Universitat de Barcelona

English Is It!

(ELT Training Series)

Grup de treball ICE-UB:*From English Acquisition to English Learning and Teaching*

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ANA MARIA FUENTES, LOURDES MONTORO (COORD.)

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Volume 4: 7 Articles

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Table of Contents

A D D E N D A

"Reading Maketh a Full Man; Conference a Ready Man; Writing an Exact Man".
Francis Bacon

Introduction

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The Research group *From English Acquisition to English Learning and Teaching* is registered at the Institute of Professional Development Teaching (ICE), at the University of Barcelona. It started in September, 2013, and, at present, it is composed of **Rosamaria Fàbrega, Ana Maria Fuentes, and Lourdes Montoro** (coordinator).

All members are teachers of English: Ana María Fuentes and Rosamaria Fàbrega (secondary education and vocational training) and L. Montoro (adult English teaching). R. Fàbrega and L. Montoro are also teacher trainers.

R. Fàbrega is teaching *Foreign Language Learning* at the Teacher Training School at the International University of Catalonia (UIC); L. Montoro has taught at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) and at the Teacher Training School at the University of Barcelona. You will find the group professional bios after this introduction.

The group shares work ethics, vocation, and senior professional careers. Their human and academic background enhances the group with specialties such as art, films, group dynamics, computer science, interpretation, literature, mass media, music, philosophy, sports, theatre and translation.

The group analyses the work of those teachers who we all know, and who, day after day, do admirable teaching works of art, making a difference in their students´ lives and in theirs, and whose schools and educational system very much benefit from.

We have all met excellent teachers who are so submerged in their daily lessons, administrative chores and the constant updating of professional life, that they are not given the opportunity to consider research or publications.

English Is It! (ELT Training Series) was created with a view to providing opportunities which can make up, somehow, for this gap. The aforementioned members are the permanent teaching staff in the group, they investigate their different areas of expertise in their classes, expose them to the group and make proposals, which are later turned into articles.

To do that, all members have extensively trained to spend the most time in the writing process in order to give the least work to the reader. They have both been succinct and explicit, and tried to say what they meant while meaning what they said. They bore in mind that, unlike class sessions, there is no audience in front, who can ask for clarification; therefore all the planning, the sequencing, the explanations and details have been considered under this premise.

With articles meant for immediate implementation, all members have aimed at clear, yet thorough texts, which include images, charts, lists, questionnaires, tables, photos… to facilitate the reading. They also include bibliographical and web references.

In general, the articles summarize what regular classes stand for each member and all: they show the picture of a human teaching forest, where we can observe distinct areas in its vegetation, with individual human plant life and a didactic ground which is covered by them all.

Long-time quantitative and qualitative work has taken their classes to the documents in writing which they have become now, like flowing creeks in the forest above referred. And this has all been part of the learning processes which all members have undergone, and a consequence of them too.

From original theses, which were presented individually and welcomed by all members, they proceeded to the defences of their general didactic framework, basically the inclusiveness of the basic pillars in teaching English as a foreign language, and also the sequentiation of the contents, with cohesiveness lighting all the way too.

Without leaving aside the authors´ teaching style, this group has pretended to blend everybody´s work in and ensure that balancing the articles out in the group teaching environment was possible: that their work could leave their classrooms for a while, and reach out for other colleagues in the field.

As pointed out earlier, all articles in this volume have stemmed from the basics in lesson planning, whether, depending on their nature, they were fully or partially pointed out and/or described: topics, levels, organization, timing, objectives, contents - procedures and concepts (communicative structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, culture) and attitudes-. Materials are also pointed out, as well the general development of activities along with references, evaluation and comments.

The group also counts on an **ADDENDA** section, which opens doors to other teaching professionals, national and international, as well, as allow the permanent staff members of the Research group, to present other academic works. It is also opened to alumni among the members of the group, so that further pedagogical interventions from them can be considered in the future.

In the *Addenda* sections in this volume, the group welcomes the professional work of two teachers, especialized in ELT Primary Education: **Sara García and Maria Alba Sánchez**. They contribute with an article each. Their abstracts and their bios, as well as the group permanent members´ can be found next.

None of these articles would have been possible without the group supervisors at ICE: **Mercè Martínez**, continuing primary and secondary teacher training coordinator, and **Mercè Gracenea**, secretary of the institution, who supported the group research work from the start, and turned it into what it is: *English Is It!* (ELT Training Series).

Abstracts from the authors

ROSAMARIA FÀBREGA

Hanging out in Class...? No Way!: Native Speakers and Technology

English teachers usually experience a constant drawback when developing the "four skills" to learn a language. Fostering SPEAKING is hard work. This article introduces two projects which enhance communication to make the students speak in a fun and motivating way. When students get in touch with reality is when they experience meaningful learning. These two proposals presented here talk about having a "Language Assistant" in class and a "Language *Skype-Hangout* pal" by taking advantage of what new technologies and social networks give us nowadays. They are offered as "Learning Presents", magnanimous gifts that leave a footprint on their learning.

ANA MARÍA FUENTES

"The Shakespearean Experience" in Secondary School. Part I

Sometimes it is hard to approach the classics in the English class. But, "The Shakespearean Experience in Secondary School" aims at dealing with literature as a personal experience and also deepening into the work of William Shakespeare and his contribution to posterity.
The first phase of the project is a two-hour workshop, when the students are presented the play *Romeo and Juliet*. They read the play, practise the scenes and then perform the play. In the second phase, the students prepare projects about the most significant aspects of the play, author, and historical period. To carry out these projects they will use reseach, communicative, narrative skills as well as presentation skills using IT. Later, they will share their findings with the whole class, making Shakespeare an outstanding element in the curriculum of secondary school.

LOURDES MONTORO

Reading in ELT Classes: Didactiv View and Proposals

This article, the third one of a series of four on skills, is divided into five sections: Reading as a complex cognitive process of understanding, her own experience as a reader;   its influence as a young teacher of English, its influence as a senior teacher, and her didactic basis. Based on memorable reading, there is a defense of the readers´ need to be exposed to a variety of topics, be able to choose what to read, freely choose when to read, have it all very accessible, and be motivated by it. She also presents samples of her ELT teacher training readings on education. Firstly, they include some of her worksheets to help students with reading organization, while learning through the technical college reading dossier and her own. Secondly, she presents her guided worksheets on quotations, view on working for and with children, the impact of adults in children, the impact of teachers in students, the Finnish school success, and the relevance of focusing on multiple intelligences.

ADDENDA

How to foster Oral Production among ESL learners: Interactive Routines and Language Posters

SARA GARCÍA

When it comes to learning a foreign language or L2, several factors must be taken into consideration. However, there is one specific element that can give EFL teachers a cause for concern: the lack of effective oral production among students. After having reflected on her teaching practice, this teacher has created her own way of teaching English in EFL classrooms. This teacher presents two different activities that promote interaction between students in the foreign language or L2. It is addressed to nursery and primary school teachers who want to foster oral production among their learners. The didactic development of these two tasks includes a sequencing chart with all learning objectives, curricular contents and materials that are involved in the interactive routines as well as a detailed description of the language posters tasks based on two teaching practices.

LOURDES MONTORO

Cover Letters in ELT College Portfolios: Learning Proceses, Vocation and Professional Expectations

This article enhances the relevance of personal cover letters in ELT student teachers´ College Portfolios. When teaching ELT methods to English language trainee teachers, she added to the basic course work her general compendium of readings on teaching methods, thirty practical guidance worksheets on different English teaching aspects, and her own pedagogics, both as a teacher of English and as a teacher trainer. Her objective was to lead her students through their most personal itineraries. This article includes worksheet #30 titled: "Your vocation, your preparation, your future teacher training, and your professional career". It also presents some samples which her students produced. In all cases, their main axis, which was another addition, was that all cover letters were to be "addressed" to the students´ potential pupils-to-be, which turned the subject into a very meaningful one from the start, and led to memorable learning processes and results at the end.

LOURDES MONTORO

ELT School Field Trips: Hand on Academics in Context

This article firstly presents a general perspective of some ELT Field trips which she has led, along with a general reference to the activities around which they took place, and their websites: Barcelona Historic Archives, Biblioteca y TIC – CRAI (Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Facultat de Traducció i Interpretació), British Council Library, Caixa Forum Barcelona, Catalunya Ràdio, Dubbing Studio *La Voz de España,* Parc del Laberint and *Termcat*. As an example of the work done, she describes two field trips which correspond to two different 35-hour upper-intermediate and advanced specialized English courses which she taught: 1/ *Introduction to American Culture* (3-day field trip) and 2/ *Introduction to Translation* (One-day field trip).. To understand the specialized courses which these field trips were part of, and the educational role which they had, both syllabi (objectives and components) and the field trip worksheets which she devised for them are enclosed.

A Teacher's Portfolio: A Lifetime Never-ending Career

MARIA ALBA SÁNCHEZ

Based on academics and initial ESL experience in teaching, the aim of this article is to, firstly, present part of her professional portfolio, specifically a compilation of practical tips that can help primary school teachers in their first years in teaching; and secondly, to encourage these teachers to welcome new challenges and learning experiences, since great results can be achieved. This article is divided into two parts. The first part consists of a general presentation of her beginning as an English language teacher after finishing college. It shows the practice of going from university classes to a professional career through her learnings reflected in her personal English Language Didactics' college portfolio. In the second part, six activities from her personal continuing *Methods Bank*, which was created after real classroom practice, are described (level, material, grouping and procedure), along with the personal and professional experiences that led to them each.

Professional bios

RESEARCH GROUP

RosamariaFàbrega has been a Secondary English teacher since 1985. She comes from a family devoted to teaching, and has exchanged teaching experiences in England, Ireland and the US. She is currently teaching "Aprenentatge de les Llengües Estrangeres" at UIC in the Faculty of Education and English in a Secondary Public School. She loves New Technologies and has a blog to help her students to work in an autonomous way.

Ana María Fuentes holds a BA in English Philology and a postgraduate course in Textual Translation Analysis from the University of Barcelona. She has also specialized in Text management for professionals at the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She has taught English in Catalonia for fourteen years. She enjoys exploiting drama and audiovisual projects in class as well as new technologies to suport students' learning process and group dynamics.

Lourdes Montoro is a professor of English at Escola Oficial d´Idiomes in Barcelona. She initially taught all levels, from elementary school to high school and vocational school. She has also taught at university, both in Barcelona (UOC and UB), and the United States (UW-L). She is also a teacher trainer, a translator and a critic reader. She has specialized in American culture, English-speaking countries, paremiology and project work.

GUEST TEACHERS

Sara García has a dual degree program in Primary Education and English as a Foreign Language Teacher (EFL) from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She has attended several professional courses based on EFL methodology and CLIL, the majority of them offered by the Educational Department of Catalonia. She has taught English at all levels, from children to adults. She is currently teaching English to children at nursery and primary school as well as adults at a private language school in Mataró.

Maria Alba Sanchez is a Primary English teacher at a public school since 2009. Before that, she had worked in an English Language School and English Summer Camps for four years. She has also participated in CLIL research activities at Universitat de Barcelona. She has attended numeorus ELT courses based on the creation of educational resources from infant and primary Education, and TAC tools in English learning. She is doing research on new activities, games and stories to work with her students.

Hanging out in Class...? No Way!: Native Speakers and Technology

Rosamaria Fàbrega
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In my overall experience as an English teacher, already approaching the three decades, I have come across three types of students, especially among teenagers and adults. I call the first type "**the procedure student**". This is the type of student whose aim is to accomplish the official procedure, who just wishes to fulfil the compulsory 80% of attendance and pass the exam in order to get a certificate, and who is satisfied with the minimum grade. This student does not usually pay attention, does not take notes, and only takes part in class if the teacher asks for it. In other words, the "procedure student" is, roughly speaking, like "a piece of furniture" in the classroom.

The second group could be called "**the wishing student**". This student certainly wishes to learn, but his/her main interest is the final grade. S/He works if there is a reward of "brownie points". Improving on the mistakes made on a test is not a priority; what is important is that the sum of points is correct, and that any possible computing error will be in his/her favour. The minimum grade is not enough, for s/he wants a high grade despite the lack of learning.

The third group is "**the memorable student**". This is the student who any teacher would like to have. This category of students enjoys learning and takes advantage of any pedagogical opportunity given in the classroom. They are brilliant even though the teacher might not be the best. They are used to thinking, to being critical; they share with their teacher the same goal of acquiring knowledge; they pursue the saying: "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers".

This leads me to argue that we can have a parallel matching with three categories of teachers. My goal is to be in the third group, for I wish to be a "memorable teacher". I want to prepare my students from the very beginning to be completely engaged in their learning process.

In order to transmit passion for knowledge and wisdom, I believe teachers should be giving their students "**Learning Presents**", that is to say, implementations that are not compulsory activities. Because they are optional, they are not in the year syllabus; they do not have a compulsory final grade, and are offered to the students just as a "present". If they accept it, they can take full advantage if they want to. When a present is given and is accepted, it can increase motivation. Eventually, the "procedure students" and the "wishing students" may feel inspired, abandon the group they are in, and become "memorable students".

This article describes two different projects that can be considered "Learning Presents", and whose aim is to foster the students' speaking skill. "**A Language Assistant in the Classroom Project" and "The *Hangout/Skype* Pal Project**". They both have been implemented and successfully tested. That is why the title of this article makes sense, my students have been *"Hanging out"* in class for the whole year.

The first project consists in having an English-speaking student in the class session, as a "language assistant". The second project, "The *Hangout/Skype* Pal Project", offers the possibility to speak one-on-one with an English-speaking student through *Hangout/Skype*.

First Project: A Language Assistant in Class

Is the **Language Assistant** in the Classroom experienced enough in language classes? In the secondary school where I am teaching at the moment, I am the only teacher who takes advantage of having a language assistant in class. The other teachers prefer to teach without the assistant after having had negative experiences in the previous year. For over twenty years, I have been working closely with American language assistants in my English classes. I have tested this project so many times that I can state its pros and cons with certainty.

If we balance the advantages and disadvantages of the project, we can assert that the benefits for the students largely outweigh the inconveniences. From my view, we can summarize the gains of having a Language Assistant in the classroom through the following points:

1.   It is an asset for the classroom language.

2.   It is motivating, as it encourages continuous learning.

3.   What students learn from their assistant in the classroom is real, authentic and updated.

4.   Students realize that they can really communicate, even though their level may not be very high. They are happy when the assistants understand them and when they see that their learning is meaningful.

5.   With a native student in class the cultural input is complemented. Both our students and our assistants can ask questions and learn about each other's culture.

6.   The American view complements the British background of the textbooks.

7.   Both, our students and our assistants, welcome each other: the Catalan students help the native student to be integrated into the Catalan society while American students offer the English knowledge and culture to the Catalan students.

8.   Listening to and interacting with a human being is much more meaningful than just exposure to audio and video (as Patricia Kuhl also confirms in "The Linguistic Genius of Babies" (http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies?language=en#t-17016)

9.   And last but not least, the activity becomes so intense that strong friendships flow out of it, between the assistants and the students, and the assistants and the teacher.

Some teachers, however, prefer not to have a language assistant in class as they find it more of a nuisance than help. From the feedback which I have received their reasons are the following ones:

A.   Having a native speaker in class does not mean students are going to learn more. Training must be guided. A good teacher may know how to teach a foreign language better than a native speaker who masters the language but not the methodology.

B.   Lessons should be guided; the assistants need to be instructed and monitored. It is usually their first experience talking in public, in front of a group of students, who are nearly their age. The language assistants need guidance from the teacher.

C.   The activity needs preparation, organization and commitment. A previous, while and post task is needed in every session (in my case, a revision of vocabulary, grammar structures or idioms... seen in the previous class is the starting point of the following class).

D.   Sometimes the helpers become an inconvenience if they have too much or too little initiative. This usually requires too much effort for the teacher to control and supervise.

E.   The main objective cannot be lost. Assistants are a backup for the students. It is easy to waste time if lessons are not linked to the syllabus. The four learning skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), plus grammar and vocabulary and intonation and pronunciation should be always aimed at in class.

Indeed, the first project: "Language Assistant in the Classroom", as well as the second project: "The *Hangout/Skype* Pal Project", require the teacher's good will and effort for them to become the "learning presents" which I referred to earlier at the start. But any conscientious instructor knows what is best for his or her students, and is ready to convey the necessary endeavours to reach the highest results.


Logan, our Language Assistant in 2014-2015 (second term)

Two groups of students in the Secondary School where I am working

2nd Project: The *Hangout/Skype* Pal Project

The second Learning present is "The Hangout/Skype Pal Project". This project consists of establishing one-on-one conversations between students of English in Barcelona, Catalonia; and students of Spanish in Philadelphia, United States.

https://maps.google.com
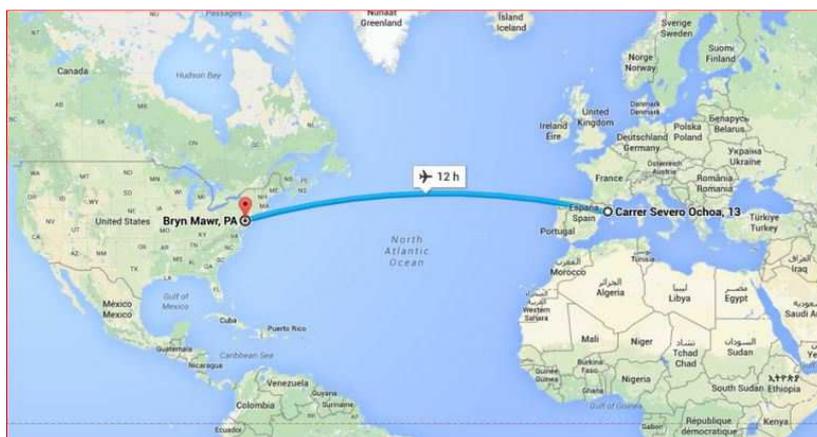
Once the respective teachers in both places agree on the project, the implementation procedure which I recommend is the following one:

1.   Both parts agree on similar objectives for both classes which help students to improve vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency, grammatical accuracy and their cultural knowledge of Spain and the USA.

2.   Students should know that this project needs commitment and focus on learning the foreign language by listening and speaking. The main objective is for them to communicate orally.

3.   The minimum level of English required to take part in the project is B1, otherwise communication can be difficult.

4.   Students are matched and connected in pairs and they establish their first contacts via instant messaging, email or directly by *Hang out/Skype*.

5.   Students start working on the project according to the guidelines given previously by both teachers. They connect weekly with their partner for one hour and divide the time between the two target languages: English and Spanish.

6.   Students give evidence of their work, either by writing on a blog or by sending pictures that prove their meetings. In my opinion the teacher should not be too harsh on this requirement, since it is a "present".

7.   Teachers are the bridge that link both parts. Teachers should oversee that the project is taking place and running smoothly.


Samples of the blog where the American students were writing in

I would like to explain that twenty-eight students took part in the project that started in January 2015 and ended in May. The pairs were connected at random, due to time constraints. In future speaking practices we will pair them up according to their tastes, their linguistic strength, or their time availability.

The commitment was to speak twenty minutes in English and twenty minutes in Spanish in each session. The students had previously received some guided questions that helped them to keep their conversations going. At the end of both sessions each partner had to give each other various pieces of advice about pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, grammar accuracy that should be improved.

The students were given a program with the topics of conversation that was similar for both parts. (Annex 1)

By taking advantage of new technologies, the infrastructure of the project was cheap and easy. In the USA, *WhatsApp* is not as common as in Spain but many of them took it as a way to start their communication. *Facebook*, *Messenger* and other apps, for example the widget "Digital dual clock" were sometimes chosen although *Skype and Hangouts-Google* were the most used virtual tools.
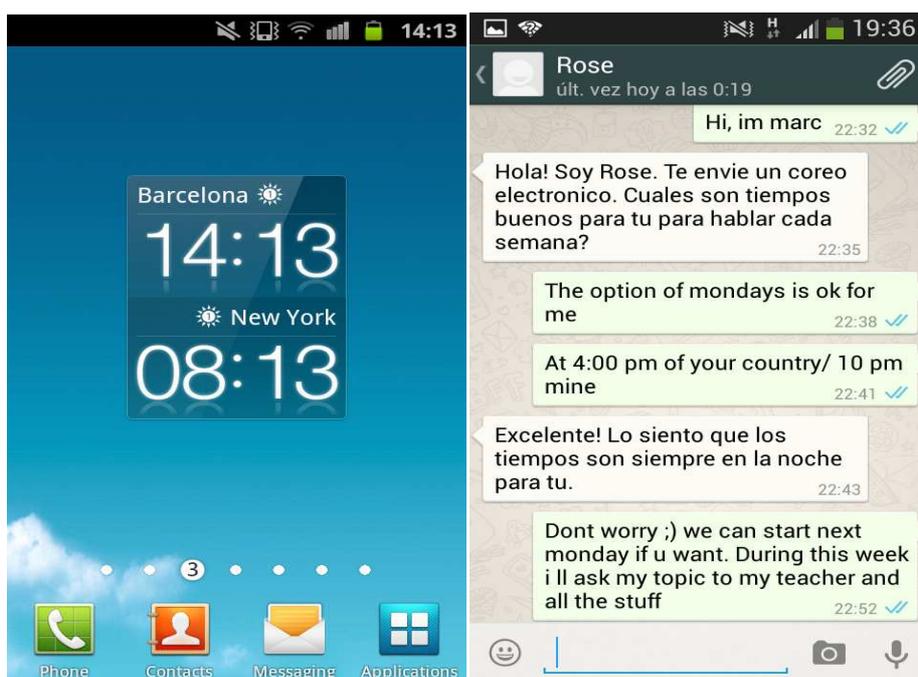
"Digital Dual Clock" widget: it allowed the students to be aware of the time difference

One of the first conversations through *Whatsapp*

The language exchanges took place once a week from January until May. Once the project finished, the students were asked to provide their feedback in order to improve it in the future. The students were given a questionnaire to fill in online: https://goo.gl/1WR9Bp (Annex 2)

The results were positive. Data on detailed feedback is being processed now. In general Catalan students were happier than the American ones. I think it is because they do not have so many opportunities to practise English as a foreign language, and the ones who accepted to participate did it on a voluntary basis. Their motivation was very high to start with. The American students, however, had no choice: it was a compulsory activity that the entire class group had to do. (Annex 3)

Samples of the students' *Skype* sessions

Taking drawbacks also into consideration, I must refer to:

A.   The quality of the technological connection was not always the best, making conversations hard to follow at times.

B.   The time difference was sometimes an issue and students missed their connection time.

C.   Mainly the individual commitment to the project was the key component for its success or its failure: this project requires an extra effort from both students to remember their appointments with their language partner.

So, in the future, the improvements that are going to be made can be summarized in three objectives that need to be fulfilled:

•   To monitor the student's interpersonal compatibility.
•   To make immediate partner changes once problems have been identified.
•   To keep reminding the students of the huge benefits of these language exchanges!

As a conclusion, I am satisfied with this project because for my students it was a new challenge, which turned into a memorable experience and an immediate trigger to keep practising real English. Could an English language teacher ask for more?

ANNEX 1: GUIDELINES FOR CONVERSATION

Estudiantes de Español	Students of English
TEMAS de los INTERCAMBIOS POR SKYPE 2015	TOPICS for the LANGUAGE EXCHANGE by SKYPE 2015
1. Semana del 26 de enero – Información, instalación del proyecto	1. Week beginning January 26th – Information, setting up the project
2. Semana del 2 de febrero – Primeros contactos por chat o email. Hoja de trabajo: saludos, preguntas generales, mejor día y mejor hora de la semana para el proyecto	2. Week beginning February 2nd – First contact by chat o email. greetings, general questions, best day & time to work on the project
3. Semana del 9 de febrero - Capp.4 y 5 – **Nuestra relación con el otro** (Hombres/Mujeres, Yo/Ellos, Nosotros/Ellos).	3. Week beginning February 9th **School & College education in the US / Youth relationship**
4. Semana del 16 de febrero - Cap.6 – **La familia** (el papel del padre en la familia, las relaciones padres/hijos)	4. Week beginning February 16th - **The family**.- Compare the concept of family in the States and in Spain
5. Semana del 23 de febrero - Cap.7- **El concepto de patria/nación**	5. Week beginning February 23rd - **The concepts of Country, State & Nation** Spain / Catalonia
6. Semana del 2 de marzo - Tema: **Los exámenes en tu país**	6. Week beginning March 2nd - **Examinations / Entry exams for University:** Selectividad
Descanso-Spring Break	Spring Break
7. Semana del 16 de marzo - Cap.8 - **La represión** (los sistemas políticos)	7. Week beginning March 16th - **Festivities in Catalonia: Food traditions**
8. Semana del 23 de marzo - Cap.8 – **La represión** (el sistema carcelario)	8. Week beginning March 23rd - **Readers** (books I have read)
9. Semana del 30 de marzo - Cap.9 – **Denuncias** (la impunidad, la corrupción, la violencia)	9. Week beginning March 30th - **Planet awareness, ecology, environment, recycling**
10. Semana del 6 de abril - Cap.9 – **La pobreza** (la supervivencia, el reciclaje)	10. Week beginning April 6th - Choose one of the 2 topics: Poverty, surviving, marginal groups of society / Sports
11. Semana del 13 de abril - Cap.11- **Desarraigos** (el exilio, los refugiados)	11. Week beginning April 13th / **Music, TV series**
12. Semana del 20 de abril - Cap.11 – **Desarraigos** (la emigración, los extranjeros)	12. Week beginning April 20th / **Sant Jordi**, Patron Saint of Catalonia
13. Semana del 27 de abril - Tema libre	13. Week beginning April 27th - Free Topic

ANNEX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS AT THE END OF THE PROJECT

Feedback about "Skype Pal Project" 2015

Your feedback on the project will help to improve it in the future. Any comments or suggestions are welcome. Thank you. You may write in English or Spanish, however you feel more comfortable.

* Necessari

Name & Surname *

1- This project helped me to improve my grammatical accuracy. *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
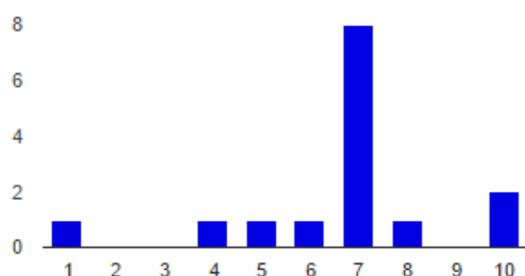
Very little ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ A lot

Personal comment
Could you specify how the project helped you?

ANNEX 3: PERSONAL COMMENTS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE (SEVEN ITEMS)

1- This project helped me to improve my grammatical accuracy.

Very little: 1	**1**	6.7%
2	**0**	0%
3	**0**	0%
4	**1**	6.7%
5	**1**	6.7%
6	**1**	6.7%
7	**8**	53.3%
8	**1**	6.7%
9	**0**	0%
A lot: 10	**2**	13.3%

- The project helped me communicate more effectively in Spanish in general. I was able to form sentences and manipulate sentence structure more to match the Spanish language.

- I was able to move away from directly translating English phrases in my head to Spanish and I improved my ability to think in Spanish.

- My partner helped correct me, and would tell me words/phrases that they use in Barcelona versus what the phrasing was/words used in the provided questions. She also helped me with my pronunciation.

- I think when we were really into a conversation, we focused more on the content on the conversation, rather than the grammar. Also, because we do not know each other really well, we tend to be "nicer" and not point out the grammar error of each other.

- Hearing my intercambio create sentences provided a model for my own speaking.

- It was a good way of practising the grammar that was taught in classes especially when my partner gave me constructive criticism which helped with my sentence formation. My grammar still isn't perfect but, I feel a little more comfortable and relaxed when speaking,

- It was extremely helpful to be able to practice conversation with a peer in a relaxed, casual forum.

- It was helpful to be forced to use different tenses when speaking with someone so I had to think of the conjugations quickly.

2- This project helped me to improve my vocabulary.

Very little: 1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%
4	0	0%
5	2	13.3%
6	2	13.3%
7	3	20%
8	2	13.3%
9	5	33.3%
A lot: 10	1	6.7%
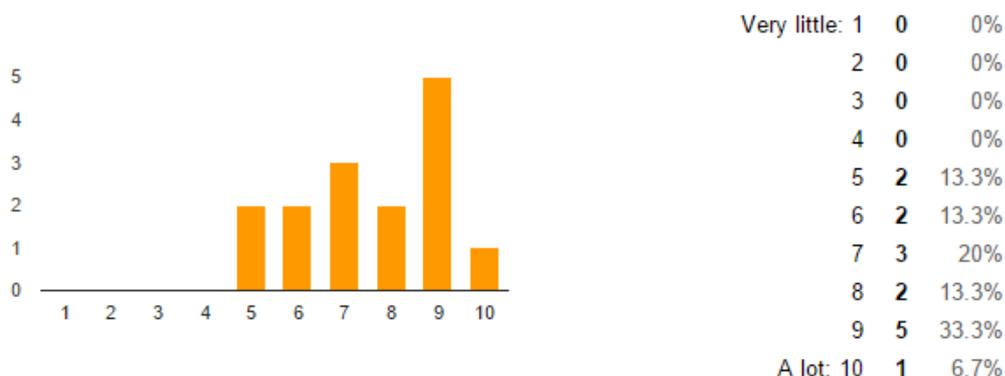
- I learned various new words, and I found out how to use words that I had previously learned in different ways.

- My partner would always teach me new vocabularies whenever I asked him a question. He would teach me so many new vocabs that were not in the textbook. I really love learning Spanish because of him!

- There were many times when my partner used words I had never heard of and she was good at explaining them so I understood better. I tried to incorporate them into our conversation and sometimes at the end, to reinforce what we talked about, my partner would ask me to re-explain what she told me for the specific words.

- She would tell me what words and phrases they would use in Barcelona, and sometimes when I would answer her questions, I would have to find different words to explain what I meant in Spanish.

- I learned some new words that aren't necessarily taught in the classroom.

- Each week I would come across many new words in speaking with my intercambio; she actively helped me figure out new phrases and words by sending me pictures of what they meant, defining them with other, more basic phrases, etc. And as I attempted to communicate with her, I had to look up words to explain myself.

- I felt like there were times where I could not always come up with a word, but my partner helped me figure it out in Spanish.

3- This project helped me to improve my pronunciation.
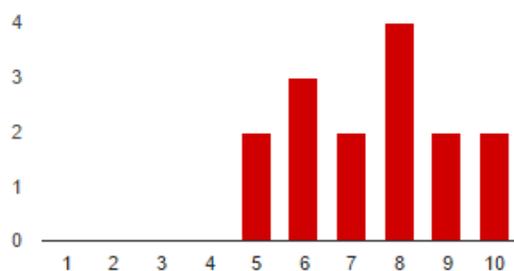
Very little: 1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%
4	0	0%
5	2	13.3%
6	3	20%
7	2	13.3%
8	4	26.7%
9	2	13.3%
A lot: 10	2	13.3%

- My partner was good at correcting my pronunciation.
- It was helpful to hear someone else speaking, although it was hard to keep up at times.
- If she heard me struggling with my pronunciation, she would help me out.
- I am not sure if I personally improved how I speak, but I know I have a better sense of the pronunciation of the words.
- My partner corrected me whenever I pronounced things wrong, which was helpful.
- My intercambio would correct me on my pronunciation, and her own speaking again provided a model for me.
- My partner and I always corrected our pronunciation, which was often.
- Actually having conversations with a native Spanish speaker helped me hear how words should be pronounced and helped me better learn how to pronounce words myself.
- I was able to receive instantaneous feedback about whether or not I had been understood, in a low pressure exchange that made it easier for me to push beyond my comfort zone.

4- This project helped me to improve my cultural knowledge of Spain.
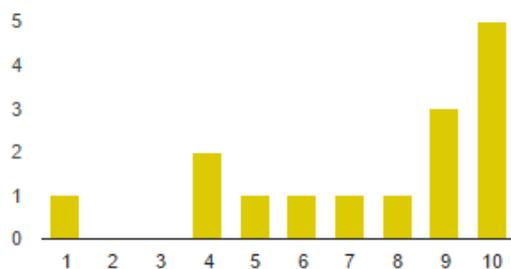
Very little: 1	**1**	6.7%
2	**0**	0%
3	**0**	0%
4	**2**	13.3%
5	**1**	6.7%
6	**1**	6.7%
7	**1**	6.7%
8	**1**	6.7%
9	**3**	20%
A lot: 10	**5**	33.3%

- I did not know anything about the culture of Spain until this project.
- For the most part, I learnt a lot about Spain's culture. However, there were certain topics that neither my partner or I knew much about so the conversation was not as informative. I definitely learnt a lot about the food!
- Learned about Spain from the perspective of a student around my age.
- I learned a lot from my partner, including families in Spain, the education system, and the nationalism, etc.
- Yes! Very much. I learned so much about the festivals, geography, cultural, stereotypes, policies. I am visiting Spain myself soon!
- Having a primary resource was really helpful because I got first hand knowledge of Spain and its culture.

5- I would repeat this experience and recommend it to other students.
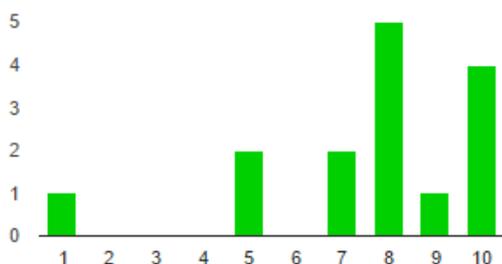
Not at all: 1	**1**	6.7%
2	**0**	0%
3	**0**	0%
4	**0**	0%
5	**2**	13.3%
6	**0**	0%
7	**2**	13.3%
8	**5**	33.3%
9	**1**	6.7%
Absolutely: 10	**4**	26.7%

- It was very interesting to talk to someone in another country who is learning English. I would have never met my partner if it weren't for this project! I enjoyed relating to my

partner about things because we are the same age. Our interactions made me want to continue travelling and continue with my plans to study abroad in Spain.

- I think one of the most challenging and easy to avoid aspects of learning a new language is taking the free fall plunge to speaking it with a native-speaker. This weekly skype session forced me to regularly practice speaking and listening. It was low stakes--we were both learning and teaching. And it was fun--I got to meet someone more or less my age and talk to them about immigration, government, prison systems, racism, family, education--things I love discussing and hearing others' views on. My intercambio and I are going to continue meeting through skype after the term ends.

- I personally think this is a great project, and it gives students the opportunity to learn about other cultures and better their pronunciation.

- YES!

- It was really rewarding to be able to talk to someone halfway around the world and get to know their experiences. Sometimes it was hard to make times work, but overall the experience was very positive.

- It was amazing.

6. Aspects of the project that I would modify

- Nothing. I really enjoyed it and benefitted for me. I especially liked having the questions--they could guide the conversation and make sure we had something to talk about, but we were allowed to expand beyond them and follow the natural rhythm of conversation, too.

- One cannot be expected to write a full summary of the session/answers the summary guideline questions in 20 minutes. Asking about Franco was not the best topic because my partner did not know much about it. It was too far in the past for him to know much about it. I would suggest having questions based on topics of the present.

- None

- Everything worked out great for me. I have nothing to complain.

- I would suggest pairing students according to their time availability.

7- How would you assess your linguistic partner?

Not passed: 1	**1**	6.7%
2	**0**	0%
3	**0**	0%
4	**0**	0%
5	**2**	13.3%
6	**0**	0%
7	**0**	0%
8	**2**	13.3%
9	**3**	20%
Excellent: 10	**7**	46.7%
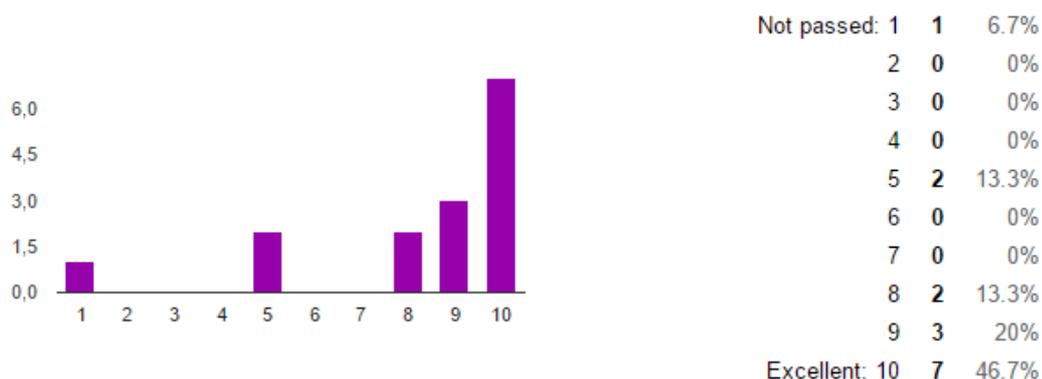
- She was always punctual (never cancelled a session without warning, for example), was engaged and eager to help me learn and learn from me. She was kind and never made me feel bad about my mistakes. A few times I asked about things she wasn't sure of (ie: the death penalty in the E.U.)--and so she looked up information and told me the answer next week. She sent me a recipe for food we talked about in one of the sessions, and in general was open to sending me resources.

- We worked really well together and never seemed bothered when I asked questions. Also, she was always responsive.

- I think Desireé is a really nice person and she is really responsible. Although she was on vacation, she still answer some of my questions.

- Anna was very nice and fun to talk to, and reliable with her meeting times.

- A+ I am so lucky to have Alejandro Gomez as my partner. He is so motivated.

- She was helpful, and held herself accountable for conversing in both English and Spanish, worked very hard to improve and to partner with me in my own learning. She was also very flexible and understanding regarding scheduling.

- Marc was a great partner! The only problem we ever had was with scheduling times that worked for both of us but he was very friendly and patient.

- My partner was very enthusiastic, kind, and very reliable when it came to planning and meeting over Skype. We always met when we had previously planned to and our discussions were always beneficial to me because I need more verbal practice. Our discussions were always substantive, too.

- My partner listened to me and corrected the large errors I made when talking. I really enjoyed cultivating this new friendship and we both want to continue talking!

"The Shakespearean Experience" in Secondary School. Part I

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"The Shakespearean Experience" is a project aimed at presenting the importance of William Shakespeare, the playwright, and the performance of the play *Romeo and Juliet* for eighth grade students, who will discover the complexity of Shakespearean plays, conflicts, dilemmas, and the greatness of his characters as well as enhance their communicative skills.

Introduction

What might "a Shakespearean experience" be like for a twenty-first century high school student? What aspects can they find enriching and exciting? Our teenagers know that Shakespeare is an important figure in the world literature but most of them are still to discover the depth of the topics in his plays and probably this experience of reading them and also performing them can affect them in ways that they will never forget.

Taking a two-hour workshop on the famous play *Romeo and Juliet* as the point of departure, the teacher develops dramatic, linguistic, cultural and artistic work to encourage productive skills in students. So, the final activity is not performing the play, but to analyse what is within Shakespeare that has contributed to posterity.

Our timetables sometimes make it really difficult for us to prepare a play and then rehearse and perform it in front of an audience in the school premises. That is why several years ago I planned and applied a two-hour workshop for Saint George's Day, or during the Cultural Week. It is devised for a small group of students (14 or 15). This workshop includes the performance of *Romeo and Juliet* andthe project based on it, which consists of otherthree more sessions to deal with linguistic, cultural, historical and artistic aspects to contribute to the magic of the festivity with a remembrance of Shakespeare.

I have divided this project into two parts: "The Shakespearean Experience" in Secondary School. Part I, and "The Shakespearean Experience" in Secondary School. Part II. "The Shakespearean Experience" in Secondary School. Part I presents the play and the guidelines to consolidate the linguistic, cultural and communicative contents. In "The Shakespearean Experience" in Secondary School. Part I, I will describe in detail every type of project, what web

tools and apps are necessary to carry them out, as well as some actual examples of projects that my students did.

In this article I would like to present the first part, and therefore, thoroughly develop and describe the didactic lesson of "The Shakespearean experience", which I have divided into:

I. Basis of the project:
   A) Drama skills
   B) The classics
   C) Shakespeare and the youth

II. Teaching objectives:
   A) General Objectives
   B) Key Competences
   C) Communicative, Formal and Extra-Linguistic components

III. Guidelines and teaching:
   1. Introducing Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet*
   2. Dress rehearsal
   3. Performance

IV. Projects

I.   Basis of the project

A. The importance of drama skills in the English class

From my experience, drama is ideal to ensure that students develop communicative competence. It is definitely a discipline that helps our students to participate in oral interactions, written and even, audiovisual messages. Drama skills can be practised in class with short dialogues, role plays and sketches, but also with actual plays.

Bringing a classic play in class can be a wonderful opportunity to enrich our lessons and provide them with a deeper dimension. The case of Shakespeare has always been a success with my students: they love the stories, the depth of his characters and the intensity of their lines. They also enjoy acting and wearing the costumes.

B. Why should we read the classics?

From my experience, there are many reasons why we should read the classics and re-read them. One of our task as teachers should definitely be to encourage our students to discover them, especially Shakespeare.

The article "Why read the classics?" on *The New York Book Review* explores the effects of reading the classics on teenage students:

First of all, it can increase students' vocabulary, social skills and besides, since their typically universal themes, characters, experiences, perspectives and emotions are as valid as ever. Also, their references are nearly unlimited: the media, the entertainment, the news, and other fiction works have allusions to the characters in these classic masterpieces.

Secondly, the classics give us an opportunity to understand many aspects of history and culture in context. These great works provide the reader with a more accessible historical and philosophical perspective on a specific period of history.

Thirdly, the classics seem to have many psychological and mental benefits for the individual. Claire Needell Hollander, a middle school English teacher in Manhattan, discovered that the classics were a form of therapy for her most disadvantaged students. Even, the University of Liverpool studied the effect of poetic language in the classroom and they reported that it stimulates the part of the brain linked to "autobiographical memory" and emotion, a type of brain activity that makes the readers reflect on their own experiences.

The article from the literary portal Puchnels.com "10 Reasons You Should be Reading the Classics" quotes PhD Arnold Bernstein, Professor Emeritus in Psychology at Queens College of the City of New York: "*Classics (…) are restless creatures, trying out new forms of expression, challenging our views on how a culture might be understood and how a life might be packaged. What is the shape of experience? How would you represent your own? These books help us toward a deeper understanding of our own estate.*"

Generally, reading is still considered the best way to improve our intelligence, so as we read the classics, we are building our knowledge of the world. But, most importantly, they are all part of our human legacy.

The classics are books that we find all the more new, fresh, and unexpected upon reading, the more we thought we knew them from hearing them talked about, since they establish a personal rapport with the reader, which is exactly what "The Shakespearean experience" aims to do in students.

C. Shakespeare and the youth

According to "Why Read the Classics?", "*to read a great book for the first time in one's maturity is an extraordinary pleasure, different from the pleasure of having read it in one's youth. Youth brings to reading, as to any other experience, a particular flavor and a particular*

sense of importance, whereas in maturity one appreciates (or ought to appreciate) many more details and levels and meanings."

Teenage years are linked to the discovery of love, its conflicts, and a different role of family. Our teenagers may have other meanings or associations to the ideas of love, destiny, tragedy, sense of belonging/family and rivalry, but what is true is, from what I have observed in class, that they are trapped by the strength of Shakespeare's characters and the depth of the conflicts that he poses, rooted in the human soul.

Moreover, through Shakespeare and particularly "Romeo and Juliet", we can deal with the topic of age and arranged marriages, the ideal partner, love at first sight, customs (duels), Elizabethan society, and, last but not least, Shakespeare's English.

II. Teaching objectives

A) This project has some general objectives in the English classroom:

- to encourage productive skills in oral output
- to encourage artistic abilities
- to develop accuracy in oral dialogues and narratives
- to organize new information in presentations
- to create quizzes, games
- to perform drama role-plays and simulations
- to work in groups
- to use digital skills

B) It also contributes to key competences:
- ✓ Linguistic competence
- ✓ Digital competence
- ✓ Cultural and artistic competence
- ✓ Competence to learn how to learn

C) It presents three different kinds of contents:
1) Communicative components
    a) Participation in oral, written and audio-visual interactions: acting out scenes
    b) Understanding oral, written and audio-visual messages:
    c) Expressing oral, written and audio-visual messages: developing fluency, accuracy and acting abilities
    d) Knowledge of the functioning of language and its learning:
        i) Vocabulary of the story
        ii) Common dialogical structures
        iii) Presentation skills

2) Formal components
    a) Accuracy in oral output

      b)   Fluency in written and oral output

   3) Extra-linguistic components:
      a)   Cultural heritage
      b)   Artistic values
      c)   Cooperation

III.   Guidelines and teaching

STEP 1: INTRODUCING SHAKESPEARE AND *ROMEO AND JULIET*

Material: - Handout 1, handout 2
                 - Pictures of William Shakespeare
                 - Pictures of different scenes of "Romeo and Juliet"
                 - Students' smartphones (at least one per pair) or computer
                 - Copies of the adapted play

Grouping: Individual and pair work

Time: 1 session

Objective: To elicit Shakespeare the playwright and man and introduce the contents of the play "Romeo and Juliet"

Assessment: The teacher will supervise the students' interactions and pronunciation

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Directions:

Before the lesson starts, the teacher sticks pictures of Shakespeare and different scenes of the play, in various parts of the class.

1.   The students can be prompted with a quick warm-up. The teacher asks them if they know who Shakespeare is, if they can name some of his works, for instance.

2.   The teacher asks for the feedback and will comment on the students' feedback.

3.   Students and teacher read a brief summary of the plot of "Romeo and Juliet" and the biography of William Shakespeare (Handout 1).

HANDOUT 1
The Shakespearean Experience

Romeo and Juliet

In Verona there are two families who hate each other: the Capulet family and the Montague family. Their fathers hated each other and their grandfathers hated each other. Nobody can remember why. When Juliet Capulet and Romeo Montague meet and fall in love the result is violence and death.

Shakespeare 1564-1616

Shakespeare was born and died on 23rd April in Stratford-upon-Avon. He got married when he was eighteen and had three children. When he was twenty-two he went to London to work as an actor. He published his first play when he was thirty and became England's most famous writer. He wrote and acted for Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet* around 1595. He didn't invent the story but he wrote the most popular version. Many stories from Shakespeare originally come from Italy. Now, after four hundred years, people still love to go to the theatre to see his plays.
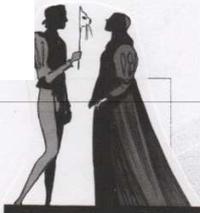
4. While reading the biography of William Shakespeare, the teacher can expand the contents with a brief reference to some historical and cultural contents related to the play:

1. Queen Elizabeth
2. Elizabethan times
3. Verona
4. Drama in Elizabethan times.

5. Together teacher and students read the dramatis personnae (Handout 2)

6. Then the teacher presents the characters with the following cards:

The teacher shows the card of one character and asks students who they are. For example, the teacher asks "*Who is Lord Capulet*?" and the student has to answer, "*He is Juliet's father*." or "*Who is Romeo*?" "*The only son of the Montague family.*"

7. The students can do their own casting. They are asked to enter Macmillan page with resources for Shakespeare entitled "Which Shakespeare character are you?".

They answer the questions of the quiz and then, they get an automated answer according to the data included in their profiles.

http://www.macmillanenglish.com/resources/shakespeare/quiz/

8. The teacher gets the feedback, and the group decides what the casting for the play is going to be and announces it.

Casting for "The Shakespearean experience" (2009)

Students and teacher prepare for "The Shakespearean Experience " (2007)

9. Reading of the play: every student reads their character's lines. I work with my own adapted and reduced version (only 6 pages) of the *Romeo and Juliet* published in "The Black Cat" series by VicensVives. The following are the first two pages of the adapted play:

The teacher clarifies the meaning of some difficult words and, if necessary, stresses on correct intonation and pronunciation. During the reading the teacher can make the students guess which scene matches the pictures that are distributed along the classroom walls.

Sellen, D. (2002) *William Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet* Barcelona. Ediciones Vicens Vives

STEP 2: DRESS REHEARSAL

Material: - Copies of the adapted play
                  - Costumes
                  - Handkerchiefs
                  - Masks
                  - Fake beards
                  - A dagger
                  - A small bottle with "poison" written on it
                  - A bunch of flowers
                  - Sheets
                  - Wooden swords and other props

Grouping: Group work

Time: ½ hour

Objective: To rehearse the play as a dramatic reading

Assessment: The teacher assesses the oral output

Directions:

1. The actors dress up in their costumes.

2. The teacher distributes the groups depending on the scenes that the characters appear in.

3. The groups change depending on the acts and scenes.

4. The teacher makes students work drama skills in specific ways:

    a. Choral speaking

        i.   The teacher explains the concept of "chorus" instead of narrator in Greek theatre. In groups they are to devise a piece of choral speaking where they move in a line towards the other family, shouting out "*Down with the Capulets*!". "*The Montagues are bloodsuckers*!"

        ii. They decide how to say each insult and create a movement to go with each. They must move forward each time they speak. The end result should be a choreographed piece where each group speaks in turn and where they end up facing each other in the centre of the room.

    b. Feuding families

        i.   As a warm up they walk round and freeze, showing different emotions, ending in anger, emphasizing facial expression.

    c. Stage fighting

      i.   Learning how to stage fight: they group into pairs, standing one metre apart, facing each other. They need to use facial expression to show how they feel about the person opposite.

      ii. Fighting with swords: practise up and down, side to side and the lunge

  d. Love scene (kiss)

      i.   The teacher shows the position of the actors in the balcony scene and also the kiss scene.

"The Shakespearean Experience" (2007)

STEP 3: PERFORMANCE

| **Material**: | - Copies of the adapted play |
	- Costumes
	- Handkerchiefs
	- Masks
	- Fake beards
	- A dagger
	- A small bottle with "*Poison*" written on it
	- A bunch of flowers
	- Sheets
	- Wooden swords and other props
Grouping: Group work	

Time: ½ hour
Objective: To perform the play

Assessment: The teacher assesses the students' performance

Directions:

1. The students perform the play, with or without script.

2. We can play music to accompany the performance of the play.
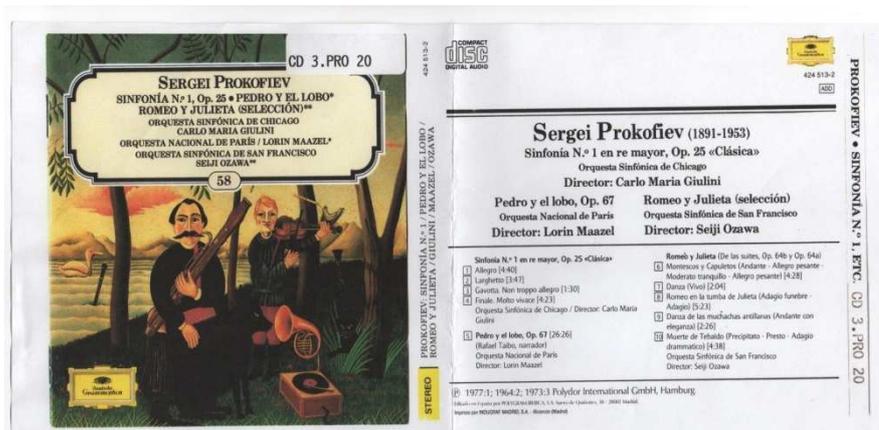
3. The teacher(s) or other students with minor roles record the scenes and take pictures.

Students after performing the play "The Shakespearean experience"(2007)

IV.   Projects

After the workshop on *Romeo and Juliet*, the students do different projects related to the play.
In groups of four students, they explore the story, characters, contents, historical and cultural
contents of this literary masterpiece.

The projects of "The Shakespearean Experience" in Secondary School. Part II will cover the following skills:

    A. Searching for information about a topic

    B. Managing and organizing information

    C. Narrating stories

    D. Presenting content for class exposition

    E. Using IT tools efficiently

In the next volume, I will explain the creation of the projects based on the experience with Shakespeare in class: process, resources and evaluation. I will also include the types of activities according to the content (linguistic, communicative or cultural), the web tools and apps that are necessary to create the different types of activities, the timing and the evaluation criteria as well.

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"Which Shakespeare character are you?" Macmillan Resources.http://www.macmillanenglish.com/resources/shakespeare/quiz/

Reading in ELT Classes: Didactic View and Proposals

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To my parents, Casimira Cardo and Fernando Montoro, for having provided me with a wonderful children´s encyclopedia, lots of story books, and later, in my teens, with all the books and collections that I needed to continue extensively and leisurely reading. And to all those outstanding teachers and professors who throughout their career ensure that reading remains being a never-ending adventure of discovery for all involved.

This article is the third one of a series of four on skills. It is the continuation of two articles on the listening and the speaking skill (*English Is It!* (ELT Training Series), vol. 2 and vol. 3). Like in the former ones, its aim is to get English acquisition closer to English learning and teaching. To teach English as a foreign language and have our students learn it as closely as how we acquired our mother tongue, we must ensure that our students have been orally presented the language first and given their chance to reproduce it orally next.

Only then, it will be time to introduce them to the written form and conventions of English, that is, to reading, which, after mastering it, will set them ready for their last step forward: writing in the new language. Successful reading comprehension will need a major exposure to the language, a lot of everyday class natural and formal practice, and, also, constant encouragement to have students enjoy the whole process.

As they deal with new pronunciation, vocabulary, structures, and paragraphs, and try to make sense of them all in readings, their motivation is to be always taken care of: a variety of texts and topics of their interest, emphasis on their talents or different class interaction techniques, for instance, can help. Such choices can make their readings personally meaningful from day one, as they themselves easily build on their own learning of their foreign language, as well as on their personal, social, cultural and world knowledge.

This article is based on my reflections as a teacher of English and a teacher trainer, classroom experiences with both audiences, and teacher training sessions. The ideas and guidelines enclosed have been previously implemented and/or passed along to either students of English, student-teachers and also senior teachers in continuing learning. To present reading in ELT classes, my view and proposals, I will divide this article into five sections:

1. **READING AS A COMPLEX COGNITIVE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING**
2. **MY OWN EXPERIENCE AS A READER (FROM CHILDHOOD INTO ADULTHOOD)**
3. **ITS INFLUENCE AS A YOUNG TEACHER OF ENGLISH – A SAMPLE ABOUT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS**

4. **ITS INFLUENCE AS A SENIOR TEACHER – A SAMPLE ABOUT COLLEGE STUDENT TEACHERS**

5. **MY DIDACTIC BASIS**

Firstly, I will start reviewing the complexity of the reading process, which is necessary to always bear in mind when encouraging others to read, in this case, students of a foreign language, who obviously face harder obstacles; secondly, I will briefly present my pleasant home experience as a reader starting in my childhood: how it got built up into adulthood; how compulsory academic reading contrasted with that at times, and made me wonder, and my reflection on possible circumstances which may have led to that.

Thirdly and fourthly I will explain where my own practice as a natural reader and as a teacher, took me to, and how I tried to apply what had coherently worked for me throughout my infancy and teens into my career: as a young teacher of English in vocational school, and as a college professor training student teachers of English; examples of reading practices will be provided; fifthly; I will summarize the previous listed sections under what I understand as my didactic basis, which I share with teachers of English in continuing education to promote reflection and actions which may match it. I will describe each section next.

1. **READING AS A COMPLEX PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING**

We all derive and construct meaning, after decoding symbols through complex cognitive processes which are prompted when facing written linguistic messages. Through their meaning or significance which we obtain from reading comprehension, and the processes above-mentioned, we create mental representations. They contain information which reflect the extent of our level of language acquisition.

Reading comprehension is not possible without the interaction of the reader with a given text. From the mid-eighties I have tried to keep in mind an excellent presentation on the skill and practice of reading by L. Haarman, P. Leech, and J. Murray (1988). They do not only refer to each element and sub-element/s which is/are part of the skill and practice of reading involving the **Reading process, Strategies, and Aspects of the text**, but also to what happens when readers read: How the elements mentioned above depend on each other and interact with one another to lead to full meaning.

Research in the field of psycholinguistics has proved that "*the reader does no decode text in his first language (L1) in an orderly, linear fashion, word after word, rather that his eyes move rapidly over the page, going forward and backward as he perceives meaningful groups of*

words and relates these to the non-verbal information at his disposal" (1988, p. vii). I believe that my perspective of how complex the process of reading, stemming from them, has very much served me in my approach to it as a teacher of English as a foreign language in different educational levels, and as a teacher trainer too. I will try to summarize below the practical contents which, from my view, they provided:

THE READING PROCESS

READER	READER READS

1. **KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD**
A/ Culture specific
B/ Topic specific
2. **LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE**
A/ Lexis:
. Knowledge of Content words (Vocabulary items which can sometimes change grammatical class or meaning through prefixes and suffixes)
. Knowledge of Function Words - helping to express the **relationships between concepts**: classes of linkers and modal verbs in different **contexts-**
B/ Knowledge of Syntax in a linguistic system
C/ Knowledge of Rhetorical patterns and Conventions
. Genre and global text Structure (depending on function)
. Paragraph structure (as expansion of topic sentence,
	1. **GENUINE MOTIVATION**
	2. **READING PURPOSE**
	3. **EXPECTATIONS AND PREDICTIONS REGARDING**
	A/ Content (based on **graphic cues -** headlines, photographs, tables.. - **and knowledge of the subject matter**)
	B/ The organization of the text (based on the **genre**)
	4. **STRATEGIES AND TECHINQUES DEPENDING ON TYPE AND CONTENT OF TEXT AND READING PURPOSE** (Main styles: Skimming, scanning, intensive reading, extensive reading)
	5. **TEXT** (with overlapping layers organized to convey meaning)
	   3. **Lexis**
	   4. **Syntax**
	   5. **Conventions**
	   6. **Meaning** (after processing the text and inferring meaning)

central ideas into expansions of particular topic)	
	(Adapted from Haarman, L., Leech, P. and Murray, J (1988)

I understand both sections "Reader" and "Reader reads" as parallel. Also in "Reader reads" Numbers 1 to 5 are consecutive in performance, to finally lead to meaning. The reader wishing to read and reading itself join in and become the starting point for all the rest of elements to come into play in the complex comprehension process which gets activated when doing so.

S. House (1997) refers to the reading skill and early reading in children, and divides it into two other previous skills:

1. Decoding: "*This is the correct pronunciation and sounding out of the word and should always be done aloud and always following a model from the teacher or the tape when the language is being presented*" (p. 24)

2. Reading with understanding, which will happen with time. To do that, she points to the need to adapt activities to the age and skills of students, while "*treat all reading and writing exercises as speaking exercises first"*

   She gives some tips to *readers*", to ease off students´ reading comprehension practices:

   - Plenty of stimulus of whole words: playing with words, labeling the classroom… for "*pre-readers or rudimentary*"
   - Working on vocabulary and guessing the meaning of unknown words
   - Offering not difficult, varied, attractive readers to our students which they will enjoy
   - Not turning readers into tests
   - Not setting a reading pace
   - Monitoring students as they go through their readers
   - Collecting students´ reviews which can help other students continue reading

T. Hedge (2000) presents a very thorough reflection on the process of second language reading, the ways how reading is an interactive, purposeful and critical process, the role of extensive reading, how we establish goals for the English classroom, what criteria we use to select reading texts, what kinds of tasks help to develop reading ability, if we can help students to read critically, and what we can do to encourage extensive reading.

While we get technically prepared to give the most and expect the most from our students, two basic patterns are to take place, which apply at all levels: we all need to practice the skill of reading, and enjoy it. As we read in Peter McWilliams (1994) *Learning Life 101,* pp. 12-13: "*The more we learn, the more we can do, the more we do, the more we can learn. But in all this doing and learning, let´s not forget one of the most important lessons of all – enjoyment*".

2. MY OWN EXPERIENCE AS A READER

With the perspective of the personally memorable impact of readings as a child, and my profession, I deduced that, at that time, my readings already had all the elements that I find necessary to master, as an ELT professional, to provide my students of English, and the teachers who I train with:

1/ Being exposed to a variety of topics

2/ Being able to choose what to read

3/ Choosing when to read

4/ Having it all very accessible

4/ Being motivated by it all

El Nuevo Tesoro de la Juventud (1968) *,* defined as "Knowledge Encyclopedia" was given to me as a child, and placed behind my bed, on a shelf which I could easily reach from it!. It had the following sections, which I still recall, as amazing discoveries: Spain, interesting tales, the book of the "Why´s", heroic facts, the book of science, countries and their traditions, two big nature kingdoms, things that we must know, well-known men and women, the book of our life, the book of poetry, history of the earth, recreational lessons (music, drawing and languages: English and French), well-known books, and games and pastimes.

I chose what to read, when, how, and I was intrigued and admired by it all. As I progressed, I used it for school assignment too. Later, as a young teenager, my parents got me two major collections, which made it very easy for my studies and personal interests: *Diccionario Enciclópedico Salvat* (1967), and *Enciclopedia Temática Ciesa* (1973).

Reading excerpts from them as well as the logical story books that went with age made reading a natural thing in me. The older I was getting, the more I started to notice that the academic choices to read and what we might like to read could differ. Academic readings seemed to be restricted by syllabi, and, I guessed, by teachers´ preferences and areas of expertise… I was as applied as I had always been, but felt obliged to read at times. That was a first.

While college readings had me on the alert, I kept reading what I liked in my free time, as I still do now, be it in English, Spanish or Catalan. What had been so easy for me, almost natural, had started to be a chore, when viewed and felt as an imposition of the system and/or somebody else´s circumstances, or simply, preferences.

At times, some quotes which I learned in my mid/late-twenties when preparing for my master´s thesis, make me think about those teachers´ choices, and wonder about which human (besides academic) base they stood on to promote the readings that they did:

- *"Lawyers, I suppose, were children once"*
- *"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view— until you climb into his skin and walk around in it"*
- *"I think there's just one kind of folks. Folks"*)   (N. Harper Lee, *To kill a Mockingbird*)

3. ITS INFLUENCE AS A YOUNG TEACHER OF ENGLISH – A SAMPLE ABOUT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

Reading comprehension is, certainly, accomplished because of the complex interaction between reading passages and readers (and their knowledge of the world, knowledge of the language, knowledge of the community where they belong to, personal interests, attitude, creative aptitude, inferring ability, experience in interpretation, and a lot of practice) so that what we acquire and learn enter our already existing personal, cultural and linguistic human framework.

From acquiring reading, at the age of introducing literacy learning in our mother tongue, to full reading comprehension in English as a foreign language, we all face difficulties; as we overcome them, we go through several stages that take us from being pre-readers to novice readers, decoders, fluent comprehensive readers to, finally, expert ones, or to follow *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, we go from being - Basic users (A1 and A2), to Independent users (B1 and B2), to finally proficient ones (C1 and C2).

As we try to help our students acquire the necessary reading skills to enable them to process texts and infer meaning from them, we are witnesses to their individual abilities, talents, knowledge, fears and worries. We often want to stay away from texts which expose them to numerous new terms, which may interfere with their competence to fully understand what they read.

No matter how much I keep considering different approaches to improve reading comprehension through previous or simultaneous work on vocabulary, that is, to accompany students, in their reading discoveries, my own experience as a very young reader, commented above, and the good time which I had while doing that, always comes in very handy, and somehow, prevails. I will refer to vocabulary again in the section "MY DIDACTIC BASIS".

As a young teacher of English, in the eighties, working with different kinds of students, levels, and interests, such an experience along with my academic training in technical reading and in reading per se, helped me wish to look for texts that had to do with areas of expertise that my students could technically master and love. At that time, I did not care much if I was not knowledgeable enough in what they were, be it electronics, administration, chemistry, or computer science in vocational school. In fact, that turned into a motivational bonus for them: Students had a great chance to teach their enthusiastic teacher what they certainly were in command: Their specialty!. And they did!

Vocational students were usually reported not to like English the most. Yet, as I exposed them to a compendium of specialty readings in their field, which was a weekly class workshop, they were intrigued, as well as challenged, to see if they could understand it (And I knew they could because the materials which I used were from youth encyclopedias in English). Students were soon willing to get started and certainly continue.

Their task was simply to read their texts, understand them, and make sure that I did too!: To do that, after discussing them with me in small groups in class, in pairs, or individually (Their choice), they all nicely typed them all out in Spanish or Catalan so that their translations became nicely arranged school papers which even had the British flag at times, and which I was going to use to certify their progresses in English reading.

With the time, I realized that such a successful response simply depicted a quote to a tee: "*If you build it, he will come*" (*Field of Dreams*, 1989). At vocational school that was simply all that occurred to me that I could do for my students: I provided them with an area of their like, expertise, and life, which could help make their school work meaningful beyond the ELT class. It just worked for all of us.

4. ITS INFLUENCE AS A SENIOR TEACHER – A SAMPLE ABOUT COLLEGE STUDENT TEACHERS

Two decades later, as a teacher trainer of student teachers at the Teaching School (University of Barcelona), my students needed to be necessarily exposed to ELT technical teaching

methods literature, which we are all familiar with, as professionals in the field; and they became so, through the college dossier, and another technical one, which I prepared to complement it.

Still, I tried to go beyond the classic areas which students were to master, in the acknowledgement of what I explained in section 1/ (Reading as a complex cognitive process), and under the influence of what I referred to in sections 2/ and 3/ (Experience as a learner and experience as a teacher): I wanted them to think about something else, which I could label, as human choices, because, they are present in all that we do, and we all need to understand their effect and master them.

From my view, this even becomes more relevant in our daily educational interaction as teachers. I decided to take my students to what I understood as special readings on education. They were part of a 30-worksheet collection which I designed for fit the class sessions and cover different aspects in teaching. These worksheets were the result of my long career as an ELT teacher and teacher trainer. I could thoroughly plan them and create them. As far as reading is concerned, the collection had:

- Two worksheets to help them get organized and enjoy their own pace and learning through the technical college reading dossier and my own
- Six worksheets with readings and questions about the place of the world heritage of quotations, our view on working for and with children, the impact of adults in children, the impact of teachers in students, the Finnish school success, and the relevance of focusing on multiple intelligences.

Student teachers were addressed to them at the start of the subject syllabus to help them easily want to submerge in them all, as I thought that they should, and, in the belief that they would also love to. They did. I think that the first two worksheets facilitated their entrance in their brand-new academic insights in the ELT field; they will be presented in another article.

The last six worksheets gave the students the responsibility of feeling and living the leading role that a teacher always has; they also provided them with choices to face themselves, as the persons who they were, and the teachers that they wanted to become, and therefore, to move forward in their apprenticeship. I will refer to them next for two reasons:

- They contributed as significant readings for student teachers, as they chose to register them in their portfolios

- Their inclusion showed that taking the pleasure of reading away is avoidable at all levels; from my view, through balancing out the most technical quantitative academic musts with the most qualitative human ELT approaches. While their personal delight and academic interest blended in, the students just found themselves happily reading and doing all that they were expected to.

The worksheet **Educational Quotes–Compilation** took them to the value of quotations, and to the difficulty of being fond of some, when facing the human hardships of applying them; **Recipe for a Happy Child** presented a metaphorical class procedure around ingredients and measures such a patience, discipline guidance, cooperation, love, affection….. to get a well-developed "product", which they could discuss and alter, as they liked while picturing themselves teaching children.

On Teachers and Pupils: "The case of Teddy Stoddard and Mrs. Thompson" (http://www.makeadifferencemovie.com/) showed a fifth grader and his teacher, Mrs. Thompson, and the difference which she made in him when she took over, and, he did move forward in all senses, against all the odds. One of the questions which I asked my students to consider as they read the text was: *"What is the difference between 1."Teaching reading, and writing, and speaking" and 2. "Teaching children?".*

School Success in Finland. Some practical data was centered on the Finnish focus on the development of young children´s communication skills and cooperation since day care and kindergarten, and their readiness to teach and learn through play. With very qualified and talented teachers in all levels of education, their exposition to the text could help them see how each stage is fundamental to train young kids for lifelong education, and later, for formal teaching and learning of the skill of reading, and mathematics too.

Multiple Intelligences. Zanatta T. (2003) *Zoom* **(pp. 7-8)** started with a quote by Howard Gardner: "*I want my children to understand the world, but not just because the world is fascinating and the human mind is curious. I want them to understand it so that they will be positioned to make it a better place*". Trainee teachers could see that students can be helped in their best possible way: by being involved in what they like, and by providing them with the tools which can reinforce their weak areas.

Last but not least, I will enclose the full worksheet of **The Impact of Adults.** *To Kill a Mockingbird* for thought*.* It is a reading on a problem dealing with home reading versus school teaching of reading imposed on a pupil by the choice of a teacher, and how it is brilliantly and humanly resolved by her outstanding compassionate father and man, Atticus Finch.

T A S K

R E A D I N G   W O R K S H E E T   **Prof.** Lourdes Montoro

The Impact of Adults
To Kill a Mockingbird (OV)

(From: FOOTE, Horton (1962) *The Screenplay of To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World: 48-50)

Read the following excerpt, and answer the questions below:

----

*Scout: I don´t care. Everything went wrong. **My teacher got mad as the devil at me and said you were teaching me to read all wrong and to stop it.** (…)*

Atticus: Well, maybe she´s just nervous. After all, it´s her first day, too, teachin´school and bein´new here.

Scout: Oh, Atticus.

Atticus: Now, wait a minute. If you can learn a single trick, you´ll get along better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view.

Scout: Sir?

Atticus: Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it.

Scout: But if I keep goin´to school, we can´t ever read any more.

Atticus: Scout, do you know what a compromise is?

Scout: Bending the law.

*Atticus: Ah, no. It´s an agreement reached by mutual consent. Now, here´s the way it works. **You concede the necessity of goin´to school,we´ll keep right on readin´ every night, the same as we always have. Is that a bargain?***

----

1. Are you familiar with this movie? What about the book?

2. What is Scout´s problem? Why is she desperate? Is it exaggerated?

3. Is it wrong that she reads at home with dad? Explain it.

4. What is the impact of the teacher?

5. Is it the teacher´s fault? What is your view? Could she have done better?

6. How does Atticus, the girl´s dad, solve the kid´s problem?

7. Do you agree with that? Why? Why not?

8. What are the adults´contribution to this child?

9. How should we contribute to children in general?

10. Can you see any connection with learning experiences and/or successes?

5.   MY DIDACTIC BASIS

From what I have conveyed in the previous sections, several elements are to be dealt with before helping our students read in English as a foreign language: the complexity of the reading process itself, the knowledge of what kind of readers they are, the need for pleasurable reading instances, the role of significant texts, the objective and effect of memorable reading journeys, the variety of topics and genres which we can offer them to choose from, the acknowledgement of their individual reading paces, the enthusiasm and wish to reach out to all students on the teacher´s part, and the pursue of accessible objectives and assignment.

Touching base with reality, with our motivation and preparation, and having an open mind to approach school reading can keep both teachers and students motivated. Therefore, from the very start, we can make a difference in how we prepare our students to face their reading processes, circumstances,   and their own selves, that is, to help them become autonomous readers: detecting, deciphering, and deducing to finally comprehend it all at once.

Centered on my reflections, experience and practices, I see ELT classes and classrooms as outstanding human, cultural and linguistic laboratories, where actions are planned, data is collected, conclusions are reached, new actions are taken, as the learning and teaching processes start over and over again.

From my view, while this is happening, accompaniment of the student on the teacher´s part is essential.   In that sense, and as expressed in former articles, to help students become autonomous learners, in this case, readers,   I recommend the usage of self/pair/group assessment tasks and/or worksheets, in a variety of formats, as well as individual tutoring sessions, which help promote individual itineraries.

These means will not only support the technical resource materials which i*tutors* or virtual platforms, like *Moodle,* can provide, to name some, but also will set teachers in the closest

place to students. Adjusting the reading work to each student´s needs and likes will easily take place. Therefore, refining their mastering in the multi-angled reading skill will turn into a reality at a faster pace.

In practice, the different comprehension levels demand different brain-activated areas, while work on **strategies, vocabulary and assessment** takes place. There is no doubt that students are turned down when we do not lead them through the most suitable tailor-made strategies**,** help them grasp the new vocabulary, or assess them in what we should not or how we should not.

We can certainly help students through many **strategies**: asking them to predict meaning, visualize what they read, summarize what they understand, answer or ask questions which test memory or general comprehension, have them create diagrams, ask them to apply what they read, infer meaning and analyze it, relate it to something that they know, evaluate it, discuss what they read, infer from genres and its own features, whether literary or referential …

With regards to **vocabulary**, D. Nielsen in "*Study shows greater focus on vocabulary can help make students better readers (2013)* affirms that if students do not understand the meaning of words, their potential to reach meaning of a text decreases*.* C.B. Smith in "*Vocabulary Instruction and Reading Comprehension*" (1997) enhances the relevance of word knowledge in literate societies, since they contribute to success at school, and, particularly, in formal and informal speaking and writing.

As pointed in the previous article on Listening (*English Is It!* (ELT Series), vol. 3), "S*tudents cannot understand what they do not know when they are exposed to words or expressions which are new to them with regards to their meaning, and we do not do anything about that. Making sure that the new vocabulary and/or structure from which they need to infer meaning is made available to them is part of our work, whether we choose to present the new language days ahead or minutes before, but, in all cases, students cannot miss their chance to decode and process what they are expected to, due to lack of prevention on our part*".

Concerning **assessment**, we all know that we can monitor our students in various ways, formally and, also, informally, through observation and note-taking, and practices in various forms: synonym hunting, dialog completion, sentence completion, paragraph completion, headline matching, picture matching, paragraph matching, jumbled sentences ordering, jumbled paragraphs ordering, irrelevant sentences identification, interactive writing, paired-up complementary reading… or readers´ reports, including, for instance aspects such as facts

(title, author…), description (place where action takes place, relevant characters…) and general comments (reasons to choose the book, frequency of dictionary checks…).

We all want our students to be able to effectively use the language as a general communication vehicle, and acquire the basic receptive and productive skills, both in written and oral production. Regarding the reading skill, J. Derrida (1995) points to the difficulties and complexity of context as follows: "*In order to unfold what is implicit in so many discourses, one would have each time to make a pedagogical outlay that is just not reasonable to expect from every book. Here the responsibility has to be shared out, mediated; the reading has to do its work and the work has to make its reader*".

This takes us back to the start, to Haarman, P. Leech, and J. Murray (1988), and the chart above, where "the reader" and " the reader reads" are it. For further reference, I enclose at the end an extensive bibliographical reference on the reading skill that goes from general methods to websites. They include reading comprehension practices from kindergarten to sixth[h] grade, non-fiction and literary passages, free online reading comprehension worksheets, work on multiple intelligences, kids´ encyclopedias, work on reading, writing, language, linguistics and communication, vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension.

Needless to say that being aware of the difficulties which the reading skill presents, and applying the best learning styles for our students, as well as a large variety of techniques will very much benefit them, as they develop, retain, recycle and connect what they read and learn with their own lives and the world surrounding us.

As we get to know our students, and become acquainted with their unique ways of thinking and learning, likes and talents, we cannot forget that "*Our task is to provide an education for the kind of kids we have, not the kids, we used to have or want to have or the kids that exist in our dreams.* " (E.P. Gerlack). Through our expertise as professionals, our awareness of our own learning/teaching styles, and the difficulties which teaching and learning arise, we can smoothly lead our students to the objectives which we aim at, while we all, teachers and students, get the most out of the common process and enjoy it.

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ADDENDA

How to Foster Oral Production among ESL Learners: Interactive Routines and Language Posters

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My devotion to English language started during my adolescence. I was a teenager and my dream was travelling to New York, as well as getting in touch with the language and culture. I was willing to have a real context where I could communicate with a native person and of course, I did it! My family and I travelled to New York when I was fifteen and I still remember how nervous and excited at the same time I felt, when I first went into a restaurant and I ordered our breakfast. It was not an easy situation to me, since I had never been exposed to American English, but as the days went by, I felt more confident and I realized that I was learning a few pieces of vocabulary and some informal structures just by "living" in the United States during nine days!

I finished my high school studies in 2006 and I had already decided that I wanted to be an English teacher and get students close to British and American culture. So, I started my teaching training degree at *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* and I started teaching English in primary levels in 2009. Ever since then, I have taught English to children, teenagers and adults.

Before I headed to my first EFL lesson as a teacher, I already had two clear thoughts: I wanted students to call me "Teacher Sara" and I want them to communicate with me in English. The majority of my young students still think their English teacher is from a native English speaking country, so my plan worked.

During my first three years, I worked at six different primary schools and I am quite grateful for this experience because I had time to observe some teaching methodologies and reflect on my own teaching practice. I was curious about the fact that there was always a common topic across small-talk conversations between English teachers: **the lack of effective oral production among students**.

At the beginning, I had some short teacher cover leave jobs and I was asked to follow the planning that the teacher I was substituting, had created. Most of the times, the lessons were exclusively based on the activities of the course book where students' oral production was not a must.

In 2012 I was given a full year vacancy and I started creating my own English teaching methodology in EFL classrooms. I wanted students to interact with the English language and use it in the same way I used it when I was in the USA. To do that, I created some interactive routines that would **allow students to use the L2 with a real purpose** and I fostered the **use of language posters** in my lessons.

During that year, my students improved their English command in a significant way reaching high scores in official government tests; they also participated in "The Fonix "contest (http://the-fonix.org/) and joined some speaking lessons with a native language assistant where they had the chance to interact with a native speaker. From that year on, all my English lessons have started with interactive routines and all my lesson plans, for primary school groups, have included a language poster.

The article will refer to:

1. The theoretical framework of my teaching methodology
2. The role of the teacher in interactive routines and language posters
3. Interactive routines: Practical development and sequencing
4. Language posters: Practical development

It will also provide a detailed description of the interactive methodology which I use and can be implemented in nursery and primary school ESL lessons.

1. Theoretical framework of my teaching methodology

The use of interactive routines and language posters is theoretically based on the *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) paradigm. This methodology affirms that it is crucial to create some meaningful communicative contexts as well as real outcome tasks when teaching a new language.

According to *Communicative Language Teaching Today* (Richards, J. 2006), "*the overarching principles of communicative language teaching methodology at this time can be summarized as follows:*

✓ *Make real communication the focus of language learning.*
✓ *Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know*
✓ *Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence.*
✓ *Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.*
✓ *Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world.*
✓ *Let students induce or discover grammar rules".*

As mentioned in the previous list and I stated, it is essential to let students experiment with the foreign language so that, they try out, play, make mistakes, correct themselves and develop their communicative competence in the L2. From my experience, interactive routines and language posters let students feel free when interacting and communicating in English and this fact also causes a significant improvement in pupils' motivation.

I strongly believe in exposing EFL students to real and meaningful contexts or situations where they have to interact with the teacher and their peers. Languages are communicative tools and it is important that EFL learners use them with a real purpose. They should have the opportunity of experimenting with some language chunks by making mistakes and trying again.

Nowadays, as I exposed at the beginning of this article, most of my colleagues worry about their students' command of English. They want students to communicate in a fluent and accurate way and consequently, they want pupils to achieve a high communicative competence too. But, how can students have mastery of spoken English if they do not use it?

2. The role of the teacher in interactive routines and language posters

During the development of interactive routines and language posters, the teacher is a guide that helps students when required. Students have an active role and they are the responsible for their learning process.

If we focus on the **interactive routines**, the teacher always provides some scaffolding at the beginning of the course year so that students have a proper linguistic model to follow. During the first weeks, the teacher leads the new interactive routines and students participate by interacting with the teacher. When pupils are ready to start leading the interactive routines, the teacher becomes an observer rather than a leader.

In the case of **language posters**, it is important to point out that students are in charge of creating some visual resources that help them produce some oral presentations with a real outcome. Moreover, multiple intelligences are developed by elaborating these posters, since students work with some different techniques, such as arts and crafts or ICT.

It is important to point out that both interactive routines and language posters offer students the opportunity of using the language in an active and engaging way. It should also be noted that this kind of activity and methodology, as mentioned earlier, can be implemented in both nursery and primary school. I think it is important that we, as teachers, create an optimum routines sequence taking into account our students grades and their L2 competence.

The routines that I implement in nursery school are also sequenced by terms. Depending on

students' level there is a change in the teacher's role, which can be either active or passive:

	Age 3			Age 4			Age 5		
	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
Waking up our puppet	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	P
Attendance register			A	A	P	P	P	P	P
Singing the "Hello song"	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	P	P
Observing the weather				A	A	P	P	P	P
Vocabulary box			A	A	P	P	P	P	P

A: Active role. The teacher leads the routine and offers some scaffolding to children.

P: Passive role. The teacher plays a passive role and one or two students lead the routine.

3. Interactive routines: practical development

In this section, I would like to describe two charts that include all learning objectives, curricular contents and materials that are involved in interactive routines, which I practise at the beginning of every lesson.

All the Interactive routines that I implement are based on oral production; students develop listening and speaking skills. I start exposing children to reading and writing input when they are in the second grade and have already acquired listening and speaking skills, as they do in their mother tongue. It is very useful to foster oral production among special needs students by asking for an assistant volunteer that can help them.

We, as teachers, must bear in mind that children love playing, singing and dancing. In my experience, I always try to gamify every routine I do with them by adding some gamifying elements like a timer, clapping rhymes, gestures or movements and songs. All rhymes and tongue twisters are accompanied by gestures and movements that help students integrate language chunks, as proposed in *Total Physical Response*.

Moreover, I want to comment that I always reward my students with some English stars, which I find very encouraging too. Every pupil has an English star rewarding chart and I give stars when they finish with the interactive routines. I supervise the amount of English starts that everyone has and I try to give everybody the same quantity of English stars by the end of the school year.

Next, I will present the interactive routines which I follow; they are categorized by grades. Some routines are repeated in the different grades; yet, as students advance, they are adjusted to the next level. It is important to mention that these routines are implemented in the same chronological order that is described.

From nursery school (aged four and five) to primary school (first and second graders), my pupils interact through:

- *Waking up our puppet*

- *Singing the Hello song*

In primary education (from first to sixth grade), they follow:

- *Brain gym exercises*

- *Taking the register*

- *Observing the weather*

- *Phonics*

Specifically, from first to fourth grade, they practise through:

- *The green monster*

From fourth to sixth grade pupils have some extra routines:

- *The spelling box*

- *The round of questions*

The following two charts offer a detailed description of the above-mentioned interactive routines, as well as present the vocabulary which I use in nursery school:

A) EDUCATION STAGE: NURSERY SCHOOL			
Routine	**Learning objectives**	**Curricular contents**	**Materials**
1. Waking up our puppet	To identify and use the correct structures related to waking up and saying good morning	<u>Grammar structures</u> - *Good morning...* - *How are you today?* - *Open the box, please.* - **Numbers** from 1 to 5 (age 3). - **Numbers** from 1 to 10 (age 4). - **Numbers** from 1 to 20 (age 5).	- English puppet - Magic bell puppets
2. Taking the register	To identify and use the correct structures involved in taking the register when asking and answering questions	<u>Grammar structures</u> - *Is (_____) here?* - *Good morning, here I am.*	- A list of the students with their pictures - Magic wand
3. Singing the "Hello song"	To sing and use some gestures that accompany the song lyrics	<u>Grammar structures</u> - *Hello (boys and girls).* · *How are you today?* · *I'm fine thank you, and you?*	- *Hello* song
4. Observing the weather	To sing and use some gestures that accompany the song lyrics To identify and use the correct structures related to the weather	<u>Grammar structures</u> - *What's the weather like today?* - *Today is (_____).* - *Is it cloudy today?* Only age 4 & 5.	- *What's the weather like today?* Song - Weather wheel (Children spin it and they ask questions)
5. Vocabulary box	To identify and use some of the vocabulary and linguistic structures previously learnt in class (review task)	<u>Grammar structures</u> - *What can you see?* - *I can see a (_____).* - *Is there a (_____)?* - *Yes, there is /No, there isn't*	- Vocabulary box - Magnifying glass - Realia - Flashcards

B) EDUCATIONAL STAGE: PRIMARY SCHOOL			
Routine	**Learning objectives**	**Curricular contents**	**Materials**
1. Brain gym (kinesiology)	To identify and use the correct structures related to brain gym exercises	<u>Grammar structures</u> - *Are you ready for (_____)?* - *Our right hand touches our (_____), our left hand touches our (_____).* - *Breathe in deeply three times.* - *Stretch your arms.* - *Make circles with your fingers around the ears.* - *Cross your feet, cross your hands and keep the balance.* - Parts of the body.	- Brain gym song (Teachers can use any relaxing song during Brain gym exercises)
2. Waking up our puppet (Only for first and second graders)	To give some directions and instructions about where the puppet's box is	- **Numbers** from 1 to 40 (orally). - **Prepositions:** up, down, left, right, forwards, backwards, inside and outside.	- English puppet - Magic bell - *Uncle Harry* box (it is used as the English puppet home)
3. Taking the register	To identify and use the correct structures related to today's date, yesterday's date and tomorrow's date (First graders only work on today's date. Second graders are exposed gradually to yesterday's date and tomorrow's date in the third term)	<u>Grammar structures</u> -*Today is (_____) of (_____) of (_____).* -*Yesterday was (_____) of (_____) of (_____).* -*Tomorrow will be (_____) of (_____) of (_____).*	- Magic wand (only with first and second graders) - Days of the week rap - Months' song (finger play) - Wordcards: days of the week and months
4. Hello song (Only for first and second graders)	To count down from 20 to 0 (first graders) To count down from 30 to 0 (second graders)	<u>Grammar structures</u> -*Are you ready for English? Yes, we are.* -*H-E-L-L-O Teacher S-A-R-A* (simple word spelling).	- *Hello* song

5. Observing the weather	To identify and use the correct structures related to weather, temperatures and seasons	Grammar structures -*What's the weather like today? Today is _____.* -*What's the temperature today? Today the temperature is _____ degree Celsius.* -*What season are we in? We are in _____.*	- What's the weather like today? Chant - Weather and seasons flashcards - Temperature thermometer
6. Green monster	To identify and use some of the vocabulary and linguistic structures previously learnt in class (The amount of flashcards increases as the students' grade increases too)	Grammar structures -*Hello, green monster. Are you hungry? Yes, I'm very hungry.* -*Then, what do you want to eat first? I want to eat* (parts of the house). -*Green monster are you still hungry? What else do you want to eat?*	- Green monster - Flashcards (Children imagine that the drawn monster is very hungry and that he always wants to eat lots of flashcards, so they name every object that he will eat)
7. Round of questions	To build some questions and answers in a correct way	Grammar structures -*Questions and answers about different vocabulary blocks:* *Can you play the piano? Yes, I can/ No, I can't.*	(Students review vocabulary blocks through previous grammar structures. The student leading the routine chooses the block Students follow a chain of questions: a student asks the peer that is sitting next to him/her until the whole chain is finished)
8. Phonics	To identify and produce some characteristic sounds of English language	-Rhymes and tongue twisters. 1st grade: *There is a bee in the roof, boof boof!* 3rd grade: *Stan the clown sees a man on the moon with a melon and a spoon.* 5th grade: *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper.Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled pepper? If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper,*	- Phonics reader (Oxford University Press) (Teachers can use the phonics reader with first and second graders and tongue twisters with third graders on)

		where's the peck of pickled pepper Peter Piperpicked?	
9. Spelling box (implemented from fourth grade on*).*	To spell words correctly	4th graders work with words that contain up to five letters	**-** Spelling box with some ready-to-spell words
	To pronounce some English sounds in a correct way	5th graders work with words that contain up to ten letters	
		6th graders work with words that contain up to fifteen letters	

4. Language posters: practical development

I would like to mention that I use language posters once every three weeks approximately. As I have previously explained, I include one language poster presentation in every EFL unit that I plan.

From my teaching practice, I find that this kind of communicative tasks, as well as interactive routines, previously described, allow students to integrate and work on the communicative skills that they develop during their learning process. As teachers, we should introduce the task with a clear outcome so that students can put their English skills into practice in a meaningful way. Students can create their posters individually, in pairs or groups. Thus, collaborative and cooperative work is promoted among students as well.

When I follow this methodology, students work with lots of different materials: boxes, cardboards, models, play dough… so that, there is always a pre-exposition task with some arts and crafts contents and competencies involved. This fact helps me to integrate non-linguistic contents in my EFL lessons and to easily work through CLIL methodology.

Nowadays, students are surrounded by ICT resources. From my experience, I recommend to include some tasks that develop the digital competency. Pupils can create a digital version of their linguistic poster through *Glogster, Slideshare, Prezi* or*Storybird* and they can also record their voices with some apps like *Audioboo* or *Vocaroo*.

It is also important to take into account students' English command when providing some feedback, so that they do not lose motivation and confidence or feel frustrated. Actually, this kind of activity can be assessed through self and peer assessment which promotes reflection and the use of the L2 in a meaningful context. Linguistic posters foster interaction and communication between students. It is important that we, as teachers, provide some scaffolding at the beginning of the task so that students have a model to follow and feel more confident when communicating. Through these posters, students can develop the following

competencies:

- ✓ Artistic & cultural competency.
- ✓ Communicative & audiovisual competency (oral, written & audiovisual).
- ✓ Digital competency (ICT).
- ✓ Learning to learn competency.
- ✓ Literacy competency.
- ✓ Social interaction competency.

Next, I will provide a description of the language posters task and a practical example.

A/ A description of the language posters task

All my lesson plans include the language poster task as a final activity. This task integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing skills based on the contents and competencies practised along the unit. As I explained in *Interactive routines practical development*, I expose my students to reading and writing input when they are in second grade, so first graders create their language posters by only drawing the concepts. Children are asked to create a visual support in two sessions, which will help them when communicating and interacting with their classmates.

I choose a variety of materials that students can use in their poster taking into account the Arts and Crafts contents and techniques that I want to assess. When they do collaborative work, they have to come to an agreement about the organization of the process, which is a great opportunity for them to communicate in English. Once the posters are ready, there are two more sessions where students present their posters individually, in pairs or in groups depending on their level. For instance, in fifth and sixth grade, students first introduce themselves and then, start developing their speaking task while the other classmates listen and take some notes that will help them to provide some feedback when peer-assessment is done.

B/ A practical example of a language poster-based task

Next, I will describe a real language poster- based task that I implemented with second graders. Based on a CLIL lesson plan about robots and machines, students were asked to create a model of a robot and a language poster that contained certain materials and a robot's description.

The chart below shows the learning objectives, curricular contents and materials which were used:

Learning objectives	Curricular contents	Materials
Linguistic objectives: To write a short description using the learnt adjectives and grammar structures. To introduce him/herself using the correct grammar structures. To orally produce a description including the grammar structures learnt during the unit. **Artistic objectives:** To create an original model with the provided materials. To prepare a draft to organize the creation of the model.	Adjectives used to describe things and people: *big, happy, long, sad, short, small.* Colors Name of materials: *buttons, cardboards, crayons, felt tips, glue, pencil, rubber, scissors, sharpener, staple.* Grammar structures: - *My name is (_____).* - *I study (_____) and I am (____) years old.* - *It is (_____).* - *Its name is (_____).* - *It has got (_____).*	- Classroom material. - Cardboards. - Buttons.
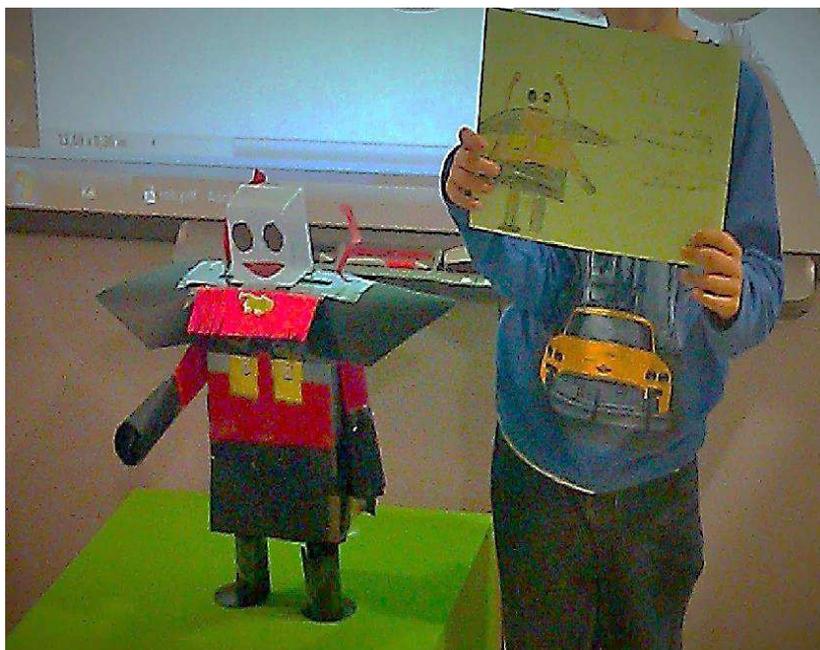
Poster created by a second grade student in the third term

To sum up, I would like to point out that English, as a communicative tool, has to be put into practice in order to learn how to use it. It is quite important to receive some English input before we start producing our English output by ourselves, even if it is just a short period of guidance. It is essential that the input is received from real and meaningful contexts, since our main goal is to be able to communicate in real situations.

As EFL teachers, we have to promote tasks where students can be exposed to that kind of input with a real perspective. In my teaching practice with interactive routines and language posters, I have found that they have both helped my students to communicate effectively and happily, while real objectives have been always kept in mind.

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Cover Letters in ELT College Porfolios: Rounding up Learning Processes, Vocation and Professional Expectations

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To the numerous student teachers, newly-qualified teachers, and senior teacher that have attended my teaching methods classes, and moved forward, while remaining faithful to their own selves, their own talents and passions, and their students´ too.

In the late eighties, I taught in high school and vocational school while working as an ELT critic reader for different publishing houses. In the early nineties, I began presenting my own teaching ideas and workshops in annual professional teachers´ venues, which right after became articles. In the mid-nineties, that all took the shape of over thirty teacher training courses for both young and veteran English language teachers serving in elementary, junior high school, high school, vocational school and literacy adult school.

Those courses allowed me to present my classroom pedagogical works, and a large number of ELT areas of my interest: American Culture, British Culture, Comics, Magazines, Newspapers, Radio, TV and Games; Communicative English; Creative Games; Didactics and Language Immersion; Didactic Interventions; Didactic Orientations; English-Speaking Countries; Ingredients for Fun ELT Classes; Interaction Techniques, Interdisciplinary English, Mass Media Projects; Music and Songs; Objectives in Teaching; Oral Expression; Practical Workshops; Teaching of Foreign languages; Theater through Roleplays, Simulations and Plays; Usage of Instrumental English; Virtual Didactics, Virtual ELT Clinic, and Written Expression.

While doing them, I realized that I wanted to have a thorough close perspective of where my trainees might have come from, before they had started in their profession: I wanted to be fully acquainted with their own initial basis as undergraduate ELT teachers in college. In the early millennium, and for five academic years, I had the chance to combine my English language teaching with my Teacher training career as an associate professor at the Teacher Training School at the University of Barcelona.

I could teach several courses and lead my student teachers in: **Teaching instrumental English; School Internships; ELT methods for general elementary school trainee teachers; and ELT methodology for specialty English language student teachers.**

Through the last subject, I had the honor to take undergraduate students to one of the most exciting academic journeys in their degrees. Students already departed from an excellent college dossier (ELT issues; the classroom; the teaching of the language through pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and culture; the development of the language skills through storytelling and literacy; the planning and assessing learning in course content; and learner autonomy and language learning strategies). They were expected to create and present microteaching sessions and a unit of work, go through a final exam, and last, but not least, produce their own portfolios.

As a college procedure, portfolios were to be scored lower than the rest; aside from figures, from my view, portfolios were going to be their own main daily ELT learning ambrosia, their hardest work because it was to enclose all the lessons which they could get from doing their best in all the course requirements, and, certainly, one of their most heart-felt productions. I believed that If the portfolio was properly and diligently done from the start, the best teacher who was already within them (and was going to be prompted through all the course and areas of work) would simply, to their own surprise, lead the way to the rest of the academic requirements which they all had to fulfill.

There were technicalities expected to be included in their portfolios: a table of contents, entries of core items (Readings, tasks, microteaching practice and observations, the planning of the unit, a glossary, a personal resource file), entries of optional items, dates, drafts, reflections, and, a **cover letter** to present it all.

With all this in mind, the acknowledgement that "*Practice makes the master*", and granted academic freedom, I planned a course which, from my view, fulfilled all the above-mentioned academic requirements, and also contributed to outstanding trainee students´ ELT learning pathways, to judge from their in-session progresses, contributions, final productions, and whose excellent academic scores proved as well.

 I added to the course what follows:

A/ MY OWN GENERAL COMPENDIUM OF READINGS ON ELT TEACHING METHODS
B/ MY OWN PRACTICAL GUIDANCE WORKSHEETS ON DIFFERENT ASPECTS ON ELT TEACHING, WHICH I COULD THOROUGHLY PLAN AND CREATE AFTER MY LONG CAREER AS A TEACHER TRAINER
C/ MY OWN PEDAGOGICS, BOTH AS A TEACHER OF ENGLISH AND A TEACHER TRAINER LEADING TO TRAINEE STUDENTS´ PERSONAL ITINERARIES

I will explain each contribution, and how from that view, I could accompany students from the start of the course to the end, to a most decisive and personal **cover letter,** which I wanted to easily and naturally stem from the best person and teacher within them.

I wanted them to brilliantly get personally involved in all the sessions from day one. And the expected portfolio cover letter was going to be no exception; just the opposite: it was going to be the cherry on the pie. Through it, they were going to draw attention to the thorough presentation of their hard, new and challenging didactic work:

They needed to learn and prove how they were going to go from class notes to reasoning; to comments, suggestions, worksheets, readings, videos, visual aids, prompts, textbook analysis, project work, resources, guests, group and individual itineraries; to microteaching and, finally, their own unit of work; that is, from theory to their own best practice. And write it all down.

At that stage, I knew that their involvement in their personal cover letters was also going to prepare them for the final exam - the last course requirement -, and, most important, for their most professional and personal life-time never-ending ELT portfolio: their about-to-start career as elementary school teachers of English.

In my belief that I could do my best to guide them to the best ELT teacher within themselves, I presented them with what I indicated above (A/, B/ and C), which I will refer to, in detail, next:

A/ GENERAL COMPENDIUM OF READINGS ON ELT TEACHING METHODS

> **AREAS OF STUDY:**
>
> **LEARNING AND TEACHING; A BRIEF HISTORY OF EFL; UNITS OF WORK; ACTIVITIES: Outdoor games and activities, Indoor games and activities, Activity bank, Total physical response activities, Reading and Writing activities, songs and rhymes; MISCELLANEOUS SELECTION WITH SAMPLES: Choosing one´s materials, Task- based activities, Rules for the classroom, Classroom language, Working with English sounds, Classifying words, Lesson planning, Plays, and Student assessment record; and EVALUATION TECHNIQUES AND REFLECTIONS**

B/ 30 PRACTICAL GUIDANCE WORKSHEETS ON DIFFERENT ASPECTS ON ELT

TEACHING

> **Whole group common practices which led to individual and group organization, reflection, action and involvement through personal guidelines and hints, around scholarly excerpts, quotes, realia, videos, visuals, and questions. The 30 worksheets adjusted to the course objectives, development and sessions, and were created to accompany the students in each aspect of their ELT training learning.**
>
> **AREAS OF STUDY:**
>
> **Organization while going through ELT standard college readings, the teacher´s readings and the course, lessons in quotes, the starring of students, the ideal profile of teachers, the impact of adults in children, the impact of teachers in students, autonomy in the foreign language classroom through its diverse spaces, views on textbooks, analysis of textbooks, project work, classroom prompts, visual aids, English language exposure, the mastery of the language, natural classroom management, success in Finland, multiple intelligences, five guests speakers (three senior ELT elementary school teachers, a publishing house teacher trainer, and a publishing house representative), foreign language centers, resource files, glossaries of educational terms, microteaching, unit of work and exam practice, and cover letter.**

C/ MY OWN PEDAGOGICS

> **From the very start, I encouraged students to build on team work, get organized, create their own calendar, let me know how they were doing during personal interviews, and have their microteaching session and unit of work in mind at all times. I also reminded them of the need to learn to apply that all to the second part of the course: their formal practice.**
>
> **While going through the sessions, they were exposed to general textbooks and cross-curricular ones; summer activity books; resource books; cross-curricular packs (Arts and crafts, drama, mass media, TV, social Science, physical Education, literature...), school materials, US school supplies catalogs, teacher´s lists, storybooks from different publishing houses, levels, formats and teaching styles, English-speaking countries, round-the-world holidays, topic-based activities, drama activities, games, magic, music, poetry corners, multi-tasked projects…**
>
> **While going through the sessions, and their study, I invited them to start a common whole class Resource File bank, which would include personal itineraries of their choice. Their research work on them could be either done individually or in groups. As they were being**

completed, they were presented to the rest.

They included: a Hospital Teaching visit; an Adult School visit; a juvenile detention center class, a resource center visit, music, songs and poetry starting in kindergarten; language conferences in the city and the region; teachers´ associations; book stores; libraries; ELT journals; museums which offered school activities in English, festivals, publishing houses; games derived from TV contests; summer ELT options for teachers ; the Institute of North-American Studies; the British council…

They were also introduced to reinforcement work, remedial work, newly-arrived students, students with learning disabilities and disadvantages to access the curriculum, fast learners, special days, class corners, additional resources, additional assessment, end-of-term, and end-of-year activities.

In short, students, needed to be familiar with all the elements which the course offered them, and realize how each related to one another, and formed a whole; apprehend them by experience (not memorize them); enjoy their learning processes and contributions; and look forward to lifetime open and lively ELT teaching portfolios of their own, which should represent the excellent professional students that they could be and the most prepared trainee students that they could become at that stage.

Their cover letter was key to sum up A/, B/, and C/ and throw light on their vocation, course preparation, future teacher training and professional career. Their vocation, dedication, common sense, discipline and planning, knowledge of children, of themselves as teachers, of their team/teams/class as both class partners and trainee teacher students had been constantly called for. They needed to prove that the contents of the course had reached them beyond data, what needed to be put into practice through microteaching, the unit of work, and later, their exam.

After weekly sessions and practices, students needed to display their knowledge, of all sorts, in their most personal and professional student teacher portfolio, and, as important as that, present it all with a **cover letter**, which had to show their lessons, their progress and reflection within reflection, and their mind and heart framework for it all.

Hence, in my line to accompany students on their didactics journey until the end of the academic year, I planned and wrote worksheet #30 to stand for their last stepping stone to their own selves, and the best teachers that they could be. Called "**COVER LETTER –Your vocation, your preparation, your future teacher training, and your professional career**",

students, were very personally asked, and guided to both summarize and enhance the evidence of their learning instances and progression.

They were reminded of where they should be by then: the different technical sections of the portfolio, the need to write about their organization; the classmates who they had worked with; the evidence which they had decided to include, along with what it had provided them with, and taken them to; as well as, how they had planned to continue their training and start their professional careers.

I tried to help them value their effort, progress, achievement, the location of tangible and not so tangible elements in teaching, their expectations, and asked them to formally check that all the formal requirements that they had been asked to fulfill were met in the portfolio, and perfectly reflected through their **cover letter**.

Last but not least, I put a special request in it, which added, from my understanding, their most personal, didactic and special touch of grace to their superb work:

THEY WERE GOING TO WRITE THE COVER LETTER TO THE MOST IMPORTANT ADDRESSEE IN THEIR TEACHING CAREER: THEIR PUPILS-TO –BE,

as the early practical ELT guidance sheets at the start of the course had already emphasized (E.g.: " The starring of students", " The ideal profile of teachers", " The impact of adults in children", and "The impact of teachers in students)

As their trainer, I informed them that I would just be looking forward to confirming, through my reading, what that term had already let me see in them: their patience observing me, as a senior teacher and teacher trainer, preparing and leading a course to fit their needs, their progression through it, their potential as a teacher of English in Elementary school, that is, to certifying their progress, through formal academic records.

You will find below:

1.   SOME SAMPLES OF COVER LETTERS WHICH WERE HANDED IN

2.   WORKSHEET # 30

1. SOME SAMPLES OF COVER LETTERS

M. A. Sánchez	C. Greer-Correa
D. Saltó	L. Corcobado
I.Cáceres	D. Piera
A. Perejuan	C.Cebrian
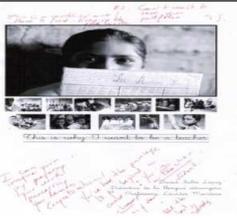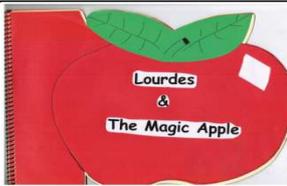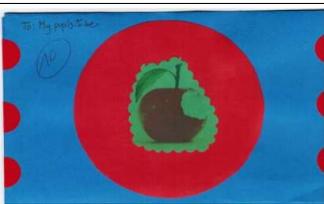
Needless to say that the rest of the cover letters, which cannot be shown here, are also gratefully acknowledged. They all very well represented their authors and great teachers-to be: They all valued what they had learned and how; their gained ability to apply theoretical contents to practice; their readiness to look further by themselves, and adjust; and their option to technically and personally stand for who they had already become in learning and teaching.

They also pointed to the relevance of vocation, gratitude, freedom, humbleness, team work, spirit of service, passion, hard work, results; class observation and practice; enjoyment; the need to see senior teachers in action, to be updated; to aim at the best in all they did, professional life included; and the step forward which they had all made to face themselves,

whenever necessary, to advance, and, of course, to keep focused on the children that they were going to be responsible for: Their students.

2. WORKSHEET # 30

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T A S K

<u>COVER LETTER</u>   **Prof. Lourdes Montoro**

<u>Your vocation, your preparation, your future teacher training, and your professional career</u>

"It should be noted that children at play are not playing about; their games should be seen as their most serious-minded activity"   (Michel   de   Montaigne)

We are near the end of the course, and you are becoming closer to your cover letter. Your portfolio will show your progress as a learner. Your cover letter is about you, and is going to summarize the evidence of your learning and progress. You are about to write your letter, because by now:
-   you have been exposed to the different sections of the course,
-   you have been given the chance to have a close-up look at them,
-   you must have a general perspective of it all too.

But, first things first. Before you start writing your cover letter, please check that your portfolio meets all the necessary requirements, and therefore, that it has:

- Table of Contents
- Entries
  - Readings (references to Teacher´s worksheets, additional readings, Teacher´s dossier, as well as official college standard dossier: summaries, charts, conceptual maps...)
  - Tasks (common worksheets, and individual itinerary tasks)
  - Microteaching: teaching practice - yours and your partners´ = observation sheets (an additional copy of your own microteaching will have already been handed in in presentation)
  - Unit of work (an additional copy will have already been handed in, along with task worksheet, in presentation)
  - Glossary
  - Resource file (sections sent by partners must have their names on them)
  - Bibliography

- Dates, first drafts and corrected/revised versions, if necessary

- Reflections.

Note:
As you know, in a portfolio, reflections can appear at different stages in the learning process. If you have worked correctly, all tasks must have made you already reflect a

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lot, in other words, your work should be done.

But this is an academic written presentation; so, to be practical, at this stage of the course, I suggest you to write very brief introductions at the start of each section (6), mentioned above. You could refer to:
- how you have organized it,
- who you have worked with,
- what you include,
- what it has provided you with,
- where it has taken you to,
- how you plan to continue.

At the end, when you have completed all the introductions, you can paraphrase their contents and adapt them to meet the requirements of your unique cover letter.

If you have taken care of the previous requirements, you are ready to proceed with your cover letter. The cover letter is a means to show:
a. your vocation,
b. your preparation,
c. your plans for further teacher training,
d. your expectations in your teaching career,

that is, your progress through your genuine fondness of education, and the opportunities which *Didàctica de la LlenguaEstrangera: Anglès*, has given you.

The main axis in this cover letter is that you are writing to your pupils-to-be. So everything that you will want to write about will have to rotate around them throughout the letter.

Remember that I, as your trainer, will be looking forward to confirming, through my reading, what this term has already let me see in you:
- your patience observing a veteran teacher prepare a course to fit your needs
- your progression through it,
- your potential as a teacher of English in Elementary school.

I know that some of you have other interests beyond primary education. Excel.lent!. As you know, there is always more than meets the eye, meaning that there is much more in all of us than can be seen directly; so, if you find that relevant, since I will be following you, be as explicit as you need to be, to let your children, your students in general, the people who you will need to work with, and indirectly, me, know.

You might like to begin explaining:
- how you found out that you wanted to be a teacher,
- if you are already teaching,
- if, while is session, the course has allowed you to make improvements at work,
- if you have a clearer picture of what the profile of a teacher is,
- if you think that you have it and how you reached that conclusion,
- if you have found a metaphor which could depict what teaching is about.

Are you ready to write it by now? As you must have discovered by now, a course in Teaching Methods has both tangible and non-tangible elements. When dealing with tangible elements, in our case, we think about the growth through the portfolio, as well the practice in microteaching, the unit of work and/or exam.

Since the portfolio includes all the sections which you have to refer to, I will remind you of what you had read at the start of the course, when dealing with what a portfolio is:

"*A purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection.*"(Paulson F.L., Paulson,P. R., Meyer, C.A, 1991).

So, when you think about your cover letter, remember that it is time for you to refer to the following elements in your writing:
- your efforts,
- your progress,
- your achievements.

Obviously you have made your effort to get through the course, progress and reach goals. To get through it all, you must have thought over the different areas which the course has covered. It is also time to refer to them in some detail. Go from general to specific. **Show your preparation**: refer here to the 6 sections which your portfolio includes. Do not forget to use the introductory presentations which I suggested above.

Non-tangible elements are often the flame which sustain and throw light on the tangible ones. So, explain your gains as a member of the class: your group work, your pair work, your individual work, your work with me, your work outside the class in an environment of your choice, your feelings, you... You have made new connections within and outside yourself. If you had worked individually, you would have not got so far. Think about that.

And the best part is yet to come You should be prepared to continue on your own, and insist on going from theory to practice, whenever you can.

So finish your letter, telling your children **how you plan to build your education as a teacher**. As you know, in the third year at university, there is no formal Teaching Methods class. See this circumstance from another angle: informal Teaching Practice, and create your own.

Make a plan which allows you to:
  - attend *Jornades*
  - attend *Teaching Days* from Publishing houses
  - subscribe to journals
  - practise class ideas if you are teaching
  - practise your own ideas of you are teaching
  - start teaching if you have not yet and have the time for that
  - observe partners teaching whenever possible
  - ask to be observed whenever possible

- visit schools where you have connections (you old school, *Practicum* I, any...)
- meet with your class team/teams to continue learning
- read books from the course bibliography
- prepare for public exams
- keep in touch with your group: you know that some of you are experts on some areas
- help each other
- see me at the office if you need ideas, advice...

Please also make a reference to **your expectations** as a teacher-to-be. What would you like to do when you have your teaching degree? Where would you like to teach/work? How do you picture yourself in your first year teaching? What do you think that having a degree will bring you? How do you picture yourself, the teacher, in the many years to come?...

Last but not least, portfolios are open, and a Teaching Methods class is too. There is no course I have taught that I have ever closed. No. No doors to education, not when being such a powerful and peaceful language to communicate with everybody everywhere. So, I would like to ask you if you would like to continue being part of the virtual list which has proved so useful to us. No obligations for anybody in it. Just a chance to share teaching ideas, if given the circumstance, as time goes by. You can tell me on the exam day.

If you have done and finished your cover letter well, when you check it, you will confirm thatit shows that:
- you have stayed focused,
- you have collected all your thoughts in an appropriate order,
- you have taken advantages of the opportunities which the course has provided you with,
- You have contributed to the language of education,
- You are offering your pupils-to-be the best preparation which you can think of now,
- You have done a thorough work to be able to do your best at school later,
- You are ready for improvements at any time,
- You are a professional student-teacher,
- You are ready for Continuous Education.

Do not forget to:
- hand in a copy of the cover letter the week before the portfolio defense
- include a copy of the cover letter at the beginning of your portfolio, so that the document is complete.

I hope the course has been useful and inspirational. It has been a pleasure to teach you. I look forward to reading your cover letter, and checkingall your portfolio work. Hope you are making it clear, attractive, and, best of all, ready for you, to consult and extend at any time.

All the best,
Lourdes Montoro

One of the quotes that my students and I had referred to at the start of the year had been "*A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child*" (Forest E. Witcraft). Definitely, student teachers in my ELT Methods class had learnt to make a difference with regards to their own selves, while putting their students first, and still highly value, respect and defense their serious and professionally-oriented didactic work.

I had no doubt that they would bloom in their teaching careers, as I have already started witnessing. The thorough close perspective which I expected to have of undergraduate ELT teachers in college, as I had mentioned at the start, became an accomplished mission in my career.

Portfolio references below are included for further general information.

References

Creating a teaching portfolio (professional career)
http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/About/ProgramsforGraduateStudentsandPostdocs/resources/Pages/Creating-a-Teaching-Portfolio.aspx

Fiktorius , T. (2013) Portfolio assessment in English language teaching. Pontianak: University of Tanjungpura.
http://www.academia.edu/2324141/Portfolio_Assessment_in_English_Language_Teaching_ELT_

Paulson F.L., Paulson, P. R., Meyer, C. A. (2003: 1991). "What makes a portfolio a portfolio?".*Educational Leadership* 5: 60-63*).* Ipswich*:* EBSCO Publishing.
http://web.stanford.edu/dept/SUSE/projects/ireport/articles/e-portfolio/what%20makes%20a%20portfolio%20a%20portfolio.pdf

Portfolios in ELT
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/portfolios-elt

Teaching portfolios and course portfolios
http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpcp

ELT School Field Trips: Hands on Academics in Context

Lourdes Montoro

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School Field trips are part of a teaching method which I very much enjoyed as a student, and later, as a teacher. Field trips are very common and necessary with regards to sciences. Yet, humanities can also very much benefit from. In this global and digital era, where virtual trips are available at a click, I would like to enhance the role of those students and teachers who still go on classic school field trips, and encourage others to get started.

No matter where we live, there are always chances to prepare field trips, and have our students get the most out of them. Firstly we just need to know the area where we teach, and the institutions there. Secondly, we must focus on what our objectives are and choose the ones that can best fit our needs. We must have in mind that although most work in the field trip is centered on some objectives around data, that is, contents, we, as teachers and organizers must also think about what assessment to proceed with, what methodology to use, what bibliography to work with – if necessary -, and how we can locate staff members at the institution who can help us get started. The latter is easily available in their official webpages.

Field trips provide interactivity with the subject which is being studied, with other students, who they are expected to work with, with their own selves in new circumstances, which they need to adapt to, and, last but not least, with other educational professionals, the ones mentioned above, whose specific job they can be witness to and learn about. Field trips set us, teachers and students, on journeys to destinations which are connected with subjects in the curricula, yet away from our usual environment and routine. They give us both the chance for hands on academics in context. Students are asked to observe data related to their learning area in places which can provide practical lessons, samples to gather, research practice, and autonomy.

From my view, the success of field trips has to do with the planning stage, and a thorough practical preparation in advance on premises, with the professionals there. They are willing and prepared to offer their assistance and expertise in the institutions which we may choose to work with. On the other hand, the more, we are involved with the place and the activities which we are designing be carried out there, the more our students will be too.

At that stage, we will need to narrow our goals, adapt our activities to the materials and service which the institutions provide, and devise the follow-up work which we will need to do at the end. Activities can vary. Having the students learn about the institution in advance is necessary. Several activities can be offered: scavenger hunts on the contents of their webpage, orientation videos, or family and/or friends activities, for example,   will easily set the right atmosphere for day trips. Once there, we can have other actitvities arranged earlier: educational films, guided tours, interviews, lectures, questionnaires, treasure hunt games…

 In my experience, having student worksheets prepared for that visit and handed in to the students upon arrival, is the key to lead the way at that stage. I find them to immediately help students know what is exactly expected from them, and to get them easily started. We might like to also consider working interdisciplinarily too, with specialized teachers on other areas, and departments.

For several years I could take my students on different field trips to some institutions. The trips were part of specialized courses around the English Language: Advanced English, American culture, Foreign Language Acquisition, Teaching Methods, and ELT Theater. Sometimes the field trip tasks also combined two different subjects: English and art, English and history...

On the other hand, I also arranged for some undergraduate students in the Teaching methods class at the University of Barcelona) to go to several educational institutions of their interest: hospital classrooms, juvenile prison classrooms, literacy adult schools and publishing houses. My job consisted of formally contacting the educational staff in charge: writing to them, explaining the reason for the requested visit, waiting for their approval, and then, having the students introduce themselves to the staff in charge, and have them directly arrange for their visit.

Five benefits derived from that: students were exposed to professional educational life while responsible for their interaction with the managers in charge, and the information which they wanted to request; they learnt about educational areas which they were really interested in and were considering for their further careers; they shared what they had learnt with the rest of the classmates, they formally included their learning experience in their class final portfolios; and last but not least, they became my contact assistants for other students of mine who in the next years to come, were also going to be interested in doing what they did.

To have a general perspective of some of the ELT Field trips which I have led, you will find below a list of some, along with a general reference to the activities around which they revolved, and the websites corresponding to the institutions which are mentioned:

- **Barcelona Historic Archives:** Quiz on city history and work on files
http://w110.bcn.cat/portal/site/ArxiuHistoric

- **Biblioteca y TIC – CRAI**. **UniversitatPompeuFabra. Facultat de Traducció i Interpretació**: Translation
http://www.upf.edu/bibtic/es/

- **British Council Library**: British culture
http://www.britishcouncil.es/ca/angles/per-que-estudiar/biblioteques/barcelona-amigo

  Caixa Forum Barcelona: ELT teaching methods and arts
http://obrasocial.lacaixa.es/nuestroscentros/caixaforumbarcelona/elcentro_ca.html

  Catalunya Ràdio: Live interview to students on a theater project
http://www.ccma.cat/catradio/

- **Dubbing Studio***La Voz de España*: Translation, dubbing session live and note-taking (no longer existing)

- ***Max. H. Klein* Library. Institute of North-American Studies**: American Culture
http://www.ien.es/ca/serveis/

- **Parc del Laberint**: History and English
- http://www.barcelona.cat/resources/hu/parcs-i-jardins/ParcsIFRAME/w110.bcn.cat/portal/site/MediAmbient/menuitem.0d4d06202ea41e13e9c5e9c5a2ef8a0c/indexbd24.html

  Termcat. Centre de Terminologia: L1, other languages, resources, service and Foreign Language Acquisition
http://www.termcat.cat/

As an example of the work that was done, I have chosen **two field trips** which correspond to **two different courses** of mine:

1/Introduction to American Culture. Upper Intermediate and Advanced level*.* **3-day field trip to *Max. H. Klein Library*. Institute of North-American Studies.**

2/Introduction to Translation. Advanced level**. One-day field trip toBiblioteca y TIC – CRAI. Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Facultat de Traducció i Interpretació.**

They are both 35-hour advanced courses which include some research work (independent study), which, in both cases, is related to the field trip activities. The field trip on American culture can be easily adapted to the intermediate level, and the activities enclosed can be easily adapted to other lower levels.   The one on Translation models language specialization, and presents the sequencing and procedures.   To understand the specialized courses which these field trips were part of, and the role which their field trips had, I will include below both their syllabi (objectives and components) and the field trip worksheets which I devised for them:

1/ *Introduction to American Culture*

S Y L L A B U S

Introduction to American Culture
Upper-Intermediate and Advanced level
Prof. Lourdes Montoro
(35h, including 5 hour-research work + 4-hour American English oral practice with American teaching assistants)

Objectives: The overall objective of this course is to introduce the participants to American culture, and to the usage of resources related to it, the specific aims being:

a.   To maintain and extend the participants' oral skills in English
b.   To acquire a general knowledge of American culture and American English
c.   To learn by doing, by being exposed to American realia, and by getting acquainted with American guests and American institutions
d.   To improve listening and reading comprehension of texts related to American culture
e.   To develop oral and writing skills related to aspects of American culture
f.   To provide participants with strategies for further study. E.g: To compile materials for personal use, or the creation of "*crèdits variables d'ampliació del curriculum diversificat d'E.S.O., batxillerat, i de les especialitats de turisme i hostaleria dels cicles formatius de grau mitjà i superior*"

Components:

. American assistant teachers from B.C.A. (Brethren Colleges Abroad).
. Introduction to the origin of some American holidays, and celebration of: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and an American Graduation

. Curiosities about stereotypes (Coca-cola, Uncle Sam, chewing gum, the pony express, the Joshua tree...)
. Americans and their way of living
. American food: description, samplings, and a pot-luck cooking contest
. American English: Grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation
. General U.S. facts
. The history, the government, the economic and social structure, the legal system, the people, education, religion, sports, entertainment...
. Famous Americans and cities
. Travelling, studying and working possibilities in the U.S.

S T U D E N T S´ W O R K S H E E T

FIELD TRIP TO THE <u>MAX H. KLEIN LIBRARY.</u> <u>INSTITUTE OF NORTH-AMERICAN STUDIES .</u>
(Part of syllabus in "Introduction to American Culture". Prof. Lourdes Montoro)

<u>DAY 1</u>: History
- Guided tour of library
- History questionnaire
- Acquaintance with IEN bulletin
- Gifts: Gral. envelope & Book on American History
- Composition: "Find out what happened in the U.S. the year you were born, and write a report about it".

<u>DAY 2</u>: Performing arts
- Individual research on favorite performing arts - history; music, theater, dance…, and favorite performer.
- Video on the subject, and comments about it.
- Gifts: Booklets on American Theater, and American dance.
- Composition: "Write a biography of your American favorite performing artist (musician, singer, actor…)" or "Your favorite performing art, and the history beyond."

<u>DAY 3</u>: Tourism
- Research work on favorite holiday spots in the US
- Writing workshop: real letters to American Tourist Agencies to ask for updated brochures. Volunteer work.
- Gifts: A variety of tourist pamphlets from the US.
- Composition: "Plan out an imaginary trip to the United States. Include: length of trip, visits, stays, travelling within the country…"

S Y L L A B U S

Introduction to Translation
Advanced level
Prof. Lourdes Montoro
(35h, including 7-hour research work)

Objectives:

The overall objective of this course is to introduce the participants to translation, and to the usage of resources related to it, the specific aims being:

a. To offer advanced students the chance to continue their English studies after obtaining "Certificatd'Aptitud" or equivalent diplomas
b. To acquire a general and practical knowledge of translation
c. To learn by doing, by being exposed to different kinds of authentic texts both in L1 and L2
d. To get familiar with frequent linguistic deviations when translating
e. To improve listening and reading comprehension of texts related to subject which is being translated both in L1 and L2
g. To develop oral and written skill related to different areas in L1 and L2 to carry out a terminological research
h. To compile materials for personal use or the creation of cross curricular units in "E.S.O., batxillerat, ielsciclesformatius de grau mitjà i superior"
i. To provide participants with strategies for further study

Components:

. Introduction to the history of translation
. Introduction to a critical assessment method: Additions, omissions, substitutions, errors, adaptations, and adoptions
. Analysis of the three Spanish translations (novel, condensed version and film script) of an American classic: *To Kill a Mockingbird*: author's biography, reviews, background, plot, introduction, analysis, conclusions, statistical study, and alternatives
. Study of sayings, idioms, false friends, registers...
. Study of terminology in cross-curricular lessons on social studies, natural science, electronics, mathematics...
. Research work with TERMCAT (Centre de Terminologia)
. Translation exercises: advertisements, songs, menus, contracts, laws, catalogues, correspondence, psychology, literature, children's literature, geography, history, gemmology... (English into Catalan and/or Spanish)

S T U D E N T S´ W O R K S H E E T

RESEARCH WORK AT UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA:
Biblioteca y TIC – CRAI.
(Part of syllabus in course: <u>Introduction to Translation</u>.
Prof. Lourdes Montoro)

INTRODUCTION
Tour of the premises: librarian

DEVELOPMENT
Questionnaire: answered out by students (previously created and adapted by the teacher)

RESULTS
Presentation and discussion in following class: students + teacher
……………………………………………………………………………

Listen to the explanations which the librarian will provide about the premises. Afterwards, you will need to:

A. know your way around

B. work in groups

C. carry out all the activities included in the following worksheet:

R e s e a r c h   w o r k s h e e t

1. Find out what kind of audiovisual materials are available in the library, and the topics which they cover.

2. Use the CD called *Index Translationum*. Look up how many translations have been made of HARPER LEE´S *To Kill a Mockingbird*: number, countries, titles. Write down the tittles. For next class, you will need to have them analysed and compared: similarities, differences... (home assignment).

3. About comparative literature, can you find different versions for the same novel or play?. Write the down the title of one literary piece of work, and the name of the different publishing houses involved in the different versions .

4. About comparative literature, can you find on the shelves different translations of the same original English book?

   (Reference codes: PR- historia literatura anglesa; PQC – literatura catalana, and PQ – literatura)

5. Write down one example: original version and different translations. Include the translators´ names and the publishing houses involved.

6. Look at "Llibres d´Estil": ABC, El País, EFE, TV3 (Reference: PN4783). Find out what their usage is, and which areas they cover. Refer to a section that you find interesting in the next class.

7. Look for the section on recommended bibliography. Look for:
   MONA BAKER: *In other Words*
   SUSAN BASSNETT: *Translation Studies*
   PETER NEWMARK: *About Translation*
   CHRISTINE NORD: *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*
   GEORGE STAINER: *After Babel*

   Read one of the following articles:
   MONA BAKER´s "Idioms and Fixed Expressions " (p.p. 63-65) and
   CHRISTINE NORD´s "Translating as Intercultural Action" (p.p.23-25)

   or

   PETER NEWMARK´s "Translation as an Instrument of Linguistic, Cultural, and Literary Criticism" (p.162-168) .

8. Look for the 2 Grammar sections at the library. Find out what the main difference is.

   Clue: a. Find the book *A University English Course* by ANGELA DOWNING AND PHILIP LOCKE. Does it ring a bell? What about the other books on the shelf? Why not? Find the other section. Check the many books available there. You should be familiar with some of those.

   Can you tell now the difference between the 2 sections? If not, you may ask the librarian for help.

9. Look for the university course dossiers. Find: *Pràctica de la traducción. Anglès-Català*. 1r by DIDAC PUJOL.

   Find the section called: Diccionari 3-8 and Anglicismes. Solve the first example in "False Friends", and the first 3 examples in "Calcslèxics".

10. Write down 10 of the topics covered in the area of specialized dictionaries.

10. Look for dictionaries in your specialty. Choose some that you like best, and write down your reasons to do so. You will need to bring them to class on the next day.

12. Find out what acronyms are, and the section where Acronyms dictionaries are located too. Look up for the following acronyms:

FBI
NASA
UNICEF
UWL
YMCA

13. Check the shelves on Dictionaries which compile quotations. Write down 3 that you
   like best.

14. Use the the idioms dictionaries to translate the following:
    A land of milk and honey
    Play havoc
    To take the plunge
    "La flor y nata"
    "Bajo fianza"
    "Sano y salvo"

15. Check the metaphors´ dictionaries. Choose 2 metaphors that you like best, and
    translate them into Spanish or Catalan.

16. Find the area which has dictionaries on American slang. Look up the following
    words, and write down possible Spanish or Catalan translations:
    Barbie doll
    bummer
    cool
    dough
    whatchamacallit

17. Look for dictionaries on synonyms. Choose 2 words that you like, and compare
    what 2 dictionaries say about them. Write the information down.

18. Look for Dictionaries on doubts. Write down 2 specific examples from them: one
    from a Catalan dictionary, and another one from a Spanish one; make sure that
    you understand how the dictionaries you chose solve language problems in the 2
    languages. You will need to explain this to your classmates in the following class.

19. Go to the area where translation magazines are, and locate the following ones:
    *Babel, Livius, Machine Translation, Sendebar, Target, Meta, Translation Review
    and the Translator*. Look at some of them, and check what their specific articles are
    about.

20. Look for volume 7 of *Livius* magazine. Check where the magazine is made, who
    the director is, and find an article which is specially connected to our course. Write
    down the title and the author. Do not photocopy it. Your teacher will provide copies
    of it at the end of the research.

In the different ELT courses that we teach we take into account the basic skills which students need to master; we help them with their formal development and their practical acquisition, integrating English in their learning process and our teaching of English as a foreign language. From my view, English-oriented field trips lead to a students´practice of their foreign language in context, while they experience their own performance through varied activities outside their usual classrooms. That does not only build on motivation, and the creative potential of both the teacher and the students, but also takes the foreign language to our classes, linking formal class teaching with real life which also happens in English in our cities and villages.

References

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Dr. Alice Christie's "Virtual Field Trips" Resource Guide http://alicechristie.org/search/trips.html

Field trips research paper starter http://www.enotes.com/research-starters/field-trips

Foley, K. (2010). *The Big Pocket Guide to Using & Creating Virtual Field Trips*. Seattle: Tramline.

Kawka, B.. Burgess, B. (2001). *V-Trip travel guide: Classroom strategies for virtual field trips*. Eugene: ISTE Publications.

Learnz takes you there http://www.learnz.org.nz/about

New England Aquarium. Activities for a field trip http://www.neaq.org/education_and_activities/teacher_resources/field_trips/activities_for_a_field_trip/

New York field trips http://www.mcny.org/content/field-trips

Teaching Outside the Classroom http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-outside-the-classroom/

"A Teacher's Portfolio: A Lifetime Never-ending Career"

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When I had my first opportunity to deal with children I was 21. I was still in college. I instantly knew that I had a special affinity with children. For that reason, I always encourage student teachers to teach part-time while doing their degree. I had never been in contact with kids before, so it made the situation more exciting. Later, gradually up as an ELT primary school teacher, I could apply what I had been presented within college.

Being a teacher can have two faces; one day you love your job, and another day you wonder why you are there dealing with those little monsters! You do not realize the importance of the degree until you apply it. Having the possibility to study a subject to teach children practical English language skills is a chance that you cannot miss. And I had a teacher who made it possible. She taught me lots of techniques and, above all, she let me see the teacher that I had inside. Lourdes Montoro's expertise and the way how she inspires students caught my attention and prepared me academically for my profession later. As a result, I did an inspiring and practical portfolio and, what is more, a cover letter, which I have applied in my teaching career and which is the starting point in this article:

DESTINATION:

ELT

Professional

career

Through this article, based on my experience in my first years teaching, I would like to provide some practical tips to help teachers in their first years in ELT. To do that, firstly I will refer to them as a whole. Secondly, I will describe six activities from my personal *Methods Bank*. They will include objectives, contents, corner/activity, organization, methodology and level. Thus, this article is divided into two sections:

A. General Presentation
B. Specific class activities

A. GENERAL PRESENTATION

I have worked as a teacher for nine years, and I have intensely experienced them. I have bonded with my students, their families, and my teaching colleagues. As a student, I used to be always excited and wondered who my teacher would be or what we would learn. The first time that I taught, similar questions came to my mind, but then I was the one responsible for the answers for us both: them and me. What will I be like as a teacher? What will they learn? I only taught for a month, but I had the chance of teaching all the school levels, from pre-school education to sixth grade.

This was the start of a new stage of my life. I felt nervous, but that vanished the moment I entered the classroom. Nevertheless, I think that the students were more nervous than I was, because I was going to be their new teacher. I remember teaching better in my first year than

in my first class. I made some mistakes but I also learnt from them. Now I know what I must not do.

I consider myself a person eager to learn new things to help my students out.´ Every time I have started teaching in a new school, I have tried to learn their way of doing things and their methodologies. Beginnings are always difficult, especially if you are new in the profession. But, I have to admit that being in a different school each year has increased my skills as a teacher. It is true that starting teaching in the same school to get familiar with the work environment and to focus on the same students should have been easier. But, on the other hand, moving from one school to another, learning new and interesting ways of carrying ideas out and meeting lots of professional English Language teachers has been an outstanding experience in my first years.

One of the most important things that I have realized is that having the ability to act as a child can help us learn how, for instance, a child with disabilities can act, or what to do if a pupil disrupts in class. These are situations that allow trainee students to make improvements in their future.

We should not be afraid to move forward and act and think as a child whenever necessary. This is a way to arouse curiosity in students to learn new things. I wanted to teach kids to create, rather than lead them to imitate others. Then, through this, I applied what I had mentioned on page 6 of my cover letter: "*Learning is like creating a building; you construct a high-quality basis and it is growing little by little and step by step*".

A Portfolio is a hard and laborious process that demonstrates one's learning ability, critical views, teaching methods and effort, and it also helps students improve while collecting new and exciting contents. In my *English Language Didactics* class, I started experimenting skills, which I have been able to master in my professional practice. Also, I have had the possibility to put into practice the units created for the class mentioned above (for the ELT portfolio) and for *Practicum 2*.

On pages 8 and 9 in my cover letter, I mentioned chants, corners, games,realia, songs, storytelling practice and TPR activities, which I have also been able to implement in my teaching. I wanted to help students develop their basic language skills and most common learning strategies. From both my ELT learning experience and English Language teaching professional practice, I continued building up my college portfolio, which became a professional one.

I included a multi-level *Methods Bank* with a large number of proposals, activities and guidelines. My *Methods Bank* is based on areas which I had already emphasized in my portfolio and cover letter:

- The importance of team work
- Helping others
- Being ready to learn and make changes
- Taking advantage of opportunities to gain experience
- The profile of a teacher
- Moving forward
- The relevance of being in a comfort zone when teaching
- The role of effort and results
- Storytelling: From theory to immediate practice
- Enjoyment in doing
- Expectations in doing
- The importance of learning about oneself
- Being always there for children
- Having a spirit of service

B. SPECIFIC CLASS ACTIVITIES

I would like to present now the six activities that I have referred to at the start:

1) *Magic bag*
2) *Headbanz*
3) *Ball game*
4) *Scattergories*
5) *Storytelling and performance of "Stone Soup"*
6) *The English box*

Before introducing them through their corresponding grids, I must say that they are all very meaningful to me. All of them have been learnt and put into practice in my classes. This is why I would like to first explain where they have all come from:

1) *Magic bag*. This is the first activity which I carried out with my classmates in the English Didactics class. With the help of Adrianna Sanmartí and Alba Perejuan, we created a unit of work about fruits. We prepared lots of interesting material: a big bed sheet with an apple drawn where students had to pass through to enter the classroom, an invented song about

fruits, a superb fruit salad and, what is more, a Magic Bag. The bag was big, and made of red velvet. It was used in *Practicum 2* as well, and has changed hands of lots of fascinated children. Nowadays, wherever I go, it is still working.

2) *Headbanz*. This game has another special story behind. Two years ago I went to New York on my honeymoon. One of the places which I wanted to visit was the well-known toy factory, called FAO Schwarz. It was amazing to see the amount of games and toys created for children. Then, it was inevitable to find a game suitable for my English students. One of them caught my attention, because it was aimed at practicing speaking. I did not hesitate to take it home and later to class. To adjust the game to my students, I decided to create a worksheet with questions related to the cards. That certainly made the game easier.

3) *Ball game*. This is a very simple game, which is especially valuable because of the person who explained it to me. In one of the schools where I worked, I met a very talented and experienced teacher: Conxita Sal·lari. It was her last year in teaching, because she was about to retire. She taught cricket to her students, performed fantastic theatre plays and cooked special English dishes in the English classroom. I have to admit that I learnt a lot with her help. Finding teachers like her, ELT models, is very important to improve in our professional career.

4) *Scattergories*. I remember playing this game with my dad when I was ten years old. I had lots of fun with him, and it reminds me of Sunday evenings at home. For that reason, and knowing how special it was for me, I wanted to do something similar and apply it to my pupils' lessons. With that in mind, I adapted the renowned game to their corresponding level. This game is very useful to encourage fastthinking and vocabulary reviews.

5) *Storytelling and performanceof "Stone Soup"*. In another school, I met a music teacher who did a performance about this story. When I started teaching there, she suggested me to carry the same play out but in English. At first, I thought I would not be capable of doing something like that but, step by step, it all turned into a very inspiring process which was going to end well. It was hard because I had to bear many things in mind (pronunciation, intonation, voicevolume, costumes, decorations, etc.), but the results were absolutely gratifying.

6) *The English box*. This initiative was accomplished thanks to my third grade students in the same school where I started using the *Ball Game*. I was fascinated observing how curious they were about learning things that surrounded them. For that reason, with one of my half groups, I asked them to write something which they wanted to talk about. I handed them little pieces of paper. This immediately caught their attention and they wrote about topics such as animals, celebrities, clothes, food, sports... With some help and some structures written on the board, they were capable to express their thoughts.

All six activities are adaptable to different topics and levels. Some of them are useful to review previous vocabulary and introduce a new topic (*Magic Bag*); others are suitable to play with half groups (*Ball game, The English Box*); some are interesting to promote speaking (*Hedbanz*) and also, at some moment, we can also have students work in corners and monitor how they practice. But, above all, when carrying them out, it is essential to maintain a good and nice class atmosphere, and encourage pupils with positive messages at all times. Both elements always cheer them up and help them to advance faster.

The objectives and contents are common in the six activities. Therefore, they will be presented below as part of a whole.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote active participation in oral exchange: formulation of questions and answers, information exchange
- To use the necessary vocabulary and structures for games
- To use suitable structures for the English Language
- To understand games instructions
- To respect one's and others' effort, work and intervention
- To recognize and use basic lexical structures previously learnt
- To evaluate language as an instrument of communication and learn how to approach other cultures
- To encourage positive attitude and interest among the diverse languages and cultures

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CONTENTS

a) Vocabulary related to:
- Animals
- Clothes
- Colors
- Family
- Fruit
- Numbers
- Parts of the body
- Sports
- Adaptable to other topics

b) Structures related to:
- Asking / answering questions
- Vocabulary structures to play games and explain stories

ACTIVITY 1: *Magic Bag*	PROCEDURE:
LEVEL: Pre-schoolers to 2nd grade	- The teacher shows a Magic Bag full of unknown objects which will have to be recognized by students. - Teachers must have in mind that the objects must be related to previous vocabulary so that it can be recycled. New vocabulary must be also introduced. - The teacher asks for a volunteer and the game starts. This volunteer has to take one of the objects and guess what it is.
MATERIAL: - Magic Bag - Realia inside 	
GROUPING: Whole group	

ACTIVITY 2: *Hedbanz*	PROCEDURE:
LEVEL: 3rd to 6th grade	
MATERIAL: - Cards with different pictures and its name below - Strips of plastic tied around the head - Sand clock - Reward cards - A sheet including suggested questions, such as: • *Am I an object?* • *Am I a food?* • *Am I a fruit or vegetable?* • *Am I color...?* • *Am I an animal?* • *Am I a pet?* • *Am I big/small?* • *Can I fly?* • *Can I swim?* • *Do I have (part of the body)?*	- All children put a headband around their head. Each headbandhas a plastic card that they cannot see. - Through ruled questions in English, each child in each group has to figure out what animal, object or thing the card has: "*Am I yellow? ","Can I fly?*"... - The rest of the classmates can only answer *'yes / no'*. If they guess the word before the time runs out, the child wins a reward card. - At the end of the game, the pupil with more reward cards wins.
GROUPING: Pupils are distributed in groups of four. While one child asks the question, the other members in the group help her/him with answers.	

ACTIVITY 3: *Ball game*	PROCEDURE:
LEVEL: 1st to 6th grade **MATERIAL**: - Small ball - Basket **GROUPING**: Half group (12 or 13 students)	- This game is used to revise the vocabulary learnt during the course. - A question related to a topic must be asked. If the question is correct, the child can throw the ball. And, if the ball is put into the basket, the pupil earns a point. - If the child does not know the answer, the next one can answer it, and so on. - The child with the most points gets a reward: a stamp with a smiley.

ACTIVITY 4: *Scattergories*	PROCEDURE:
LEVEL: 3rd to 6th grade **MATERIAL**: Worksheet to write the words **GROUPING**: Groups of four or more children	- Students have a worksheet about different topics: animals, body parts, colors, food, names of famous people, etc. - The teacher says a letter and, in 3 minutes, students try to fill in the spaces of each topic with the corresponding letter. - If a group does not repeat a word from another group, they score 2 points; if repeated, they obtain another point and, finally, if the group does not write anything, they do not score any point. - The group that has the largest number of written words is the winner.

ACTIVITY 5: *Storytelling and performance:* "*Stone Soup*"	PROCEDURE:
LEVEL: 1st to 6th grade **MATERIAL**: - The book "*Stone Soup*" - Worksheets with the roles of each character - Decorations for the play - Costumes made by themselves **GROUPING**: Whole class	- The teacher explains the story "Stone Soup" to the whole class, using the interactive whiteboard. - They assign roles to each child. - Before the performance, students should use their body language to get familiar with them, so that pupils feel more comfortable in their roles. - Children read their corresponding part separately. Then, they do it all together. - Students decorate and create plain costumes, because children enjoy making their own outfits. - Students go through the performance and, if possible, teachers record them. This way, students can see their reactions while performing the play, and enjoy it once more.

ACTIVITY 6: *The English box*
 	
LEVEL: 3rd to 6th grade
 	
MATERIAL:
   - A medium-size box
   - A piece of paper and pencil for each child
 	
GROUPING: Half group (12 or 13 students)
	PROCEDURE:
	- The teacher asks students to write something which they wanted to talk about.
	- The teacher hands them a small piece of paper to write one topic which they would like to talk about in English: animals, celebrities, clothes, food, sports, etc.
	- Once the topic is written, they put the paper into the English box.
	- In each half group class, a pupil takes a paper to see the topic of the week.
	- The teacher writes on the board some questions or sentences to facilitate talking about the topic:
	   • *It is (adjective)*
	   • *It is blue, yellow....*
	   • *It has got...*
	   • *It can...*
	   • *My favourite.... is......*
	   • *I like / I don't like*
	   • *I play.... with....*
	- Occasionally, this box can also be used to write positive messages to someone in class (to wish a happy birthday to a friend, to say that a child has done something very well, to highlight the good behaviour of a classmate...).

You will find at the end an extended list of references for further activities and ELT practice.

From my experience, I can conclude that what I see is that we, as English language teaching professionals,are constantly learning, and that only by doing, we can realize what really works and what does not. An activity which is likely not to work due to a specific circumstance can not mean that we have to give up. On the contrary, I believe that what is not possible on one day, it will be possible on another. That is why patience and being ready for constant opportunities, as I also enhanced in my cover letter and ELT portfolio, are also important.

I would like to finally say that, as a teacher, I very much value:

1. Teaching a foreign language in a natural way
2. Creating a nice and fun environment
3. Taking advantage of new projects and tools
4. Letting one's imagination fly away
5. Making mistakes
6. Learning with students

7. Letting them see that we can fall and pick ourselves back up

8. Being grateful

9. Taking time to celebrate success

10. Not being scared to dress up occasionally and put on accents

11. Learning about achievements and mistakes

I dare say that when following all these premises, a teacher may be surprised with new chances, memorable instances and great results. Children are endless sources of inspiration. Thanks to them we can, daily, go beyond as English Language teachers. Because of that, I believe that we must enjoy every moment, develop our potential, learn from mistakes and believe in our chances. What is more, from my view, we should not be afraid of acting like children at times, because great teachers never stop being and doing so, either.

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