

Quarterly Magazine

AssOCIACIÓ
d' Professors
de Catalunya

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Editorial

As time marches on, the APAC team is constantly on the move looking for new ways to support English teachers in their daily work. This can be seen in the material on the web page, the forums that have been set up, the organization of the annual convention and the magazine, which gathers articles from convention speakers as well as other professors who wish to collaborate.

This issue brings two new proposals on interdisciplinary projects for students in Batxillerat/EOI, (Meat and two Veg by Rodrigo Alonso and God Knows by Marc Olmedo) as well as a summary of the workshop on teaching English in infant education done by Jan Cadwallar at the last APAC sessions.

The flesh and bones of every issue is made up from the materials submitted by professors who wish to participate with the magazine. In line with the theme of the next convention, the article by Joana Angrill, Video Games in Education and Language Learning, makes one of those risky proposals that we aren't always willing to put into practice, but she presents the idea in a well justified and very convincing manner.

The article by Doctor Elsa Tragant from the University of Barcelona deals with something that

we all think about but are afraid to talk about: our students' low level of English. Instead of dwelling on the negative, this well documented piece demands that we find solutions. Within this search for better strategies we note the article by Caterina Casanoves, who has involved her students in an analysis of the situation, and Mariona Sanchez's experience in the European project, Food4u.

We have also included research by Maria C.Garcia Herrero on the strategies for learning vocabulary that were developed by her students and a short reflection on behavioral problems in the classroom by Barbara Leonard.

Obviously, there is more food for thought in this issue, but we leave you to your own devices to discover them.

We look forward to seeing you at the APAC convention. For those unable to make it, we will work to ensure that as many speakers as possible send in their articles for inclusion in future issues of the magazine.

The Editorial Team

Because of some typos in the article we are making the full text available as a download at :

<http://www.apac.es/publications/documents/contest.pdf>



Letter from our president

Dear all,

February is not spring, I know. Yet things at APAC appear to be in full bloom. By the end of February many of our best efforts seem to materialize. Take this quarterly. Here it is again, in due time, bringing together signatures from practitioners in the art of teaching English, colleagues from here and there ready to share their findings and check their views with all of you. And February brings to you a special issue of our monograph series on Brit Lit, the project sponsored by the British Council in order to open our classrooms to the words and presence of living authors. The monograph, edited by Neus Figueras and Lesley Denham, is a unique document that brings together academic research on the role of literature in EFL and the enormous potential for classroom practice and personal engagement with contemporary British Literature. A number of Catalan schools have already joined in the project and we'll hear a lot about it in our annual convention.

And, yes, on top of that, February is that time of the year when the APAC-ELT convention takes place. Mark the very last three days of February on your calendar and come to discuss –amongst many other things– issues related to what we are

facing teaching the net generation. This is a big challenge for the future... and for the present. The new generation gap in schools seems to have established itself as a confrontation between digital immigrant educators (us!) and digital natives (them!). New situations need new approaches and we'll have the likes of Jeremy Harmer, Gavin Dudeney and Michael Swan to assess new developments. We want the convention to focus on the impact of new technologies but, beyond becoming familiar with what's new, we want the essential goals of education revisited and see how they are best served.

February is the shortest month but, at APAC, it does come fully loaded. Do please check our website (www.apac.es) to see a preview of speakers, information on the venue at Universitat Pompeu Fabra and, of course, facilities for registration. Why not have a taste of APAC's spring-time while it's still February? Or, as good old Shelley might have put it: If February comes, can spring be far behind?

With best wishes,

Miguel Berge
President

New links on apac.es

Apart from the four featured sites which catch your eye as you open the www.apac.es portal, I'd like to draw your attention to the second line of links: Highlights.

Under the Conference image you can click on 'Preview of Speakers' to see the initial programme including plenary invitees and the roundtable panel. Browse through the page to get background information on what this year's convention offers. Come back often for the updates as the programme takes shape. At the top left of the same page there is a link to last year's programme, complete with handouts, downloadable in a fast zip file.



Many will know how to get to the venue but just in case there is a google map and street view of the entrance available on the front page.

As promised in the last magazine Apac now has its own ELT network aimed at the working teacher. The goal is to share lesson tips and plans with over a hundred other professionals to support everyone's workload. At present contributions range from videos to blogs to forums to groups, all designed to give direct material assistance and coming from experienced teachers. Joining is free and you get a complimentary personal website. Participation is the key word. Get involved right away at <http://apacelt.ning.com>



The Publications section on the Main Menu also hides a novelty since we have inserted a new media page. Here you can find a video of the 2007 keynote lecture by David Graddol. Just click on the Graddol link next to the June 08 index and it will start streaming. No long waits. You can be sure that we'll be adding selected talks from the 2009 Convention so that you can review someone you heard or watch someone you missed.

To make sure of your place at this year's upcoming Congress register online at www.apac.es/elt-convention/registration.html.

See you there.

Tom Maguire (APAC Webweaver)

might be short lived and within an hour they should playing around the playground with everybody else. But maybe not. They cry and laugh or hug one another or the teacher very easily.

They are also very **individualistic**. At home, they have concentrated on themselves and now they are in a group. They have to learn to be part of that group, and to share.

Also, they are at different points in their development. Teachers cannot come in and give them just a bit of English. One has to take into account the whole child and work alongside the class teacher.

You cannot expect them to sit still for five minutes and have to include a lot of **participation**.

Young children are very imaginative. The line between **fantasy** and reality is a lot less clear. We can use their imagination to teach them English with toys, puppets. But it is also a wonderful time for them to learn English because they are at the same time assimilating their own language. In the case of Catalunya they are assimilating two languages. So we can use the same process to help them assimilate a bit of English. They do not need to translate every word and they are making hypotheses that might be wrong. One needs to check them.

Another thing that they are very good at is **repetition**. Again their hypothesis might be wrong. As the child who insisted that the word for ¡Hola! in English was *Hallo. How are you?* As it was the greeting the teacher used as she came into the classroom.

We can use those abilities that the child has very well developed at this stage to teach him English.

In order for the child to assimilate the language, the repetition has to be meaningful and they can assimilate English in much the same way they are assimilating Catalan or Castellano.

The last lines of the poem

*I wish I could remember my name
Mummy said it would come in useful
Like wellies. When there are puddles.
Yellow wellies. I wish she was here*

*I think my name is sewn on somewhere
Perhaps the teacher will read it for me
Tea-cher. The one who makes the tea*

Children at this age jump from one thing to the other. Their attention span is very short. So we have to plan for short activities that appeal to their imagination.

What do children do at this age at school?
We can divide activities into four main areas:

1. Developing children's autonomy, their social behaviour and healthy habits.
2. Topics; the world around us: family, the world around us, music...
3. Developing gross (walking on a line) and fine motor skills (preparing them for writing)
4. Developing basic concepts: numbers, shapes, colours, place

We are going to concentrate in this last area in which the teacher of English can help the tutor to assimilate those concepts. Coordination with the class teacher is important and going a little behind her. If you are doing the number three, wait until they have done it in their first language

*"approach these areas without leaving
the children's world...
create a classroom full of colour, of music,
of stories with endearing characters so that
we capture their imagination.*

(Marta Jimenez
Colegio Tres Olivos Madrid)

Shapes

Ideas for teaching the concepts of **shapes**: circle, square, triangle, rectangle:

- Drawing in the air
- Draw in a window
- Draw on the floor
- Draw on a friend's back and have a guessing game: what am I drawing?

There are many other games to be done (see handout attached): guess what shape I have chosen, guess what is in the bag, in the box.

Stories (see handouts attached)



What are we going to do at school today? Teaching through English in infant education

by Jane
Casdwallader
Summary of her
talk done
by A. Aguilar

Very young children love fantasy, surprise and having fun. Part of the “content” of what they do in class can be very “serious”... Numbers, shapes, colours and other concepts (quite apart from sitting quietly and listening!). The secret of success is to approach these areas without leaving the child’s world... to create a classroom full of colour, of music, of stories with endearing characters which, while they capture the child’s imagination, serve as instruments to teach children things about the world we live in. As English teachers we can join in and be part of this process, adding a new dimension to children’s learning and getting a lot of satisfaction out of it at the same time!. Hers was a very practical session which went through imaginative ways to approach the context of the classroom and some of the basic areas of infant learning through English.

What are the implications from the point of view of the adult for teaching in a foreign language at such an early age? It seems we spend the first year of our children’s life teaching him/her to walk and talk and the next 12/13/14/15/16 telling them to sit down and be quiet. That is from the point of view of the adult.

I am going to look at some extracts of poems from Roger McGough, who used to be a teacher

First day at school

*A million billion willion miles from home
Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?)
Why are they so big, other children?
So noisy? So much at home they
Must have been born in uniform*

Children at this age are very **emotional**. They show their emotions. This state of uncertainty

Jane Cadwaller has taught English to children in Spain for 26 years. She has been based in Barcelona and Madrid. She has worked in Colegios Públicos teaching English to children in Infants and in Primary. Jane has also worked for the British Council, FERE and for local government teacher training departments in many autonomous regions in Spain. She has also given talks in other countries including Italy, Poland, Chile and Argentina. She has published several books and courses, among them Frisbee and Galaxy. She is the co-author of the new Richmond infants course. English with Ellie.



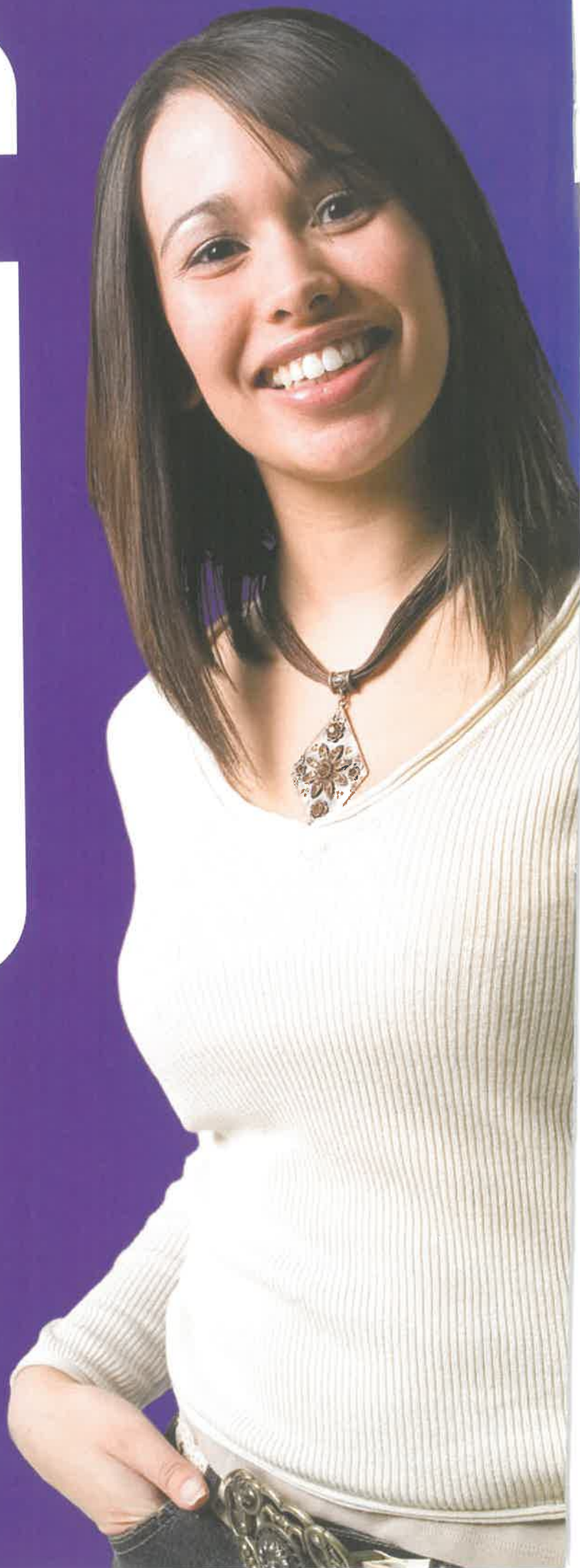
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Britlit and APAC have collaborated for some time now, and the Special Monograph published this year is a good example of this. The update provided here is a summary of the most recent materials and activities that complement nicely the texts in the Monograph.

The first few months of 2009 look like being as busy a period in BritLit – since ever. For a start, the programme for new kits appearing on the website is full. These include ‘Orange Juice’ by Michael Rosen and the publication in February of ‘The Hand that Feeds’ by Michael Z Lewin. Meanwhile the filming for Melvin Burgess’ ‘Coming Home’ has been completed and you can expect to see this new type of multi-media kit appearing in March. Before all that, however, there will be a new author kit on Bali Rai, which will be produced in time for the visit of that author to Italy. Also by the end of March another ‘first’ is planned, also based on a work by Melvin

Burgess – his book based on the film ‘Billy Elliot’. This will be the first time that a whole novel has been attempted by BritLit, and we hope that the availability of both the book and the film will make this ambitious project a very attractive proposition to teachers.

These new kits will be joining the recently added new kits: ‘The Wolf’s Tale’ and ‘The White Towel’ and if you haven’t had a chance to look at these new offerings yet then you will find them in the usual place on <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/resources/britlit>

Top Ten

According to user votes of the kits which appear on the Teaching English website, the top ten, most popular BritLit kits, with ratings between ‘Great’ and ‘Awesome’ are:

		1	2	3	4	5	
Pink Bow Tie	4.7	[Orange bar]					1
Ex-poser	4.6	[Orange bar]			[Yellow bar]		2
Carapace	4.5	[Yellow bar]		[Orange bar]			3
Jack and the Beanstalk	4.5	[Yellow bar]		[Orange bar]			4
The Copy	4.5	[Yellow bar]		[Orange bar]			5
Old Macdonald's Farm	4.4	[Orange bar]			[Yellow bar]		6
The Return of the Moonman	4.3	[Yellow bar]		[Orange bar]			7
A Handful of Poems	4.3	[Yellow bar]		[Orange bar]			8
Down by the Cool of the Pool	4.3	[Yellow bar]		[Orange bar]			9
Whose Face Do You See?	4.3	[Yellow bar]		[Orange bar]			10

The numbers in the second column are the rates awarded out of 5. The results show a more or less equal distribution between material for older teens, younger teens and primary.

Author Visit

In February, the writer of the ‘Short and Scary’ stories, Louise Cooper, will be visiting Barcelona for the APAC teachers’ conference in the days following Carnival. This is the first time we’ve managed to entice Louise away from her Cornish hideaway and we’re all looking forward to it immensely. She will also take the opportunity to visit some local Catalan schools.



During this period there will also be some BritLit training workshops for teachers in the three participating countries: in a school initiated project in Carregal do Sal, Portugal (January), at the APAC event in Barcelona, Spain (February) and at the YL Conference in Milan, Italy (March).

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO AT SCHOOL TODAY? TEACHING THROUGH ENGLISH IN INFANT EDUCATION.

First day at school

*A million billion willion miles from home
Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?)
Why are they all so big, other children?
So noisy? So much at home they
Must have been born in uniform
Lived all their lives in playgroups
Spent the years inventing games
That don't let me in. Games
That are rough, that swallow you up.*

And the railings.

All around, the railings.

Are they to keep out wolves and monsters?

Things that carry off and eat children?

Things you don't take sweets from?

Perhaps they're to stop us getting out

Running away from the lessins. Lessin.

What does a lessin look like?

Sounds small and slimy.

They keep them in the classrooms.

Whole rooms made out of glass. Imagine.

I wish I could remember my name

Mummy said it would come in useful.

Like wellies. When there's puddles.

Yellow wellies. I wish she was here.

I think my name is sewn on somewhere

Perhaps the teacher will read it for me.

Tea-cher. The one who makes the tea.

by Roger McGough



What do we need to remember?

Teaching infants means teaching the "whole child" i.e we need to teach alongside the children's class teacher and in accordance with where children are in their conceptual, motor skill and affective development. In general children at this age show their **emotions** more than older children. They are also very **individual** - they are still getting used to being part of a social group and may not be good at following group instructions or happy about sharing or taking turns. It's part of our job to help them along in these areas.

Children at this age are **ideal language learners!** They're learning their own language and can transfer the skills they are developing to the foreign language. It's important therefore to make what we do meaningful so that children can **assimilate** English in much the same way as they assimilate their mother tongue.

Jane Cadwallader, APAC 2008

They have a limited attention span so activities need to be **varied, short, plentiful** and allow for plenty of **participation**. Young children are very **imaginative** and using fantasy e.g. **stories and a puppet** will help to keep their attention and optimise learning.



What do children at this age do at school?

We can divide this into four main areas:

- Important areas that go through the whole day such as developing children's autonomy, their social behaviour and healthy habits.
- learning about the world around us for example projects on life at school, the occupations of different people in our lives, the food we eat, the seasons of the year, festivities, music, art etc.
- developing children's gross and fine motor skills to make them more confident in their movements and to prepare them for reading and writing.
- developing children's basic concepts such as number, shape, size, colour, place.

Developing Basic Concepts

This last area can be rather dry! However it doesn't need to be. Taking into account the points made above what we should aim to do is,

"approach these areas without leaving the children's world create a classroom full of colour, of music, of stories with endearing characters so that we capture their imagination."

(Marta Jimenez, Colegio Tres Olivos Madrid)

Shapes are perhaps the most challenging area to think of things to do which are relevant and fun for children. Here are some activities which you might like to use (if you don't already!).

SHAPES



Circle

Shape Song English with Ellie, Richmond
(Tune: Baa Baa Black Sheep)

Circle Circle.

Draw a big circle.

Circle Circle.

Draw a little circle.

· children help the puppet draw a circle and then find circular things in the classroom to put in it e.g. a coin, plate, button, a biscuit.

Is it a circle? Yes!

Draw round each of the items with chalk.

Remove the items.

Look circles. Lots of circles. Big circles and little circles.

· Draw imaginary big and little circles: in the air, on the floor, on the wall, on the window, on different parts of your body. Children copy. Face the same way as the children so that all start at the top and go anticlockwise.

Let's draw a big circle. Now draw a little circle.

· Play music and children move around the room. Pause and children draw an imaginary circle as above.

· Cork stamping. You need some corks and some thick red yellow green and blue paint. Divide children into three groups give each group a large piece of construction paper and a bowl of paint. Each group has one colour paint. Give each group several corks. Children dip the corks in the paint and stamp circles on their paper.

· Show the children different ways to make circles with their bodies: open mouth, forefinger and thumb, hands on waist, hands joining in front / above head

· Play at throwing bean bags into hoops on the floor. Or through a hoop that you are holding up! Shout circle every time a child is successful.

· Use some rope to make a big circle on the floor. Call out children to walk/ run/ crawl/ hop round the circle.

· Make a big circle on the floor with chalk / a rope. Children move around the room. Bang the tambourine and shout circle and children come and stand in the circle.



Square

Shape Song English with Ellie, Richmond Publishing

(Tune: Baa Baa Black Sheep)

Square Square.

Draw a big square.

Square Square.

Draw a little square.

· the puppet shows the children how to make a square with rods, plastecene, toothpicks, straws. (or any other linear objects e.g. pencils, spaghetti)

Look a square. One, two, three, four sides.

· Make the outline of a square on the floor using different objects. *What is it? It's a square! Look One two three four sides.*

Draw round the outside with chalk then push all the items inside. *Look it's a square. One two three four sides.*

· Draw a dot on the square and call out children to walk round anticlockwise. As they go along each side the puppet says: *one, two, three, four sides*



Triangle

Shape Song English with Ellie, Richmond Publishing

(Tune: Baa Baa Black Sheep)

Triangle Triangle.

Draw a big triangle.

Triangle Triangle.

Draw a little triangle.

· the puppet shows the children how to make a triangle with rods, plastecene, toothpicks, straws. (Or any other linear objects eg pencils, spaghetti)

Look a triangle. One, two, three sides.

· call out children in threes to lie in the centre of the carpet to make a triangle.

· Draw big and little triangles in the air, on the table, floor.



Rectangle

Shape Song English with Ellie, Richmond Publishing

*(Tune: Baa Baa Black Sheep)*Rectangle

Rectangle.

Draw a big rectangle.

Rectangle Rectangle.

Draw a little rectangle.

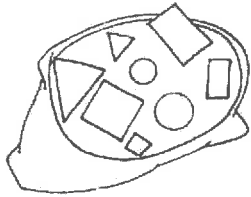
· Make a square with the four straws. The puppet says:

Look a square! One, two, three, four sides.
 · Hold four more straws. Show they are the same length. Cut two of the straws. Make a rectangle with the four straws.

Look four straws the same. Look now! Two big and two little straws.

Is it a square? No.

What is it? It's a rectangle.



All the shapes

· Put lots of examples of all four shapes in a bag. The puppet gets out a rectangle and says *rectangle*. The puppet gets out the other shapes one at a time. Children shout *rectangle* when it's a rectangle and for other shapes stay silent.

· Show the children the four geometrical shapes and put one secretly in a box. Put on some music while the children pass the box round. Pause the CD. Children guess which shape is in the box. The child with the box opens it up and shows the shape that is inside.

· Make a series using the geometrical shapes.

The puppet says:

Look a red circle, a blue square, a red circle, a blue square.

What is next? a circle or a square?

What colour is it? Red or blue?

· Make more series for the children to complete, making them each time more complicated.

· Choose children to start a series for the rest to finish.

· Make the series below and chant it with the children. Tap each shape with a pencil, keep a steady beat.

*red circle, blue circle, red circle, blue circle,
 red circle, blue circle.*

*green square, yellow square, green square,
 yellow square, green square, yellow square.*

Start very slowly and gradually get faster.
 Start very quietly and gradually get louder.

Divide the children into 2 groups each chants a different line.

· Children make belts. (Materials: a strip of cardboard for each child, a hole puncher, thick wool, gommets of different shapes).

Cut the cardboard strips slightly shorter than the child's waist. Punch holes in each end and attach a piece of wool. Children decorate the belts by making a series of red /blue / big / little gommets.

· Play odd one out. Put four shapes on the floor or the board eg. Three circles and one square or three squares and one triangle. Children say the odd one out.

**Story: Ellie's Shapes Puzzle from:
 Ellie's Big Basics Book (Richmond)**

Storyline

Ellie is in the classroom with her friends. She is doing a shapes puzzle. One piece is missing. Her friends bring her different shapes but not the right one. Finally a friend brings the right shape but it's the wrong size! It's time for the daily nap. Ellie settles down on her mat but is uncomfortable. The teacher and her friends lift up the mat to find the missing piece of her puzzle!

How to tell

Make a shapes puzzle with thin cardboard and thin foam shapes to stick on it. Use puppets / soft toys / the children in the class for the protagonists of the story.

Possible script

Narrator: *Look here is the classroom. Ellie is doing a puzzle with shapes.*

Narrator: *Oh dear! Ellie is sad.*

Ellie: (sad noises)

Narrator: *One shape is missing! Where is the shape?*

Ellie: (sad noises)

Other animals: *"What's the matter Ellie?"*

Narrator: *The animals want to help Ellie. Mouse has got a CIRCLE.*

Ellie: (sadly) *"Thank you Mouse but ...I don't want a circle."*

Mouse: (disappointedly) *Ooh!*

Narrator: *Monkey has got a RECTANGLE. (Monkey humming contentedly)*

Ellie: (sadly) *"Thank you Monkey but ...I don't want a rectangle. I don't want a circle or a rectangle"*

Monkey: (disappointedly) *Ooh!*

Narrator: *Duck has got a SQUARE.*

(few happy quacks from Duck)

Ellie: (sadly) *"Thank you Duck but ...I don't want a square. I don't want a circle, or a rectangle or a square!"*

Duck: (disappointedly) *Ooh!*

Narrator: *Hippo has got a TRIANGLE.*

(noise of Hippo thumping along)

Ellie: (excitedly) "Yes! Hurrah! Thank you Hippo. It's a triangle...I want a triangle"

Ellie: (a big sigh)

Narrator: Oh no! Hippo's triangle is little BUT the missing triangle is big.

Ellie: (sadly) "Thank you Hippo but I don't want a LITTLE triangle".

Hippo: (disappointedly) Ooh!

Ellie: (sad noises)

Other animals: (commiserating noises)

Narrator: It's time for a nap. "Everyone be quiet now."

Ellie: (grunting uncomfortable noises)

Narrator: (concerned) "What's the matter Ellie?"
Look! There's something under Ellie's bed! "Oh dear! What is it?"

(Noise of mat being tipped up to see what is underneath.)

Everyone: Ooooooh!

Narrator: (excitedly) Look! Look under the bed! Yes It's a TRIANGLE! It's a BIG triangle. It's Ellie's big triangle!

Narrator: Look at Ellie's puzzle. What a beautiful puzzle!

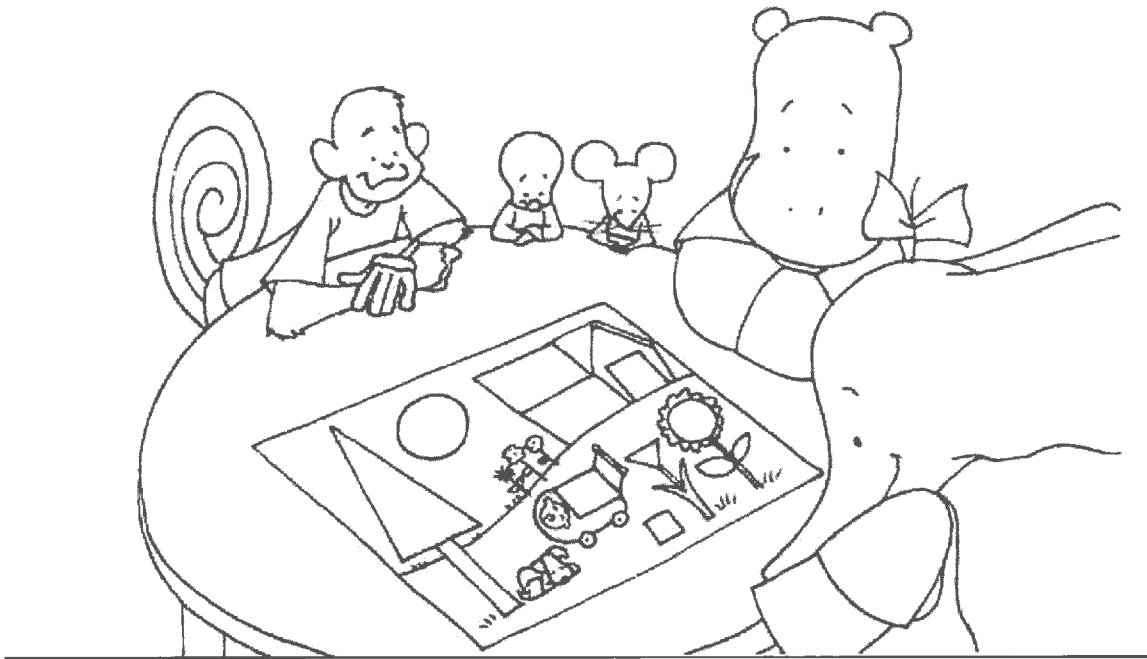
Everyone: (appreciative noises)

Narrator: There are two circles. A little circle and a big circle. There are two squares. A little square and a big square. There are two rectangles. A little rectangle and a big rectangle. There are two triangles. A little triangle and a BIG TRIANGLE.

Narrator: Look at Ellie. Ellie is very happy!

Everyone: appreciative happy noises

Ellie: (relieved and pleased) "Thank you everyone"



Un Señor Maduro con Una Oreja Verde

Un día en el expreso de Soria a Monterde,
Vi que subía un hombre con una oreja verde.
No era ya un hombre joven sino más bien
maduro,
Todo menos su oreja, que era de un verde puro.

Cambié pronto de asiento y me puse a su lado
Para estudiar el caso de cerca y con cuidado.
Le pregunté: - esa oreja que tiene usted, señor,
¿Como es de color verde si ya es usted mayor?
- Puede llamarme viejo - me dijo con un guiño -
Esa oreja me queda de mis tiempos de niño.
Es una oreja joven que sabe interpretar
Voces que los mayores no llegan a escuchar:

Oigo la voz del árbol, de la piedra en el suelo,
Del arroyo, del pájaro, de la nube en el cielo.
Y comprendo a los niños cuando hablan de
esas cosas
Que el la oreja madura resultan misteriosas...

Eso me contó el hombre con una oreja verde
Un día, en el expreso de Soria a Monterde.

Gianni Rodari



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Surviving Culture Shock in the Classroom. Five Approaches (Part Two)

Meat and Two Veg!

by Rodrigo Alonso Páramo
EOI Viladecans

Objectives

- To make students aware of national and regional food stereotypes.
- To make them see the differences between reality and the stereotype.
- To help them compare the British and their own food traditions and innovations.
- To make them aware of the reasons behind most cultural facts.
- To make them familiar with some cooking language.
- To make them aware of the healthiness of their eating habits and compare them with the ones of their partners.

Levels

A2 to B1

Procedure

A. Know what

1. Food and eating in Britain and 2. Comparisons

The teacher should explain the students that the expression *Meat and two veg* traditionally refers to what a decent meal in Britain should consist of. Pair work. Students should try to write down as many ideas as they can. They can be simple words, whole sentences, sayings, etc. Then they have to compare their ideas with those of the rest of the class and with ideas about food and eating in their own culture.

3. Some facts

The idea is to show the students through some figures that we are not so distant when it comes to eating habits and internationally awarded restaurants and reputation.

1. Spain 2. Britain 3. Britain 4. Spain 5. Britain

B. Know how, know why

4. Likes, dislikes and their origins

Students discuss these questions in groups of four or five. Encourage to openly speak their minds. To clarify if you can explain that questions 3 and 4 refer

to situations like that of the so-called *ugly American* complaining about the bad quality of hamburgers wherever they go on holiday.

5. Food rationing and its future impacts on British cooking

Explain the concept of food rationing, elicit from students when it might happen. Ask them if they think that it could have any future influence on the eating and cooking customs and traditions of a people.

Students' own answers.

Students will have to think about the British contributions to the world of cooking and adoptions from other cultures, together with a comparison with their own culture's contributions and adoptions. After comparing the two case invite students to think and consider the reason for the differences that exist between the two cultures.

6. Did you know...? The invention of curry

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F 5. T

7. The cook, the food and the music

These are all pictures of famous English, Scottish, Basque and Catalan chefs. Tell your students that some of them like Jamie Oliver or Rick Stein are very famous and popular, some others like Tom Lewis have a very high international reputation. You can also ask your students if they think that people like Arguiñano or Arzak might be popular in Britain.

1. Jamie Oliver - 2. Ferran Adrià - 3. Madhur Jaffrey - 4. Nick Nairn - 5. Rick Stein - 6. Karlos Arguiñano - 7. Juan Mari Arzak - 8. Martin Berasategui - 9. Tom Lewis

The students watch the two videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKlxRnb2zg0&feature=related>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuSKHEvO1Sg&feature=related>
and write down the information in the grid, and compare their answers. They can also talk about

which one they preferred and why. Encourage students to make comparisons between the two video recipes.

If not mentioned by the students, highlight the differences in the music used, the voice over, the cooking style, the TV studios, etc.

For the grilled mushrooms the mentioned ingredients are: mushrooms, parsley, lemon zest and juice, thyme, salt, olive oil, vinegar, pepper, and fresh chilli.

For the Sardinian Spaghetti Carbonara the list of ingredients includes: Peperino cheese, panceta, spaghetti, 3 cloves chopped garlic, parsley, eggs.

Now they watch the video *Lamb Curry*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KyYs0lpy&feature=related>
and fill in the missing words: teaspoons, slice, leaves, ginger, onions, shake, passion, turmeric, coconut milk, aromas, pinch.

After this, give students some time to comment on the video, the ingredients, the recipe and the suggested questions.

C. Know oneself

8. Our food facts

Students fill in the questionnaire, gather some data from other students and then report it to the class making comparisons using the prompts given.

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MEAT AND TWO VEG!

A. Know what

1. Food and eating in Britain

With your partner. Brainstorm as many ideas as you can about eating and food in Britain. Then share these ideas with the rest of the class.

2. Comparisons

Compare the results that have been obtained with your own ones and the ones about your culture. Are they very different? Why?

3. Some facts

Here are some sentences related to food and eating. Check the ones that you think refer to Britain and draw a circle if you think they refer to Spain.

1. A total of 134 restaurants were awarded some stars in the 2008 Michelin Guide.
2. About 30% of the population is overweight and 12% suffers from obesity.
3. 116 restaurants were awarded some stars in the 2008 edition of the Michelin Guide.
4. 33% of the population is overweight and 11% is obese.
5. Cooking classes will be compulsory in all secondary schools starting September 2008.

B. Know how, know why

4. Likes, dislikes and their origins

In groups of four people discuss these questions.

1. Why do you think British food has such a bad reputation? Have you ever eaten British food? Talk to your partner about it.
2. What do you expect to eat when you go to a foreign country?
3. How would you react if you saw a foreigner complaining because they cannot find their national meal when they are on holiday in another country?
4. Have you ever done something similar? Why do you think this happens?

5. Food rationing and its future impacts on British cooking

Here is a text that might help you to better understand the background of Britain's cooking tradition. After reading the text answer the questions.

Current Day British Cuisine

It should be noted that food rationing was introduced in January 1940. It lasted through the Second World War and was extended to 1954. Foods rationed included meat, fats, cheese, butter, milk and eggs. Bread, potatoes and vegetables were never rationed. Although this led to an improvement in people's health, it's also likely to have contributed to British cooking bad reputation in the not too distant past, of being uninspiring and tasteless. Maybe it just took a while to re-adjust.

Today however, British cooking is a gem of a cuisine. It has retained the core of its early culinary history but constantly added to it. Roasts, savoury and sweet pies, stews and a diverse selection of truly delectable (best in the world) puddings/desserts are still popular, but so is Chinese and Indian food. All major cities and most towns have at least 1 Indian restaurant or take-away (many have several) and the eating of curry has become an institution. Italian Pasta or pizza is probably cooked and eaten by the majority of people frequently, albeit often with eccentric English twists, and oriental flavourings and methods of cooking have been incorporated into everyday cooking by many.

The great English breakfast (any combination of fried bacon, eggs, sausages, tomatoes, bread, black pudding, baked beans, grilled kidneys and kedgerree) whilst not eaten by most people every day, is still loved as is Afternoon Tea (some visitors call it "high" tea) which consists of cakes, biscuits, scones, sandwiches and, of course TEA. The Sunday Roast, which can be beef with Yorkshire pudding, lamb, pork or chicken generally served with roast potatoes and at least 2 vegetables) is also still a tradition which most uphold at least once a month.

A truly eclectic cuisine....YES, being an English site we make no excuse for being biased.

Adapted from: <http://www.recipes4us.co.uk/>

1. What is food rationing?
2. Why do you think food rationing could be introduced in a country?
3. Has your country ever gone through something similar?
4. Which was the effect of food rationing in your country's cooking and eating styles?
5. Do you think your country's current cooking and eating styles have been marked by food rationing in the past?

British contributions to the world of cooking (and some adoptions)

This is a list of British "contributions" to the world of cooking. Check the ones you are familiar with. If you need some extra information go to . Then make a list of your country's contributions to international gastronomy. Compare your answers with your partner's.

Cheddar cheese	Tea
The sandwich	The English breakfast
Chutney	Custard
Pickled vegetables	Meat pies
Worcester sauce	Fish and chips

Which do you think are your country's contributions to the world of cooking?

Britain has also adopted some culinary elements of other countries. Here are some of them. Does your country share any of them as well? Which ones/which ones not? Why do you think it is so?

Pizza	Chop suey
Lasagne	Chicken tikka masala
Curry	Chile con carne
Bagels	

Can you name some ingredients, cooking method, dish, etc. that have been introduced and adopted into your country's cooking from other places?

6. Did you know...? The invention of curry

Read the text and say whether the following sentences are True or False.

Most people in the world today know what a curry is - or at least think they do. In Britain the term 'curry' has come to mean almost any Indian dish, whilst most people from the sub-continent would say it is not a word they use, but if they did it would mean a meat, vegetable or fish dish with spicy sauce and rice or bread.

The origin of the word itself is the stuff of legends, but most pundits have settled on the origins being the Tamil word '*kari*' meaning spiced sauce. In his excellent *Oxford Companion to Food*, **Alan Davidson** quotes this as a fact and supports it with reference to the accounts from a Dutch traveller in 1598 referring to a dish called '*Carriel*'. He also refers to a Portuguese cookery book from the seventeenth century called *Atre do Cozinha*, with chilli-based curry powder called '*caril*'.

In her '*50 Great Curries of India*', **Camellia Panjabi** says the word today simply means 'gravy'. *She also goes for the Tamil word 'kaari or kaaree' as the origin, but with some reservations, noting that in the north, where the English first landed in 1608 then 1612, a gravy dish is called 'khadi'*. Pat Chapman of Curry Club Fame offers several possibilities:- '*karahi or karai(Hindi)*' from the wok-shaped cooking dish, '*kari*' from the Tamil or '*Turkuri*' a seasonal sauce or stew.

The one thing all the experts seem to agree on is that the word originates from India and was adapted and adopted by the British Raj.

On closer inspection, however, there is just as much evidence to suggest the word was English all along. →

ELT Convention

In the time of **Richard I** there was a revolution in English cooking . In the better-off kitchens, cooks were regularly using ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, galingale, cubeb, coriander, cumin, cardamom and aniseed, resulting in highly spiced cooking very similar to India. They also had a 'powder fort', 'powder douce' and 'powder blanch'.

Then, in **Richard II's** reign (1377-1399) the first real English cookery book was written. Richard employed 200 cooks and they, plus others including philosophers, produced a work with 196 recipes in 1390 called '*The Forme of Cury*'. 'Cury' was the Old English word for cooking derived from the French 'cuire' - to cook, boil, grill - hence cuisine.

So when the English merchants landed at Surat in 1608 and 1612, then Calcutta 1633, Madras 1640 and Bombay 1668, the word 'cury' had been part of the English language for well over two hundred years. In fact, it was noted that the meal from Emperor Jahangir's kitchens of dumpukht fowl stewed in butter with spices, almond and raisins served to those merchants in 1612, was very similar to a recipe for English Chicken Pie in a popular cookery book of the time, '*The English Huswife*' by **Gevase Markham**.

Adapted from: <http://www.menumagazine.co.uk/book/curryhistory.html>

1. Some people think the origin of the word curry comes from a cooking utensil.
2. Curry was introduced in England by revolutionaries.
3. In the XVII century some meals were very similar both in England and India.
4. In Britain people use the word curry to refer to any kind of spicy dish.
5. For some authors the word curry in English has a French origin.

7. *The cook, the food and the music*

Have a look at the following pictures. Write there names in the space provided if you know it.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.

ELT Convention

Watch the video recipes [Grilled Mushrooms](#) by Jamie Oliver and [Spaghetti Carbonara](#) by Rick Stein and write down as much information as you can.



	Jamie Oliver's Grilled Mushrooms	Rick Stein's Spaghetti Carbonara
Level of difficulty		
Originality		
Cooking style		
Availability of ingredients		
Ingredients mentioned		
Degree of involvement with the audience		
Background music		

What can you guess about these two chefs with all the information you have gathered? Compare your answers with your partner, then report it to the class.

ELT Convention

Now watch the video [Lamb Curry](#) by Jamie Oliver. Fill in the gaps. Use the words in the box.



aromas **onions** **ginger** **pinch** **teaspoons** **leaves**
slice **turmeric** **coconut milk** **passion** **shake**

LAMB CURRY GIVE IT TO ME HOT!

VERSE 1

Get yourself a pan and get it hot,
Get your lovely lamb and slice it up,
Whop in with some mustard seeds, two _____
will do
Wait until they pop and they spit at you.

Then a teaspoon of fenugreek is nice,
You need three hot chillies; red or green,
De-seed them and finely _____, give a stir once
or twice,
Oh my god it s so nice, so nice!

I've found this new revelation it's called curry
_____,
Get yourself a handful and throw them in with ease,
Got my friend _____ just give him a peel,
It s so damn juicy, the flavour is unreal,

Skin three sweet _____ and give them a chop,
I use the food processor saves time a lot.
Whack 'em in, throw 'em in,
Give it a _____; we start to make great curry,
why ay ay ah .

CHORUS

Lamb Curry, you give it to me hot,
Ain't no worries when you cook it from your heart,
Lamb Curry, you give it to me hot,
Ain't no worries when you cook it from your heart..

Gonna give it to my brothers and sisters,
Gonna give it to the Ms' and the Mr's,
Gonna give it to my brothers and sisters,
Why ay a yeah .

VERSE 2

Now back to the pan where all the action happen,
Just one teaspoon of chilli powder for a little extra

_____,
One teaspoon of _____ that lovely yellow stuff,
Using the same processor add six ripe tomatoes

Give 'em a pulse to make some sauce, lovely lovely
sauce

Now find a tin of _____ and open it up,
But mind your bloomin' fingers they re so easy to
cut!

You can smell the sweet _____ as it hits your
face,
With a good _____ of salt you should season to
taste,

Throw 'em in, whack it in,
Give it a shake, we start to make great curry,
Why ay ay ah .

CHORUS

Lamb Curry, you give it to me hot,
Ain't no worries when you cook it from your heart,
Lamb Curry, you give it to me hot,
Ain't no worries when you cook it from your heart..

Gonna give it to my brothers and sisters,
Gonna give it to the Mr s and the Mr s,
Gonna give it to my brothers and sisters,
Why ay a yeah .

Gonna give it to my brothers and sisters,
Gonna give it to the Mr s and the Mr s,
Gonna give it to my brothers and sisters,
Why ay a yeah .

Lamb Curry, you give it to me hot,
Ain't no worries when you cook it from your heart,
Lamb Curry, you give it to me hot,
Ain't no worries when you cook it from your heart.

Can you name any chef in your country that would do something similar? Which one?
 What do you think he/she would cook? Why?
 Why do you think Jamie Oliver has chosen a curry for the music video recipe?

C. Know oneself

8. Our food facts

How healthy do you think your eating habits are?

Answer this questionnaire and then check your results. Walk through the class and get some information about your classmates. Report your findings to the group. Use expressions such as: *Most of us...*, *The majority of the class...*, *Some of the class...*, *X people in the class...*, etc.

1. In the past six months	
I have gained more than five kilos	0
I have gained between three and five kilos	1
I have gained between one and two kilos	2
I have gained less than a kilo	3
My weight has not changed	4
I have lost less than a kilo	3
I have lost between one and two kilos	2
I have lost between three and five kilos	1
I have lost more than five kilos	0
Item 1 score	_____
2. The number of foods I limit or avoid because of a health condition or because they disagree with me is:	
None	4
One or two	3
Quite a few	2
Enough to make it hard to eat with others	1
Enough to make my diet very restricted	0
Item 2 Score	_____
3. I usually eat ...	
At least 3 times each day	4
At least 3 times a day, 5 or 6 days a week	3
At least 3 times a day, 3 or 4 days a week	2
2 times each day	1
Less than 2 times each day	0
Item 3 Score	_____
4. Each day, I usually eat fresh fruits or vegetables	
Five or more times	4
Four times	3
Three times	2
Two times	1
Less than two times	0
Item 4 Score	_____
5. I usually eat meat alternatives (dried peas, beans, lentils, nuts, or tofu) ...	
Two or more times each day	4
Once each day	3
Five or six times each week	2
Three or four times each week	1
Less than three times each week	0
Item 5 Score	_____

6. I usually drink milk or eat foods made with milk (cheese, yoghurt, etc.)	
Two or more times each day	4
Once each day	3
Five or six times each week	2
Three or four times each week	1
Less than three times each week	0
Item 6 Score	_____
7. Each day, I usually drink 250 ml. of fluid (juice, water or milk) ...	
Five or more times	4
Four times	3
Three times	2
Two times	1
Less than two times	0
Item 7 Score	_____
8. When I am alone, I eat good, healthy meals	
Never	0
Rarely	1
Sometimes	2
Often	3
Always	4
Item 8 Score	_____
9. I find cooking difficult (physically, lack of interest, stressful, lack skill)	
Never	4
Rarely	3
Sometimes	2
Often	1
Always	0
Item 9 Score	_____
10. I find grocery shopping difficult (physically, poor weather, lack of interest, stressful)	
Never	4
Rarely	3
Sometimes	2
Often	1
Always	0
Item 10 Score	_____
*Scores can range from 0 to 40, the higher your score the better your eating habits.	

How would you describe your own ones and your partners' eating habits?
 Are they as you thought they would be?
 Do they correspond to the idea you had of yourself?
 Why do you think it is so?
 What do you think should be changed?

This article can be downloaded from
<http://www.apac.es>

9. Did I learn...?

Name:

Date:

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Teacher's feedback
1. I have questioned some food stereotypes about Britain.				
2. I have discussed about them with the rest of the class.				
3. I have seen the differences between reality and the stereotype.				
4. I have learned the reason behind some cultural facts.				
5. I have compared my country's cooking traditions with those of Britain.				
6. I have changed my mind about some stereotypes.				
7. I can understand better other cultures and traditions.				
8. I have seen the differences between one's own image and reality.				
9. I have learned some vocabulary about food and cooking.				
10. I can compare data from a survey or a questionnaire.				
11. I have given some thought to the importance of eating well.				
12. Other things I would like to include:				



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God Knows!

by Marc Olmedo Casas
EOI Esplugues

OBJECTIVES

- To make students aware of the religious diversity in the world
- To make students reflect on the issue of religion and help them express their own opinions about it
- To make them react to controversial opinions about religion or expressed by certain religious people
- To provide them with some insight into the role of religion in Britain and the USA
- To expand their language awareness
- To develop their reading comprehension skills
- To develop their listening skills

LEVEL

B2 (CEFR)

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to sit in small groups. Tell them they are going to discuss some questions about religions and beliefs. Allow them to read the questions and then go through the expressions in the box. Make sure they understand what they mean and how they are used. Ask them to discuss the questions and encourage them to use as many expressions from the box as possible.

2. Ask students to write the names of the religion next to the appropriate number. This can be done as a competition. Each group is a team, and the first group to come up with the correct names is the winner.

Answers:

1. Buddhism	5. Amish
2. Roman Catholicism	6. Jehovah's Witnesses
3. Islam	7. Hinduism
4. Mormonism	8. Judaism

3. Ask students to complete this task individually and to check their answers with their partner once they have finished.

Answers:

1. Amish	5. Roman Catholicism
2. Mormonism	6. Islam
3. Hinduism	7. Jehovah's Witnesses
4. Buddhism	8. Judaism

4. Students discuss the questions in pairs.

5. Ask students to read the text and complete the task in exercise 6.

6. Ask students to match the words 1-10 from the text with the definitions a-j.

Answers: a-7; b-4; c-2, d-5; e-6; f-1; g-9; h-8; i-3; j-10

Tell them that the adjective *fence-sitting* comes from the expression *to sit on the fence*, which means to avoid deciding between two sides of an argument, discussion, or quarrel.

ELT Convention

7. Students do this activity in pairs.

Possible answers:

- a. *It is written in an ironical, humorous vein, but, as a critic wrote, with underlying seriousness.*
- b. *British people do not seem to be very religious. In fact the author says that they are “probably the least religious people on Earth.” Later she writes that they are “spiritually neutral” and “apathetic”. There is no set answer to the second question.*
- c. *She is trying to point out that the Christian denomination Church of England does not have any religious connotations to many English people.*
- d. *The author seems to imply that a religion usually involves a set of rules or principles that its adherents have to observe, but that the Church of England does not stick to this definition, since it is extremely tolerant and non-prescriptive.*
- e. *She means that religion is a private matter and displays or religious zeal should take place only in the church. Outside this place, such displays may embarrass the non-practising majority.*
- f. *Whereas American politicians are forced to show their devoutness and invoke their deity all the time, in Britain they are expected not to mention their faith.*

8. Ask students to read Richard Dawkins’s statements and to say whether they agree with him.

9. Tell students they are going to watch an excerpt from an interview with Richard Dawkins and that they have to decide if the statements are true or false, and why.

Give them time to read the statements.

Play the video.

http://youtube.com/results?search_query=british+tv-richard+dawkins&search_type=search=Search (00:00:00 – 00:01:50)

Encourage them to compare their answers with their partners.

Play the video a second time if necessary.

Answers:

- a. *True (It is his latest book. Explain that he is the author of the book The Selfish Gene. They might have heard of it)*
- b. *True (He says that after six years of Bush, America is ready for an attack on religion. Remind students that Bush invaded Iraq in the name of God)*
- c. *True*
- d. *False (It is addressed to those he calls “vaguely religious people”. He intends to win them over to his point of view)*

10. Ask students to discuss this question in pairs, and then to compare their conclusions to the conclusions of a different pair.

Answer: The reader Dawkins is targeting might resemble, to a certain extent, the average British as described by Kate Fox: neither of the two gives religion much thought.

11. Tell students that they are going to listen to an excerpt from a talk Dawkins delivered at a USA University.

http://youtube.com/results?search_query=dawkins+in+1lynchburg+va+%28part2%29&search_type=&search=Search (00:15:17 – 00:17:40)

Encourage students to answer the questions.

Answers:

- a. *He says that it would be like trying to herd cats: they are too intelligent and independent minded.*
- b. *There are many more atheists and agnostics than Jews, however the former have much less power.*
- c. *Many atheistic politicians have to lie about their religious convictions.*
- d. *He says that it is not up to him but up to American people to do something to change that unfair situation.*

5. Its church was the established one in Britain until the Reformation of the 16th century. ____
6. It has the second largest number of adherents. The name of this religion means "submission to the will of God." ____
7. They believe in the imminent second coming of Christ and refuse to take oaths, enter military service, or receive blood transfusions. ____
8. A religion developed among the ancient Hebrews and characterized by belief in one God, external to creation, but operating in it. Its adherents' house of worship is called synagogue. ____

4. You are going to read a text about religion in Britain. But before you read, discuss these questions with your partner:

- a. What is the main religion in your country?
- b. How religious is your country?
- c. What percentage of people in your country actually practises their religion?
- d. How religious do you think British people are? How about Americans?

5. Now, read the text.

The Elizabethan courtier John Lyly claimed that the English were God's "chosen and peculiar people". Well, if we are, this was certainly a rather peculiar choice on the Almighty's part, as we are probably the least religious people on Earth. In surveys, up to 88 per cent of English people tick the box saying that they "belong" to one or another of the Christian denominations - usually the Church of England - but in practice only about 15 per cent of these "Christians" actually go to church on a regular basis. 5

Most of us are not christened nowadays, and only about half get married in church, but almost most of us have a Christian funeral of some sort. This is not because death suddenly inspires the English to become religious, but because it is the automatic "default" option: *not* having a Christian funeral requires a determined effort, a clear notion of exactly what one wants to do instead, and a lot of embarrassing fuss and bother. 10

In any case, the Church of England is the least religious church on Earth. It is notoriously **woolly-minded (1)**, tolerant to a fault and amiably non-prescriptive. To put yourself down as "C of E" (we prefer to use this abbreviation whenever possible, in speech as well as on forms, as the word "church" sounds a bit religious, and "England" might seem a bit patriotic) on a census or application form, as is customary, does not imply any religious **observance (2)** or beliefs whatsoever – not even a belief in the existence of God. 15

I remember **eavesdropping (3)** on a conversation in my GP's waiting room. A schoolgirl of about 12 or 13 was filling in some medical form or other, with intermittent help from her mother. The daughter asked "Religion? What religion am I? We're not any religion, are we?" "No, we're not," replied her mother, "Just put C of E." "What's C of E?" asked the daughter. "Church of England." "Is that a religion?" "Yes, sort of. Well, no, not really – it's just what you put." Like the automatic Christian funeral, "C of E" is a sort of default option. A bit like the "neither agree nor disagree" box on questionnaires – a kind of apathetic, **fence-sitting (4)**, middling sort of religion for the spiritually "neutral". 20

We are not only indifferent, but worse (from the church's point of view), we are *politely* indifferent, *tolerantly* indifferent, *benignly* indifferent. We have no actual objection to God. If pushed, we even accept that He might exist – or that Something might exist, and we might well call it God, if only for the sake of peace and quiet. God is all very well, in His place, which is the church. When we are in His house – at weddings and funerals – we make all the right polite noises, as one does in people's houses, although we find the **earnestness (5)** of it **faintly (6)** ridiculous and a bit uncomfortable. Otherwise, He **impinges (7)** very little on our lives or our thoughts. Other people are very welcome to worship Him if they choose – it's a free country – but this is a private matter, and they should keep it to themselves and not bore or embarrass the rest of us by making an unnecessary **fuss (8)** about it. (There is nothing the English hate more than a *fuss*.) 25

In many other countries – America, for example – politicians and other prominent public figures feel obliged to demonstrate their devoutness and invoke their deity at every opportunity. Here, they must do the exact opposite. Even to *mention* one's faith would be very bad form. Our current Prime Minister is known to be a devout Christian, an affliction we tolerate in our usual **grudgingly** (9) courteous fashion, but only because he has the good sense to keep extremely quiet about it. 40

Our benign indifference remains benign so long as the religious, of any persuasion, stay in their place and refrain from discomforting the non-practising, spiritually neutral majority with embarrassing or tedious displays of religious zeal. And any use of "the G-word", unless obviously idiomatic or just a figure of speech (God forbid, God knows, Godforsaken, etc.) counts as such an improper display. Earnestness of any kind makes us **squirm** (10); religious earnestness makes us deeply suspicious and decidedly twitchy. 45

Adapted from *Watching the English*, by Kate Fox

6. Match the words 1-10 with their meanings a-j.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. woolly-minded (line 12) | 6. faintly (line 31) |
| 2. observance (line 16) | 7. to impinge (line 32) |
| 3. to eavesdrop (line 18) | 8. fuss (line 8) |
| 4. fence-sitting (line 24) | 9. grudgingly (line 40) |
| 5. earnestness (line 31) | 10. to squirm (line 46) |

- a. to have an effect on something _____
- b. reluctant or unable to commit oneself or make a decision _____
- c. the practice of obeying a particular religion, law or custom _____
- d. seriousness or graveness _____
- e. slightly _____
- f. showing a vague or muddled way of thinking _____
- g. reluctantly, unwillingly _____
- h. an excessive display of anxious attention _____
- i. to listen secretly to a private conversation _____
- j. to feel or show acute discomfort at something embarrassing, shameful, or unpleasant _____

7. Discuss with a partner the following questions about the text.

- a. What style would you say the text is written in (formal, informal, light-hearted, sarcastic, humorous, etc.)? Find examples in the text to justify your answer.
- b. How religious are British people, according to the author, Kate Fox? Would you say they are more religious than the people in your country?
- c. What is the point the author is trying to make through the anecdote concerning the schoolgirl?
- d. What does the author mean when she says that "the Church of England is the least religious church on Earth" (line 12)?
- e. What does the author mean by "God is all very well, in His place" (line 29)?
- f. What is the attitude of British politicians with regard to religion as opposed to the attitude of American politicians?

8. You are going to listen to an excerpt from an interview with Richard Dawkins, an eminent scientist and controversial atheist. Before you listen to him, read some of the things he has written or said in different interviews. Do you agree with his statements?

- Religion fuels war.
- The more intelligent you are, the less religious you are likely to be.
- God is a misogynist, racist, megalomaniacal, capriciously malevolent bully.
- There isn't such a thing as a Catholic, Buddhist, or Jewish child. There's only a child of Catholic, Buddhist, or Jewish parents.

9. Watch the video and decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F). Justify your answers.

- a. *The God Delusion* isn't Dawkins's first book. ___
- b. Dawkins believes that America would have been more reluctant to read his book six years ago than now. ___
- c. Britain is more open to religious criticism than America. ___
- d. *The God Delusion* is especially addressed to people who are not religious. ___

10. Do you think the reader that Dawkins is targeting in his book might correspond to the average British as described by Kate Fox?

11. Listen to Dawkins again and answer the following questions. This time, he is giving a talk at a university in the USA.

- a. Why would it be difficult for atheists to form a lobby, according to Dawkins?
- b. Is there a correlation between the proportion of Jews and atheists and the power these two groups have in America? Why/not?
- c. What do many atheistic politicians have to do in order to get on in their careers in America?
- d. Why does the audience laugh at a certain point during his talk?

12. Can you see any connection between what you have just listened to and what Kate Fox says about American politicians' attitude towards religion?

13. What is a *televangelist*? Have you ever watched one talking on TV? What do you think of them and the way they speak?

You are going to watch the famous American televangelist Jerry Falwell talking about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Discuss with your partner what you think he will say.

14. Now watch the video and decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

- a. Falwell does not quite understand why God allowed these attacks to happen. ___
- b. He states that pagans, lesbians, feminists and gays are partly to blame for the attacks. ___
- c. Falwell's interlocutor agrees with him. ___

15. What do you think about Falwell's ideas?

16. Read the following questions and answer them on a piece of paper. Afterwards, sit in small groups and exchange your ideas with your partners.

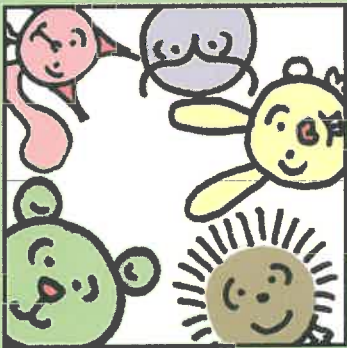
- a. Has your opinion about religion changed in any way with regard to the opinion you had before starting these activities? If so, in what way?
- b. What things have you learned?
- c. What things did you find most interesting?
- d. Can you think of three positive things and three negative things about religion?

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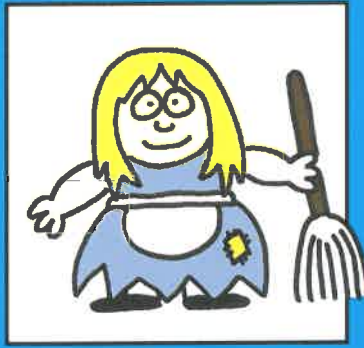
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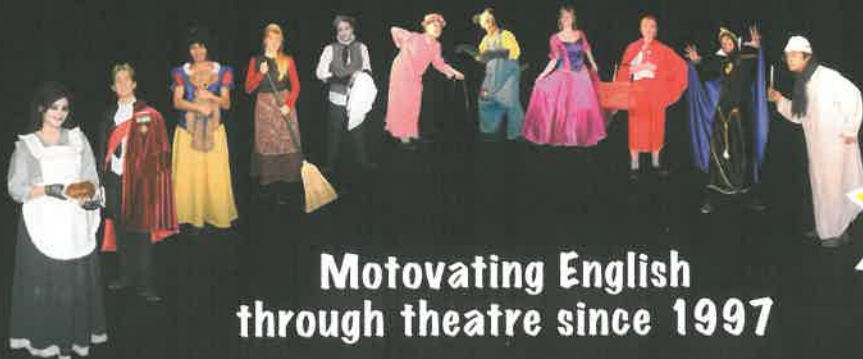
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Trilingualism in Catalan Schools and Universities? Not yet!

by Elsa
Tragant Mestres

What initiatives have been undertaken in Catalonia to promote the level of FLs in the last ten years? Can we start seeing their positive effects? Has the level of English among secondary school students improved? Have teaching practices changed in any way? How about universities? In an attempt to answer these questions, data from evaluation reports, comparative studies and research projects are referred to that take us to conclude that the main goal that the Departament d'Ensenyament had back in 2000 is basically the same as that of the Departament d'Educació today: for secondary schools students to reach a level of English which is equivalent to the elementary level at the EOI. The article concludes with a number of suggestions to further ensure that aims are fulfilled this time.

Knowledge of foreign languages has never been a strong point either in Spain in general or in Catalonia in particular. This is not news. In 1998, only 20.4 % of the population in Catalonia reported they were able to speak English or Frenchⁱⁱ. Business people have repeatedly warned that a lack of functional competence in foreign languages, especially English, was making the country less competitive. Aware of this, the president of the Catalan employers' association Foment del Treball, Joan Rosell, started a campaign for the promotion of English in Catalonia eight years ago, as evidenced by an article in the press entitled "Catalonia needs trilingualism"ⁱⁱⁱ. In that same article, Carme Laura Gil, at the time Minister for the Departament d'Ensenyament stated that even though the govern-

ment did not aim for trilingualism in Catalonia, the goal was for students to reach a basic level of communication in a first FL (equivalent to the elementary level at the EOI) at the end of their secondary education and for 60% of them to do so in a second foreign language as well. And she added, "Business people should be confident, they will soon see improvement" (p. 16). At around the same time, Minister Andreu Mas-Colell promoted the *Programa de formació en terceres llengües a la universitat 2000-2005*^v with the following mission: "To ensure that, within a period of five years, education of all students in Catalonia includes competence in a third language, in both writing and speaking" (p. 33).

In the last ten years, society at large, as well as

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schools and universities, have undergone a number of developments and changes that could well have had an impact on the level of competence of foreign languages in Catalonia. On the one hand, advances in information technology have made access to foreign language contents, both oral and written, much more readily available, an important factor in a society where the level of exposure to English is low. On the other hand, in the field of education, foreign languages have been promoted at different levels. The EOs have doubled in number since 1999-2000. In addition, during the period 2000-2005, a number of changes were implemented in the educational system. In primary education, the Departament d'Ensenyament promoted a progressively earlier start in foreign language instruction. So now we have one of the seven national curricula in Europe in which FL instruction starts at the age of 6 or earlier (in the remaining curricula in Europe, twenty-nine in number, it starts later – usually between ages 7-10^{vi}). Besides, both in compulsory and non-compulsory secondary education (ESO and batxillerat respectively), the number of weekly hours of instruction, which had been cut to two in the nineties, was again set at three. Also, in compulsory secondary education from 2004-2005 groups were split once a week, and an oral comprehension test was introduced in the English exam of the PAU-2002. In parallel, through the *Orator Project* (1999-2004) and the *Pla experimental de llengües estrangeres* starting in 2005, a number of initiatives were undertaken, promoted by the Departament d'Ensenyament, which were meant to improve teaching processes, including an increase in the number of teacher training courses, provision to schools of materials and guidelines and the promotion of innovation projects, among others.

At the tertiary level, in the early 2000's a number of initiatives were promoted that did not survive the change of government, such as the *Escola Virtual d'Idiomes per a Universitaris* (EVUI) or the *Prova Universitària de Competència en anglès* (PUC). So Catalan universities, until recently, have traditionally been less active in promoting foreign languages among their students. The Erasmus programme is probably the most outstanding initiative. Nor has any generalized decision been made to ensure an appropriate level of proficiency in the L2 of students before graduation in philology, translation or teacher training degrees. In any case, societal and educational developments at schools and universities on the whole have been significant enough in the past ten years as to justify an examination of their impact among the young in Catalonia so far.

Evidence on the impact of an earlier introduction to the FL is mixed. Results from the most recent published evaluation at primary level by the Consell Superior d'Avaluació del Sistema Educatiu (CSd'A)^{vii} show an advantage to starting early, whereas an external evaluation promoted by the Inspecció

d'Ensenyament^{viii} concludes: "No significant, overall differences have been perceived between students who have had an early introduction to the foreign language in comparison with those who began studying it in the first course of the initial cycle in primary education" (p. 34). In addition, there is empirical evidence from the Barcelona Age Factor (BAF) Project (1995-2002)^x which shows that students who had started learning English later (age 11) always performed significantly better than those who had started earlier (age 8) after the same number of hours of instruction. The project involved thirty state schools in Catalonia and data included four tests, one composition and three oral tasks. Similar studies^{xi} conducted in the Basque Country also indicate an advantage of the older starters.

Obtaining evidence about progress in students' level of English is not an easy task either at the school or university level. It would be useful to be able to have relatively recent comparative studies with other European countries, especially countries like France, Portugal or Italy, but unfortunately these studies are not scheduled to take place until 2009^{xii}. Examining results over several years from the PAU, a rich source of information in itself, is not fully adequate in this case because the difficulty of the comprehension sections of the exam may vary year to year and the reliability of composition ratings may not be high enough.

Probably the most appropriate source of information for the present purposes is to be found in the evaluation reports periodically done by the CSd'A in Catalonia. At primary level the last two evaluations were conducted in 2002-2003^{xiii} and even though for a number of reasons results from the two reports are not statistically comparable, the 2006 study gives us recent data about the level of achievement in English at 4th ESO and allows us to observe some tendencies.

An examination of the results shows a trend towards improvement in the 2006 scores for reading comprehension and lower scores than expected in the productive skills in both reports (around 60% of the students evaluated did not reach expected levels of competence). Nevertheless, it is a pity that in the latter report written production, a skill where lower scores were obtained in 2001, was not evaluated in 2006. Overall, the 2006 results show that half the students under evaluation did not reach a minimum score of 50%. In the introduction to the 2006 report, Joaquim Prats, President of the CSd'A, concludes: "The results... confirm data provided by other studies, i.e. that Catalan students have a level of knowledge that could be qualified as average or low. It is thus necessary to take steps to gradually improve the level" (p.5).

The most recent data available from non-compulsory secondary education (2nd batxillerat, 2003-2004)^{xvi} show somewhat more optimistic outcomes, with 65%

of the students reaching a level of linguistic competence corresponding to level B1 of the CEFR, with a significant improvement in the scores for oral comprehension as compared with data from 1999-2000^{xvii}. It should be added, however, that lower results were obtained in written production and no significant improvement was found in oral production skills, possibly due to the fact that students in the earlier report were coming from the LGE and those in the later report were coming from the LOGSE.

Additional information from a recent study conducted at the University of Barcelona^{xviii} shows that there may be a good number of students in 2nd batxillerat whose level of English can be placed above B1. The study involved a group of seven public high schools which were selected on the basis of the good results obtained in the PAU-anglès 2005, 2006 and 2007. Three hundred students from these schools took the reading and listening parts of a standardized test in 2007-2008 (London Tests of English) at level B2 of the CEFR and the results show that 42% of the students scored 65% of the items in reading comprehension correctly and 50% did so in listening comprehension. If we put together the results from this and the two CSd'A studies, it becomes evident that there can be a wide variety of levels among students in 2nd batxillerat ranging from A2 to B2.

Having gone over data on students' level of English, we will now look at teaching processes as seen in the CSd'A reports as well as the above mentioned university study to find out whether any changes can be spotted over time. A comparison between students' questionnaire data between the 2000 and 2004 reports on 2nd batxillerat show similar practices (see Table 1), with one third of students stating that they never or hardly ever "do conversation in class"

and more than half of them stating that "they never or hardly ever do oral presentations". At the same time, the proportion of answers referring to traditional modes of instruction, like "The teacher explains almost all the time" or "The teacher explains and students work individually" is similar at both times. Preliminary results from the university study, with a much smaller and non-stratified sample, confirm that traditional modes of teaching and an emphasis on grammar are still pervasive in some schools (see Table 2). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the 2006 4th ESO CSd'A report, except for a few items referring to the use of pair work and English by the teacher, where we can see a tendency towards change in comparison to the 2001 data (see Table 3).

At university level, there is less information available on students' level of English, so partial or indirect data will be presented here. At the UAB, new students who in 2005-2006 were asked about their command of English (on a three-point scale 'good' / 'poor' / 'no') answered 'good'= 39% vs 'poor'= 57% as regards speaking and 'good'= 48% vs 'poor'= 48% as regards writing. At the EIM (Escola d'Idiomes Moderns, UB), according to its academic director, Mr Paul Ambrose, the perception is somewhat contradictory. While the entry level of students coming from non-compulsory secondary education (who have not taken classes outside school over an extended period of time) is mostly between elementary (A2) and intermediate (B1), there is also clear evidence that students' level of English has risen over time. Whereas ten years ago courses at B2.2 level and above constituted 31% of the school enrolment, this is now 45.5%, with an important increase in the demand for CAE courses (equivalent to C1). This shows that there is more of a concern nowadays to get an external certificate beyond the FCE.

Table 1. Teaching practices in batxillerat 2000 & 2004: students' answers

	2 nd bat. 2000 (n=1.917)			2 nd bat. 2004 (n=1.870)		
	1-2*	3	4-5	1-2	3	4-5
The teacher explains almost all the time.	30.8%	37.1%	32%	28.4%	37.7%	33.8%
The teacher explains and students work individually.	17.7%	43.2%	39.1%	12.3%	39.7%	47.9%
We do conversation in English.	35%	36.9%	28.1%	33%	39.4%	27.7%
We do oral presentations.	57.8%	25.4%	16.8%	53.3%	28.6%	18%
We work in pairs or small groups.	35.9%	36%	28.1%	36.1%	39%	24.8%

* 1-2= never / hardly ever; 3 sometimes ; 4-5 often / very often

Source: CSd'A (2005). *La situació de la Llengua Anglesa al Batxillerat a Catalunya 2000-2004*. Informes d'Avaluació 7.

Table 2. Teaching practices batxillerat 2008: students' answers

	1 st & 2 nd bat. 2008 (n=264)			
	1	2	3	4
Frequency of homework dealing with grammar.	4.2%	15.6%	41.2%	38.9%
Intensity of work on grammar in class.	0%	2.3%	32.6%	65.2%
Intensity of work on pronunciation in class.	18.6%	52.3%	19.7%	9.5%
Intensity of oral practice in class.	12.5%	31.6%	43%	12.9%

* 1= never/ hardly ever or none / hardly anything; 2= sometimes or a little ; 3 often / some;
4 = very often or a lot

Table 3. Teaching practices in 4th ESO: students' answers

	4t ESO 2001 (n=2.687)			4t ESO 2006 (n=1.154)		
	1-2	3	4-5	1-2	3-4	5-7
Use of textbook	8.9%	8.7%	82.4%	4.2%	23%	72.7%
Speaking in pairs	47.5%	29.7%	22.8%	33%	39.9%	27.1%
Use of English by T	25%	22.2%	52.8%	5.8%	13.8%	80.3%

4t ESO 2001 (1-2= never / hardly ever; 3 sometimes ; 4-5 often / very often); 4t ESO 2006 (1-2= never / occasionally; 3-4 sometimes / neutral response, 5-7 often / very often / always)

Source: CSd'A (2008). *Resultats de Llengua Anglesa de l'Alumnat de 4t d'ESO de Catalunya. Avaluació de l'Educació Secundària Obligatòria 2006*. Informes d'Avaluació 12.

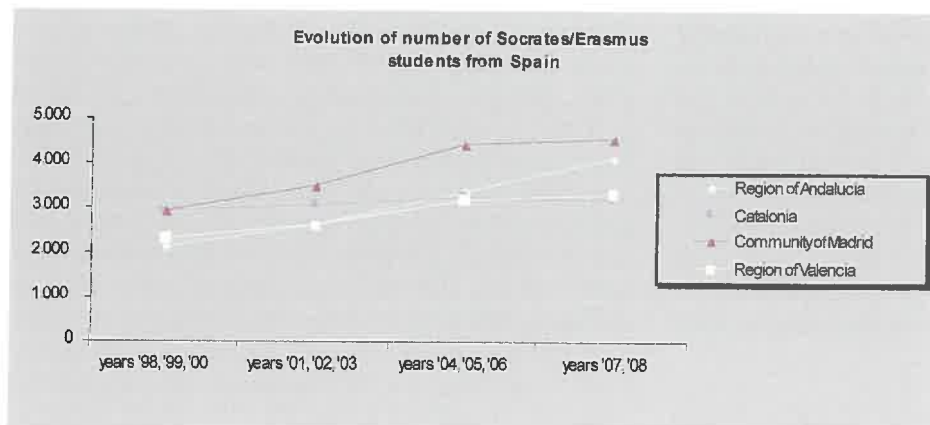
Indirect indicators of how universities are doing with foreign languages can be found in the evolution in the number of Erasmus students from Catalonia going abroad as well as the number of courses that universities offer in English. Unfortunately, the figures are not too encouraging. As Figure 1 shows, when compared with the Community of Madrid, the Region of Valencia and that of Andalucía, Catalonia is the region that has seen the smallest increase in the mean number of outgoing Erasmus students from 1998 to 2008. The reasons for this pattern of evolution may be various, but the fact that Catalan students have been getting less funding than students from other autonomous regions may have to do with it (see 2004-2005 data in Figure 2).

Figures regarding the proportion of undergraduate courses taught in English are also discouraging. To give an example, in 2004-2005, the proportion was 0.5% and 2.12% at the UAB and UPF respectively. This situation may be partially explained by the fact that there are relatively few foreign teachers in Catalan universities (and schools too) because undergrad-

uate degrees issued by foreign universities, including European universities, need to be officially validated. And for many years this process was extremely complex, in many cases involving re-registration of a good proportion of undergraduate courses. Therefore many well-prepared graduates from non-Spanish universities, often with higher ranking positions than Spanish universities, were discouraged from working here.

The balance of the brief review presented here is mixed. On the one hand, there are some signs of progress and evidence of a wide range of levels of competence among both secondary and university students. On the other hand, the proportion of students with low levels of attainment in English is still too large and politicians, just as ten years ago, are well aware of this fact. Recently Blanca Palmada, Commissioner for Universitats i Recerca, stated in *El País*, in reference to university students^{xxii}: "One must be realistic, students do not know English..." Also, the proportion of teachers who follow traditional approaches to grammar teaching is still higher than one would expect.

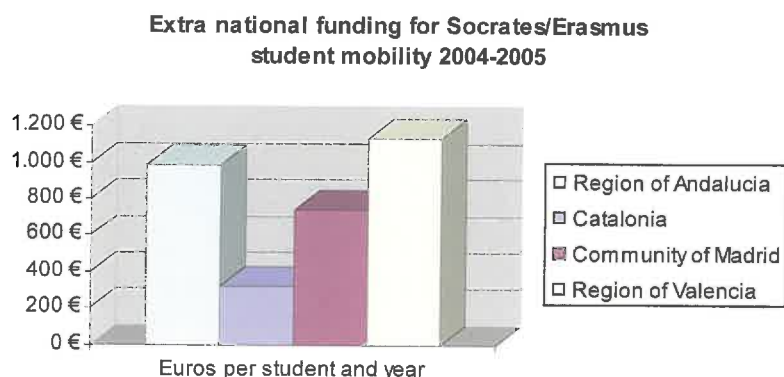
Figure 1



Source: raw data extracted from OAPEE, Anuario Estadístico Programa Erasmus¹.

¹ Organismo Autónomo Programas Educativos Europeos. Publicaciones Erasmus. Retrieved 8/12/08, from <http://www.oapee.es/oapee/inicio/servicios/publicaciones/publicaciones-erasmus.html>

Figure 2



Source: raw data extracted from OAPEE, Anuario Estadístico Programa Erasmus.

Just as ten years ago, the solution today is not easy, nor is the daily task of FL teachers, who often face crowded rooms and students with multiple levels of competence in a school system that has absorbed 131,905 immigrant students since 1998. In the meantime, the tradition goes on in our country of dubbing foreign movies and of voice-over translations on TV and the radio, something that many teachers and experts perceive to be one of the main hindrances to learning. Faced with these difficulties, politicians, again, seem to be resolved to correct the situation and Minister for Education Ernest Maragall has set himself the objective of making the school population in Catalonia trilingual by 2015 with the *Pla d'impuls de llengües estrangeres*, which started in 2007. The ultimate goal of this plan is the same as in 2000: for students to reach a basic level of communication in a first FL at the end of their secondary education (equivalent to the elementary level at the EOI). On her part, Commissioner Blanca Palmada, has promised financial support for teacher training, and some universities have already included several language

years: (a) materials for the evaluation of students' oral and written production could be provided to teachers in the form of grids, rated and commented samples, etc.; (b) ways should be found to promote a process view of grammar and the use techniques such as re-translation or dictogloss, which are especially appropriate for multilevel groups; (c) alternative modes of teacher training, different from methodology courses, should be explored, probably involving observations and individual feedback by expert teachers; (d) institutional evaluations in the last cycle of primary education should no longer exclude oral production skills; (e) results of institutional evaluations should be published within roughly a year after data is collected; (f) a thorough examination of the effects of a progressively early introduction to FL instruction under optimal conditions (regular sessions and rich input from the teacher) should be conducted before the model is extended to more and more schools; (g) universities should seek close collaboration with the Departament d'Educació in the planning of the new Master's degree to make sure that initial teacher training is mean-

related-requirements and recommendations from the Commission (*Pla d'acció pel multilingüisme*, UPF 2007; *Pla de llengües*, UAB 2008).

Within this context, a number of additional measures have recently been taken that can only bring positive outcomes: (1) the introduction of an oral production test in the PAU, (2) the requirement in non-compulsory secondary education to evaluate oral and written skills (25% each) as well as the possibility to split one weekly session in English classes also in batxillerat, and (3) the imminent substitution of the CAP for the new Màster de Professorat. I only regret some of these measures are being taken far too late (secondary school teachers started hearing about the evaluation of speaking in the PAU at least six years ago).

Additionally, it would be advisable for a number of other measures to be taken over the next few

ingful; (h) we should not forget that we are one of the only eight countries (out of a total of thirty-six national curricula in Europe) where a second FL is not compulsory. As soon as the present goals for the first FL are attained, the next aim should be making instruction of the second FL more widespread. Finally, I only hope that, in spite of the present economic situation, educational institutions can still offer the necessary working conditions under which the growing number of teachers at all levels of education getting involved in CLIL or other innovation projects can develop their projects with some continuity.

We have an increasing number of English teachers in the educational system who have found out ways to get their students involved, who follow learner-cen-

tered approaches and teach grammar as a process^{xxiii}. Thanks to the pioneer work of Ramon Ribé and Núria Vidal in Catalonia^{xxiv}, we were among the first to conceptualize and operationalize experiential approaches to language learning. At the same time, language teachers today have more resources and options than they have ever had, as Carme Dilmé, an experienced primary school teacher, reminded us recently during the Jornades in Girona^{xxv}. We have also evidence that when children start learning English at school, they are generally thrilled at the experience of a new language and the games, songs and routines that go with it. Let's hope that this early enthusiasm can be kept alive and well throughout school life. We can no longer afford failure.

ⁱ I would like to acknowledge financial support from the Departaments d'Educació i d'Innovació, Universitats i Empresa (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2005 SGR00778, 2006ARIE 10071, 2007ARIE 004) as well as from the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (HUM2007-644302). I would also like to thank Daniel Ming, who has been processing some of the data presented in this article, as well as the teachers and students who participated in the ARIE study in 2007-8. My thanks too to David Hall and Isabel Pahissa as well as my colleagues Imma Miralpeix, Carme Muñoz and Teresa Navés for reviewing this paper.

ⁱⁱ CIS. (1998). *Uso de las lenguas en Comunidades bilingües* (No. 2298). Retrieved 8/12/08, from http://www.cis.es/cis/openem/ES/1_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=1287.

ⁱⁱⁱ Timoré, E. (2000, July 22). Cataluña necesita el trilingüismo. *La Vanguardia*, Revista.

^v *Programa de formació en terceres llengües a la universitat*, juny 2001, Consell Interuniversitari de Catalunya (DURSI). Retrieved 16/12/08, <http://www10.gencat.net/dursi/generados/catala/universitats/recurs/doc/prog3llengues.pdf>.

^{vi} Eurydice network, 2008 edition. *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe*, pp. 28-30.

^{vii} CSd'A (2006). *L'Avaluació de l'Educació Primària 2003*. Informes d'Avaluació 9.

^{viii} Inspecció d'Ensenyament. *Avaluació externa de centres. Informe global 1997-2001*. Retrieved 9/12/08, from <http://www20.gencat.cat/docs/Educacio/Documents/ARXIUS/avaex3.pdf>

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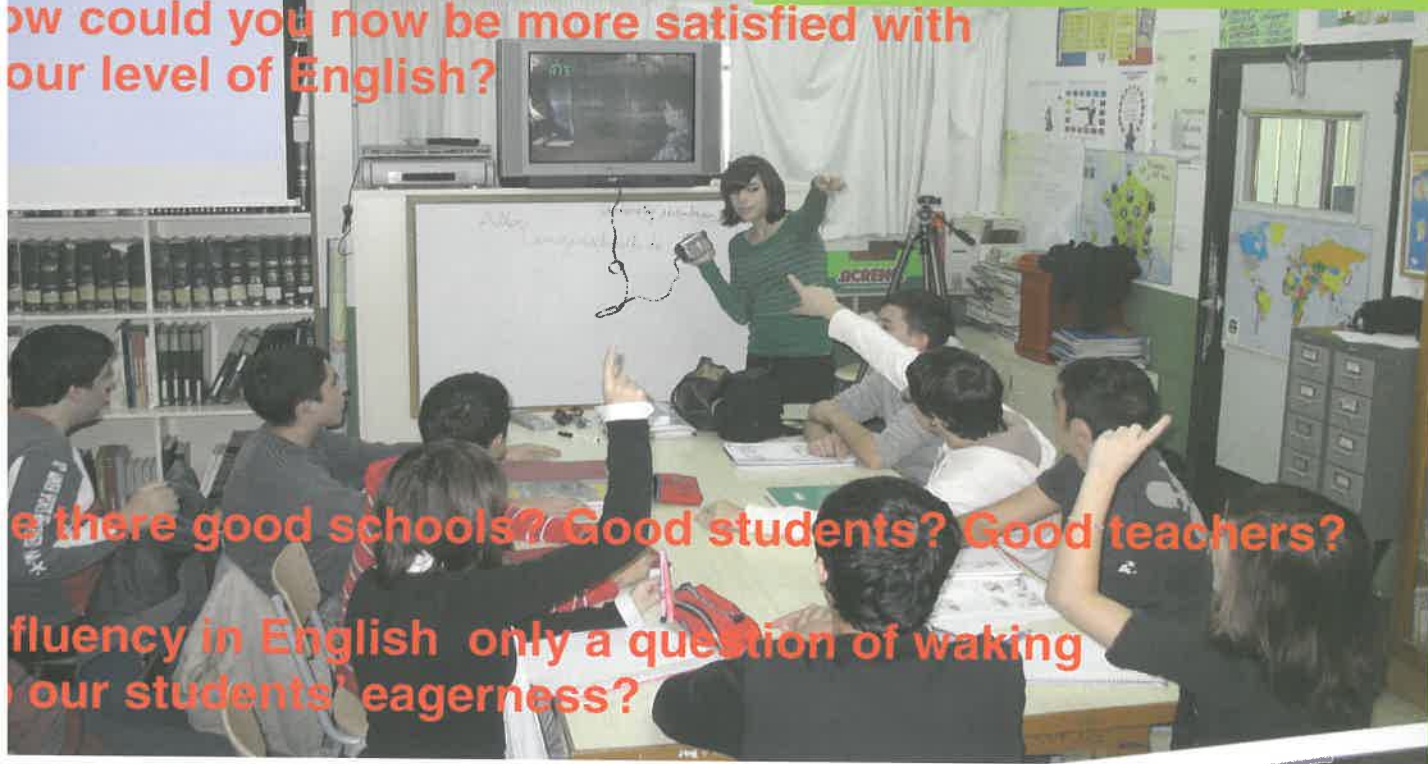
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you could have changed things
how could you now be more satisfied with
your level of English?

are there good schools? Good students? Good teachers?
fluency in English only a question of waking
up our students' eagerness?



Our 2nd “Batxillerat” state secondary school students look back on their years sitting in our classes, listening to us, trying to participate and dare tell us what could have been done so that they could now be more satisfied with their fluency in English.

During “les VIII Jornades de Llengües Estrangeres” last November in Girona, we held a quite controversial debate that had been put forward by the following question : “*Our students’ level of English ... how could we be more satisfied?*”

We were supposed to be discussing whether something could be done from the school context to improve the situation of the low level of proficiency attained by secondary students after 10-12 years of learning English at school.

The different members holding the debate had investigated possible causes that may lead to this situation, and taken into account a number of international reports that corroborate to our theory claiming that if the level of English is satisfactory in other countries, it shouldn’t be unsatisfactory in Catalonia.

I contributed to all these elements to set the audience off debating, by investigating among my 2nd “Batxillerat” students whether they felt *satisfied* after their 10 – 12 years of receiving English tuition.

The results of that investigation compose the article I am presenting now.

INQUIRY:

The inquiry was carried out among a group of 55 of my 2nd “Batxillerat” students.

Some of them have been in our school since 1st ESO, others have come from other secondary schools to study “Batxillerat”. Among those who were already in our school during their ESO studies, some had taken part in school exchanges with Germany from their early 2nd ESO school-year. Later when they were in 4th ESO or 1st “Batxillerat”, they carried out an Orator project and spent two weeks in Britain. You will be able to feel the difference in approximately half the answers they give, when they are asked about their experience of learning English.

It must also be mentioned that our school is a state secondary school that belongs to a quite poor area with a lot of immigration and social exclusion. Most students come from this area, the rest from surrounding little villages and in “Batxillerat”, some come from other secondary schools of the same town.

Caterina Casanovas,

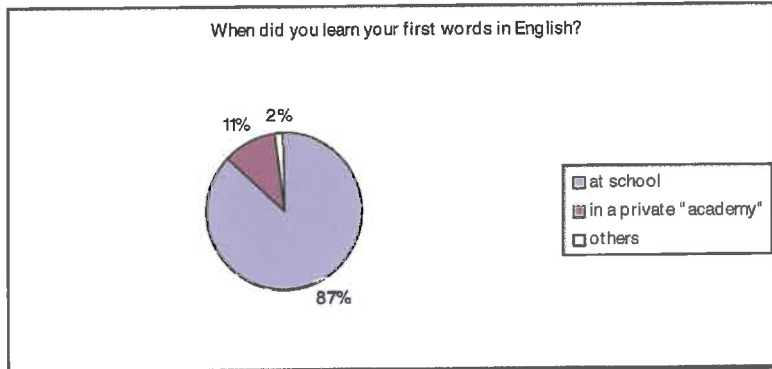
I teach English and German and I am head of the English Department in IES Alexandre Deulofeu, in Figueres (Girona). I am also a teacher trainer.

Taking part in Orator Projects and School Exchanges with different European countries has become for me a normal way of working with my students for the past ten years.

Contributions

QUESTIONS and GRAPHICS with percentages to describe the answers:

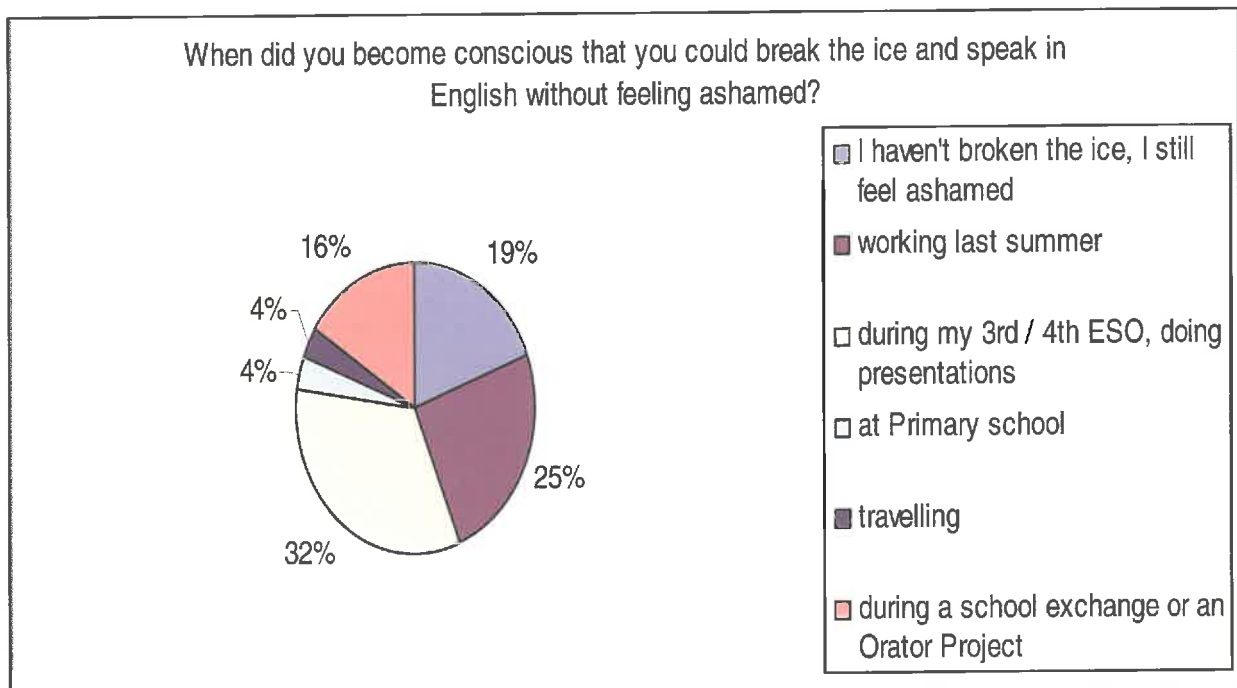
- 1. When did you learn your first words in English? At school or in a private "academy"? Justify your answer.**



Those results should satisfy us, since most of our students started learning English in our schools. However their level should be higher than it is, if we consider their early age when they said their first words in that language.



- 2. When did you become conscious that you could break the ice and speak in English without feeling ashamed?**



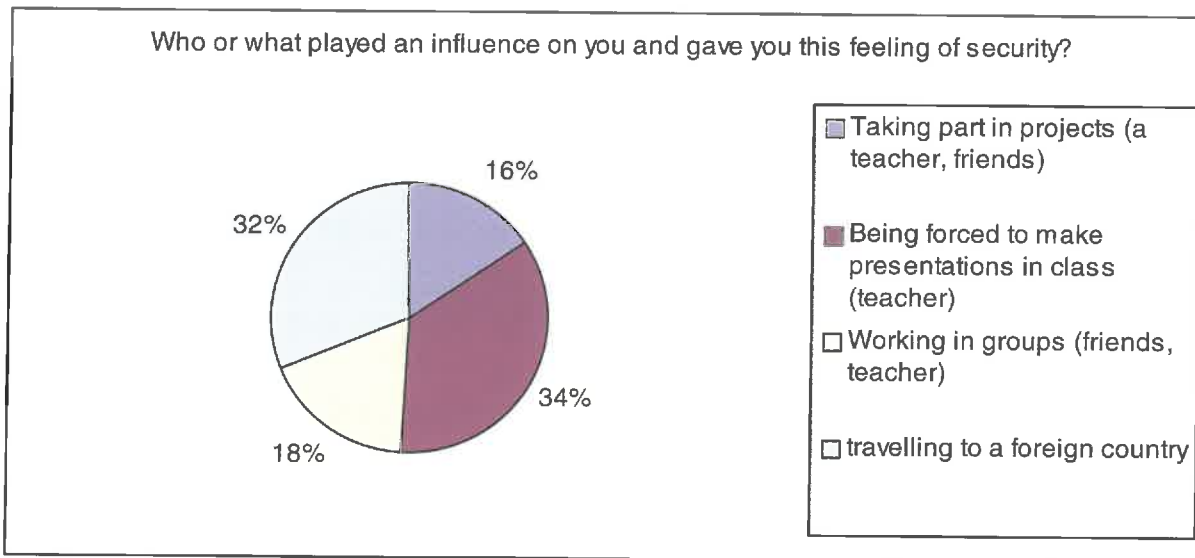
Contributions

We can see clearly that being forced either by presentations or by the contact with foreign people, is the best way for them to get rid of all their prejudices.

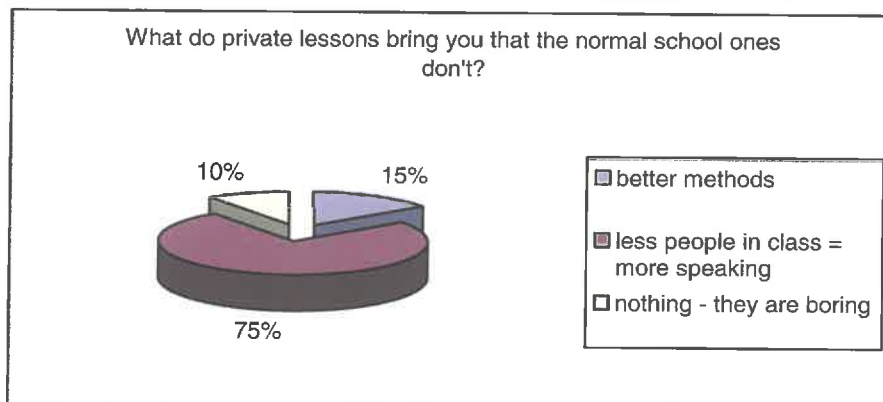
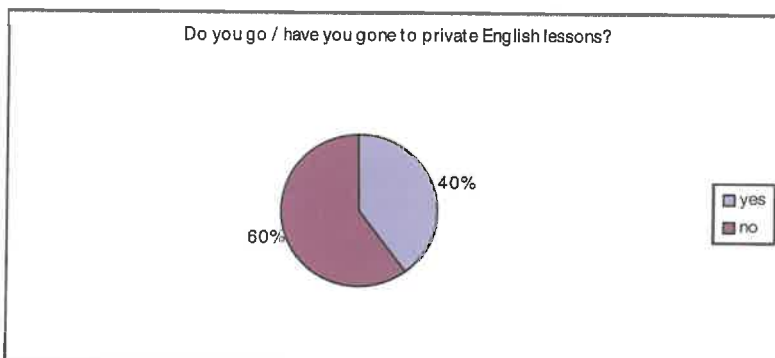
3. Who or what played an influence on you , and gave you this feeling of security?

- Taking part in projects?
- Being forced to make presentations in class?
- Working in groups?
- Travelling?

Explain...



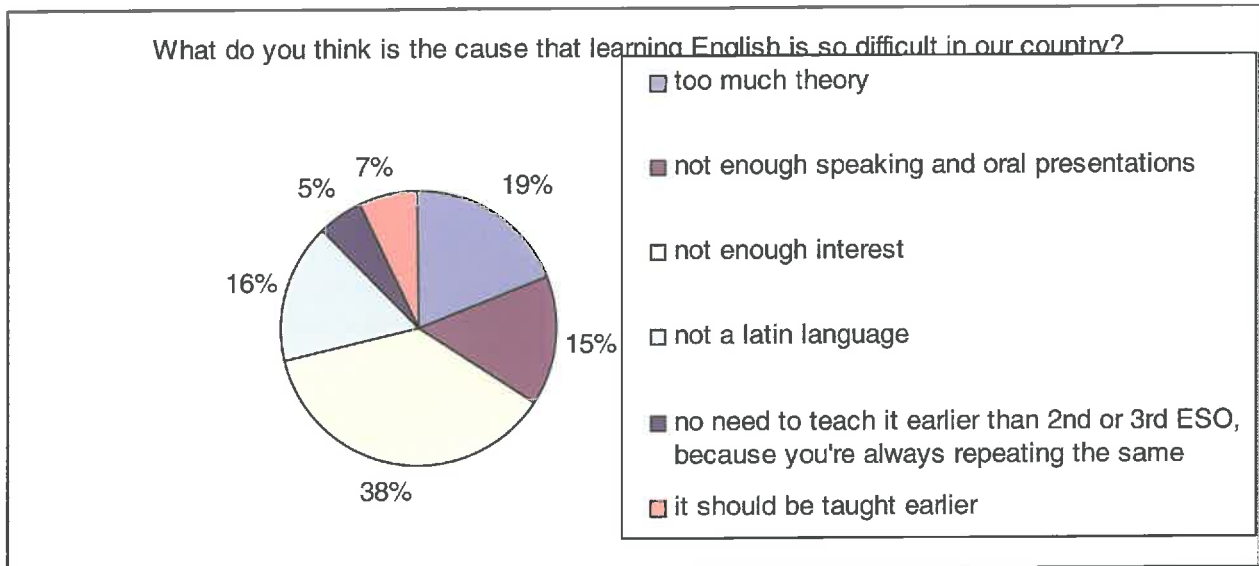
4. If you go to private classes, what do these classes bring you that the normal school ones don't?



If we consider that 75 % mention "less people in class" and thus more opportunities to speak, we confirm that one of our biggest problems are **ratios**.

Contributions

5. What do you think is the cause that makes learning English so difficult in our country?



We must give relevance to this 5% who consider that there is no need to start learning English so early "because we are always repeating the same".

Why are we always repeating the same?

Maybe because we have a tendency to follow the books too accurately... maybe because we feel some are lost and we still think we can manage to get all of them to the same level... and certainly for many more reasons that make us feel more secure in front of our students and that are absolutely legitimate.

Why do we start every year with "present simple, present continuous"?

Isn't that boring even for us?

It may also have to do with the structure of books, some of us feel insecure to pick up things freely from here and there, which only means using the book in a different way.

Where is our urge to wake up our students' eagerness if we look at that 38% who say there is "not enough interest"?

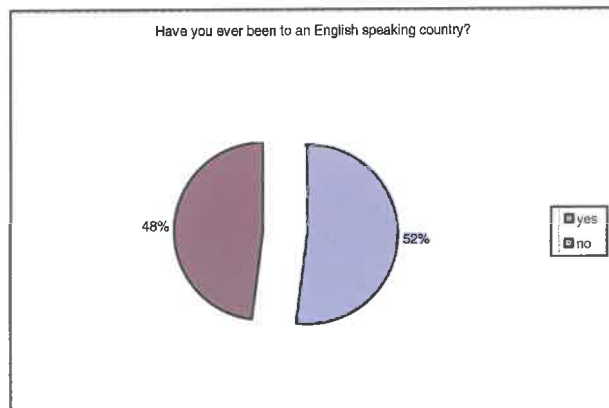
Even if we don't do it every day, let's try and break routines and find ways of arousing their curiosity and attention to what we are teaching them.

Our subject is for sure the one with the widest range of possibilities to make things always in a different way.

6. Have you ever been to an English speaking country?

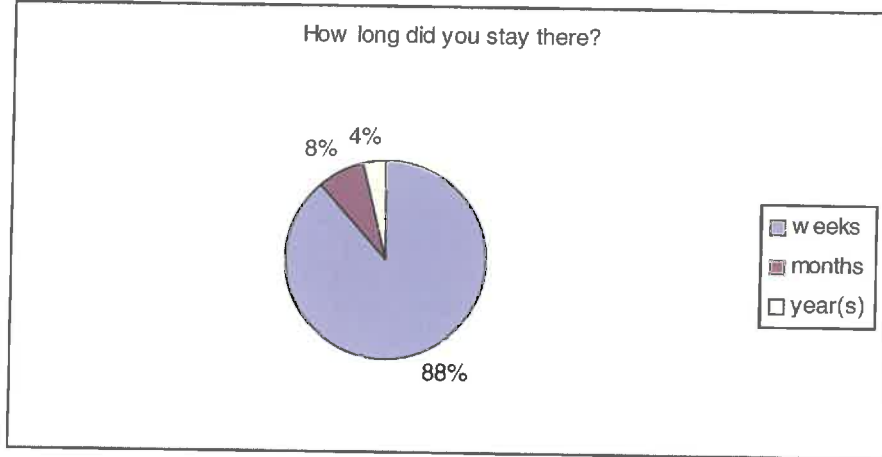
If so,

- How long did you stay there?
- Did you go there to learn English?
- Did you feel that your English was improving? At what level? In fluency, in writing, in getting rid of your fear to talk?
- Do you think that what you had learnt here helped you communicate there?

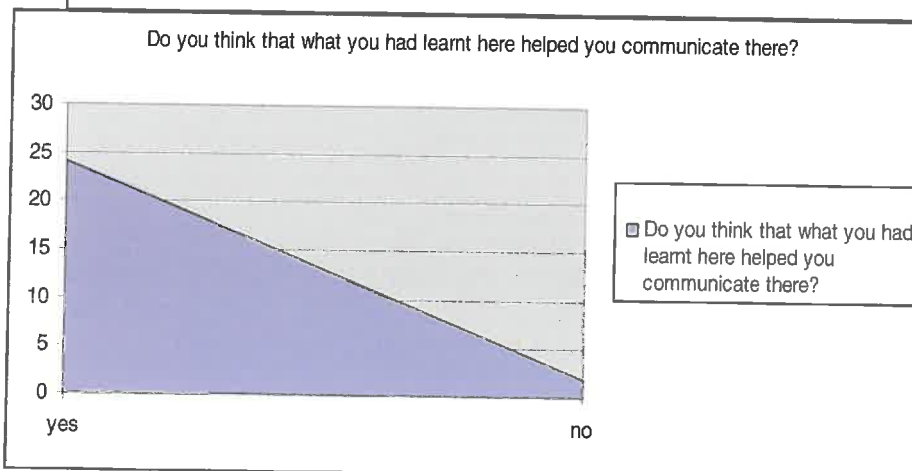
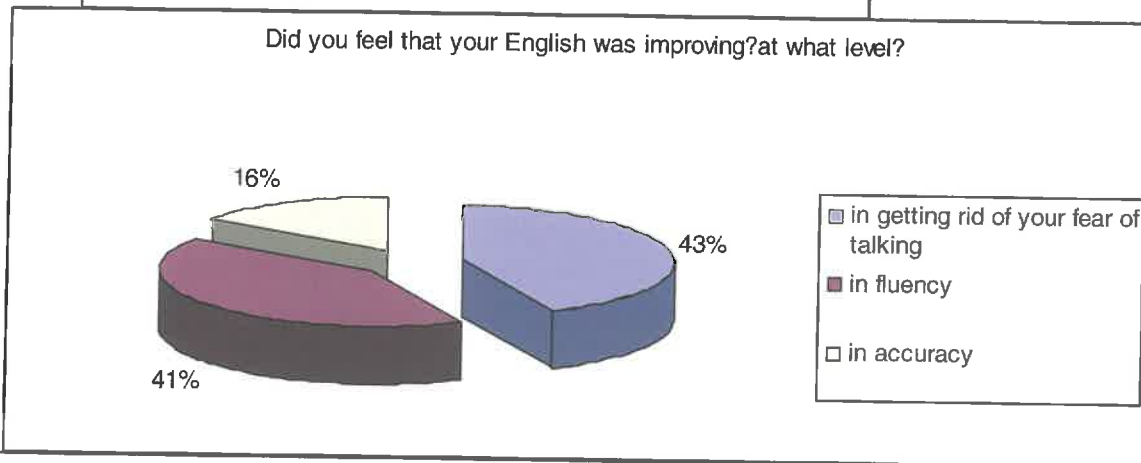
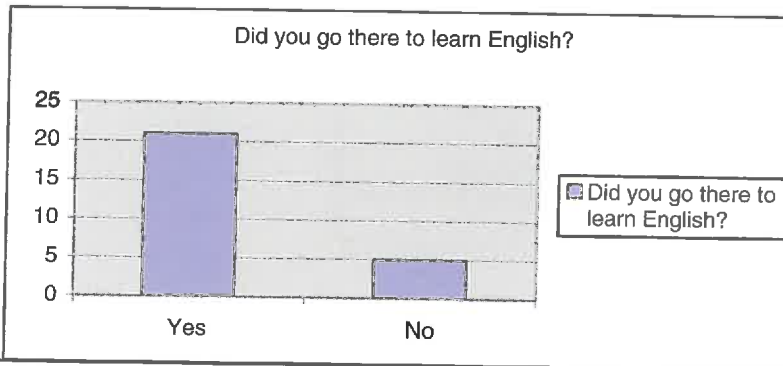


Contributions

Most students have been in Britain, but, as I said before, they went there doing an Orator Project.



Most of them have only stayed there for a few weeks and have only been there once with our school project.



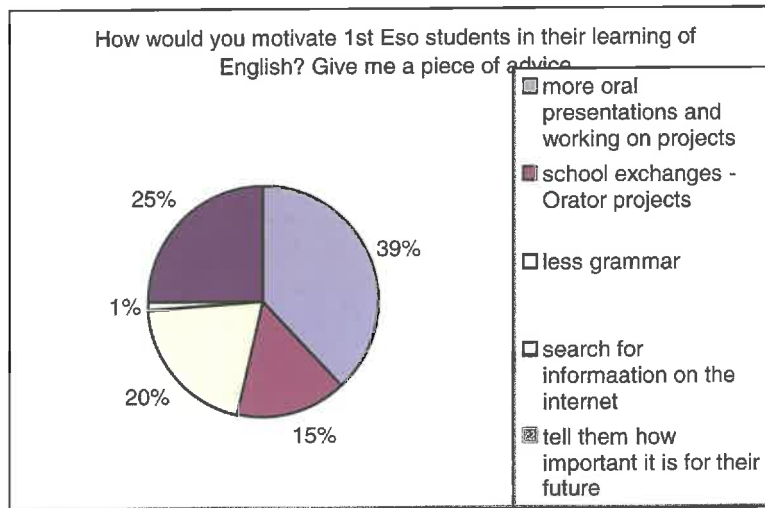
Contributions

We can see, through the graphics, that for the greatest majority their stay wouldn't have been the same if they hadn't got some previous base to communicate in English – the bigger the base the more profitable their stay.

With those graphics we realize that the work we do at school is fundamental for the students to make the most of their stay in Britain.

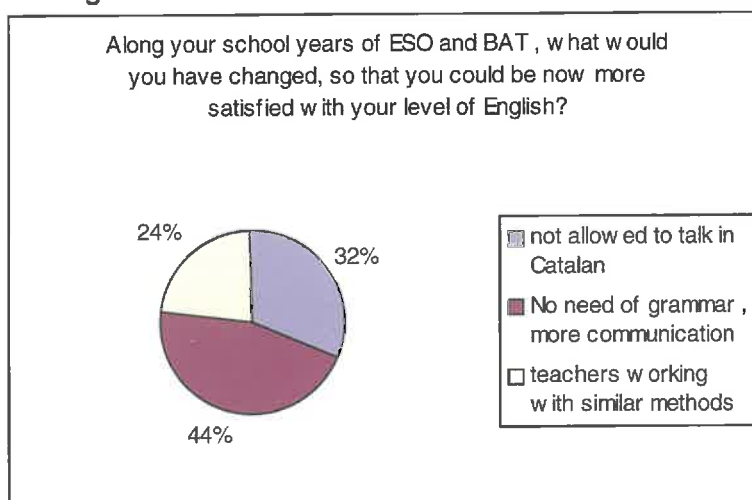


7. How would you motivate 1st ESO students in learning English? Give me a piece of advice...



I think we should really concentrate on the answers the students give to that question. Are we still doing too much grammar and not enough projects and communicative tasks?

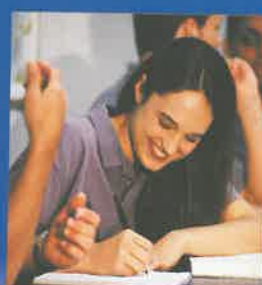
8. Along your school years of ESO and Batxillerat, what would you have changed, so that you could now be more satisfied with your level of communication in English?



In sum, showing the results of this survey had no other purpose than making us wonder for a while whether our methods are always appropriate for our students and then realize that we can still arouse enthusiasm in our classes.

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Video Games in Education and Language Learning

by Joana
Angrill Farreny

Digital game-based learning is an emerging topic in education that has its grounds on the constructivist theories of experiencing and active learning through the application of the new technologies. While play is seen as a powerful tool to foster learner's motivation, game designing involves higher intellectual skills and promotes collaboration. Although few games are being used for foreign language learning, much research in this field still needs to be done so that teachers adventure to build tasks and try out incorporating them into the virtual fantasy worlds rather than using drill-based games in their practice.

1. Introduction

Since the early days of history, games have had a significant position in our daily lives and cultures. The early Greeks and Romans considered game play –nowadays consigned to free time and leisure- and education as two concepts –*ludus* and *skole*- very much interrelated. Everyday we face games on television, on the internet, in the newspapers, in the pub or even, though rarely, at the workplace. This may, indeed, lead us to think of games as part of human universal experiences, whose power cannot be underestimated. This prevalence reveals an inherent asset that, by definition, may be useful for learning: raising intrinsic motivation to place the learner at the centre of a learning process which is usually compulsory. Our

educational system regards the use of games in class as irrelevant, inadequate and frivolous and maybe for this reason gaming has kept a low profile in education. Yet most of the literature examined exposes that, if well-chosen and well-used, games can be an add-on for the learning process. Technology has played a crucial role in accelerating their development and in changing gaming habits as well as in fostering the ludic dimension of games *per se*. Using computers is becoming an essential part of people's lives.

As digital-native students are irreversibly increasing, we cannot ignore the use of technology and games to reconcile learning and fun. Because of their playful educative potential, games are thus more and more considered for highly motivated learning.

Joana Angrill Farreny holds a BA in English Philology from the University of Barcelona and a BA in Library and Information Science from the Open University of Catalonia. Currently, she is a teacher of English at a state secondary school in Manresa. As a visiting teacher, she has also taught Spanish as a Foreign Language in England.

2. Digital Game-Based Learning

During the last decade interactive digital entertainment, commonly referred to as video games, has immersed so deeply in the new generations that their powerful influence on economics, culture or society cannot be denied. Digital games studies have come to develop their own literature and associations. Game play is changing the Millennial¹ generation's values and attitudes towards work and learning. Children spend more time wandering in digital worlds than they do with any other technological device or Internet application. Although it does not seem so, popular culture, in general terms, *has grown more complex and intellectually challenging over the past thirty years*, something which Van Eck seems to attribute to the *cognitive complexity of mass entertainment like video games*. If teaching cannot be oblivious to society's changes, there is no reason why play and project-based learning should not be included in the curriculum to attend individual needs that allow critical thinking and problem solving.

2.1. A Game Definition

Traditionally, games have been characterised as having participants, goals, rules and some kind of competition that brings about amusement. More recent definitions, such as the one that proposes Wikipedia, add the concept of educational value to the term. Computer games imply the part of interaction between the players who receive some kind of feedback to their performances. They usually represent a world of their own, completely separate from the real one, where players can express themselves without the constraints they would find in real world. As definitions vary and their core content is not common, Habgood prefers not to attempt a complete definition but rather a simplistic concept which refers to games as "interactive challenges on a digital platform undertaken for entertainment". To prevent confusion, the concepts of digital game, computer game, video game will all be used in the same sense.

2.2. Enhancing Learning with IT

Computing technology and the media are reaching more and more people and have revolutionised learning after decades of conservatism in the classroom. Nowadays, students view computers, and more specifically the Internet, as both a source of pleasure and an educational tool. Internet is a vast

resource helpful in many facets of living and the lines of playing and learning are often blurred. Because of its own nature, IT is basically learner-centred designed. For this reason, IT should be integrated into daily teaching practice, for they provide choice, dynamism, motivation and effectiveness in the teaching-learning process. Since the expansion of PCs, the use of IT and, more precisely, educational gaming software has become an increasing trend in the educational field despite the struggle to harmonise entertainment with learning.

2.3. Gaming and Motivation

Motivation is one of the key challenges teachers must face. Games act as stimulators of players' curiosity as their very intrinsic nature raises the need to reach for an established goal. Motivation and learning are two concepts closely related and they foster each other. Since they deal with fun, video games are highly motivating and effective. Motivation is activated when the psychological needs of the player, which have to do with their own interests or concerns, are fulfilled. Educational games change the role of teachers into knowledge mediators and provide learners with experiences within their zone of proximal development. In fact, Vygotsky focused on the importance of playfulness when learning as it presents a functional immediate application and real-world use of content. The fun element helps keep the learner's interest and positive attitude, and fosters intrinsic motivation. It is often suggested that learning in an informal context, as it happens in the playground or through TV, promotes knowledge acquisition. Indeed, students learn better when experiencing real and meaningful contexts, especially if they are emotionally appealing to learners. It is the teacher's role to provide this environment that motivates learning so that the student can work on their interests, needs and pleasure while feeling confident and in control of their own decisions as regards span and pace.

Intrinsic motivation activates the cognitive procedures for long-term memory and efficient learning. Motivation is related to a student's autonomy as they perceive the source of their actions. In this sense, the outcome of the students' performance is closely related to self-confidence and competence in an activity where students look for an optimal result. The motivation that stems from the illusory freedom of choosing to play a game apparently removes seriousness and boredom of the material in the lesson.

¹Van Eck uses this term to refer to the generation of teens and twentysomethings who, as opposed to the Gen X generation of teachers, are optimistic, frequently rewarded, praised and recognised. These young people want to be motivated, inspired and challenged.

Contributions

2.4. Commercial vs. Educational Games



Extracted from *Serious Games Taxonomy* by Sawyer & Smith

Acknowledged the power of games as vehicles for learning, literature on gaming has also posed the question as regards the use of commercial or educational games in the classroom. Despite the struggle for commercial success, game designers promote learning as much as possible, as long as deep and persistent engagement is ensured. Needless to say, most educational games lack a graphical design with which students have been familiar since childhood. Their interfaces are simple and well-defined and they are designed to encourage interactivity between the player and the games or even between players themselves. Commercial games are not considered good because of good graphics but if their strategies and activities keep the player engaged and motivated for continual decision-making in order to complete increasing challenging levels and a whole mission of the game based on an interactive 3D story. Far from all this, traditional educational games have evolved around drill and practice exercises with little ludic component and significant environment. The approach most promising in the short term is the integration of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) digital games in the classroom. Yet, most commercial games are not designed for teaching, and for this reason, the range of topics and their accuracy are limited (i.e. history, geography, mythology). Van Eck advocates for a blending in game design, where teachers take control of the learning part.

2.5. Engaging elements

Boredom is the key reason for high students' drop-

ping out school. This leaves no room for teachers who should connect content and learning in the classroom to these learners' aspirations. Sometimes aspirations may take on the form of fun, as they experience when game playing.

Computer games are popular because they include a determining feature to satisfy players' desire for challenge: games are based on meaningful clear achievable goals and unpredictable scores. Thus, teachers should assess the inherent motivational and emotional implications of digital games in relation to cognitive curiosity; that is, pursuing a goal through satisfying the learner's curiosity –knowledge gap- and choosing one's own level of difficulty and challenge. Mystery, for instance, can develop curiosity. However, engagement² does not come entirely from fun and motivation, but also via hard work and effort. Yet Professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi points out the need for engagement so that flow³, and by extension learning, takes place. Digital games promote possibilities for absolute immersion.

Other ingredients worth considering to introduce video games in the classroom include elements such as evoking interest through fantasy. Indeed, fantasy represents an additional hook to engage the learner. Fantasy environments may increase learning and intrinsic motivation as individual's emotional needs –power, success, etc.- can be satisfied with imaginary characters and contexts which, otherwise, would be impossible (Malone & Lepper, 1987). For digital games to be relevant, the content must be embedded in the fantasy context⁴, that is to say fantasy should be endogenous⁵. However, Habgood concludes endogenous fantasy is not essential for improving effectiveness of digital learning games rather than the role of flow.

Interactivity makes video games appealing among teachers and students. The ability to use interactive technology is in itself a motivating asset for individual meaningful learning in massively multiplayer online role playing games (MMOG). Interactivity is an element that generates experience for players and, in this sense, relevance and effective understanding, especially if there is interplay rather than isolated tasks.

2.6. Educative potential of games

Digital games have a strong task-based focus as

² Van Eck defines engagement as the constant cycle of cognitive disequilibrium and resolution.

³ Flow occurs when the player is so engaged in an activity that they come to lose track of time and the outside world.

⁴ Asgari, M. & Kaufman, D. (20004)

⁵ Endogenous fantasy in a game allows for a mutual dependence and relationship among learning and the fantasy environment.

they provide enough language and cultural background; that is, a context, where learners can engage in the tasks in the foreign language. Games are threatening not only because they pose a challenging task in the same way as real face-to-face foreign language communication, but also because students need to learn how to fend for themselves in the new world so as to accomplish their mission. Pedagogical goals are used in these alternative interactive more real-like environments. Feedback is used to respond to students' actions so that they be motivated to improve their performances and continue working. The level of challenge is mainly adjusted through assistance, which may take the form of subtitles of what characters are saying, different levels of difficulty, or tolerance at minor grammatical of learners' performances. Contexts provided by games are usually effective because of the use of a narrative story starred by the character that permits to cater for the player's desires. As learners submerge themselves into the fictitious world, they are required, and so they understand, to think of and deliver utterances that fit in with that particular context (i.e. authentic and relevant speeches).

The experience of participating in an interactive context is the starting point for the knowledge-construction. Learners stimulate their own progress when personally involved in the realistic context and develop a sense of ownership and self-awareness of the learning process. This learning environment has much of the constructivist learning theory as interaction and learner's active participation and engagement in manipulating knowledge are the main strategies that lie behind game-based learning.

2.7. Games Taxonomy

The significant amount of names (e.g. educational games, simulation games, virtual reality games, alternative purpose games, learning games, etc.) used to refer to serious games proves the lack of a well-defined classification and the need to establish a taxonomy. Nevertheless, various authors have attempted to determine a category according to different criteria. Koubek, for example, provides examples and sets a typology of games according to the learning objective (e.g. memory, precision, application of concepts, decision making, etc.), the features the game contains (e.g. communication, rules, instructions, etc.), or the topic it covers (e.g. sports, adventure, strategy, drilling, etc.). This shows the complexity to classify them following a unique pattern; Sawyer & Smith conclude the impossibility of having a serious game taxonomy without developing a taxonomy of all games. For this reason, they classify games according to the field

of interest (i.e. education, skills training, science and research, advergaming, etc.).

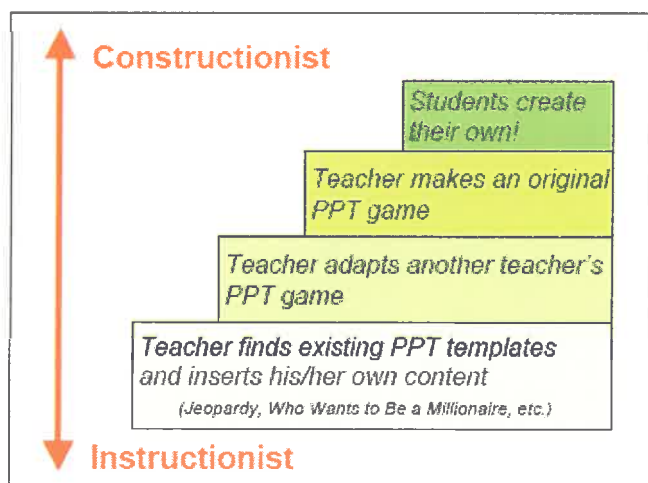
2.8. Requirements for Educational Games

Best practices of educational games gather most of the elements that characterise video games for commercial purposes. Nevertheless, educational games traditionally have rarely been designed to be played and this, in turn, is what leads to learners' disappointment and demotivation. The difference between edutainment and video games is the degree of interactivity and engagement of the player. Edutainment may cause frustration when used in the classroom as it is founded on didactical progress based on pattern repetition instead of fostering students to be in charge of their own learning development. Digital games should meet some requirements in order to be suitable for educational reasons. In a game context, values need to be embedded in rules with which players are given the power to confront. The graphical and technical interfaces should be designed as much friendly user as possible. Games should not have limitations as regards development and provide alternative trajectories that allow players to enhance their creativity and learning. In the game framework, failure is seen as an opportunity and it must open the gate to learning. For this reason, feedback comes in the form of text explanation or visual aids.

3. Creating Your Own Games

Engagement in school learning rarely occurs at the level of commitment into a recreational activity because of the motivation and challenge factors. Game designing is a splendid strategy for learning, as most of the literature supports children's learning taking place when building.

If learning in digital game contexts provides meaningful contexts where learners are to develop their



Contributions

knowledge acquisition, game designing has even much of the constructivist theory. Having students designing games (i.e. creating the games' goals, rules, characters, or even graphics) provides a meaningful experience that allows them to situate learning in an authentic context. The goal is to have students engaged in the game designing rather than just playing ready-made games. With the design process, as in any building process, learners must manipulate the content and select what is appropriate for their purposes. Engagement in the design process stems from the learning environment as this gives students considerable authority and responsibility to manage resources and take decisions.



Extracted from Rieber

The path to design demands hard work and profound commitment; yet the reward experience is so intensive and satisfying that Rieber can only best describe it as serious meaningful play. Rieber supports the idea of students becoming artists by handling a game design process to enhance their own learning in his project KID DESIGNER.

The project of building games has commonly been widespread through an easy tool such as PowerPoint. Many already-existing game templates or quiz generators can be found on the web in order to palliate programming or technological problems.

4. Practices for English Language Learning

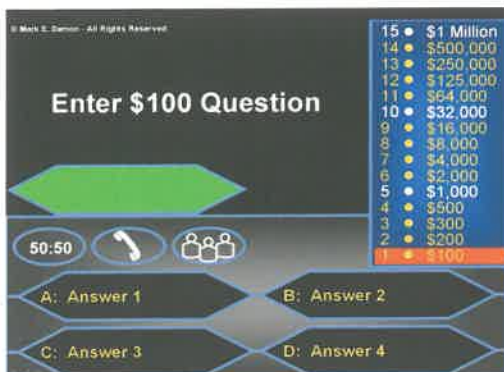
Many of the games presented so far deal with concrete aspects of the language learning, usually focusing either on grammatical points or on vocabulary acquisition. These games may fulfil some of the gaming requirements but, all in all, they are designed to practice drilling or understanding of a concept; that is, they lack a specific learning context, not to mention references to the target language culture. Purushotma proposes a series of examples on how to develop rich language teaching-learning experiences through game modding⁶ techniques, cheating⁷, etc. Few attempts have been made so far as to use modding tools to insert learning content in the game to improve the learning experience. The reasons for this may be found in the fact that the base game needs to be purchased and only some aspects are subject to modification. The fact that most games use language in one way or another allows modding and gaming for foreign language learning.

4.1. The SIMS

The commercial game The Sims is classified as a strategic life-simulation computer game in which characters carry out daily activities of virtual players. As Purushotma points out, many of the features of the game could be paired with the contents of a language textbook (i.e. parts of the body, parts of the house, household instruments, etc.). Yet, as the game has no established goal, the teacher is the sole master of constructing the mission (i.e. building a realistic English neighbourhood like a Victorian or Georgian neighbourhood, building a family, etc.).

⁶ The term refers to the act of modifying hardware or software to perform the functions the user is interested in. It is commonly used in game communities to alter content, create new ways original designers might not have considered or allow users to play home-made games, legal backup copies or even illegal unauthorised copies.

⁷ Cheating may come in the form of adding the amount of lives, altering graphical appearances, etc. so that the game is made easier.



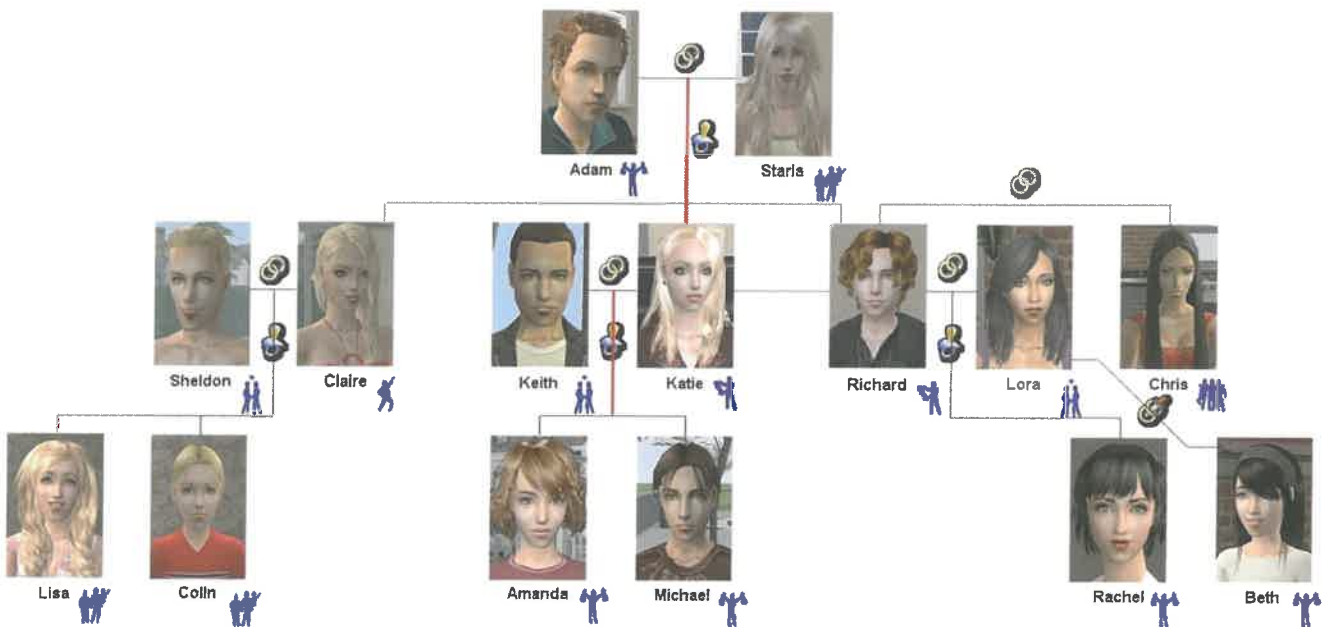
PowerPoint Template for a *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*



Who Wants to Be a Millionaire Quiz using Quiz Game Master

Contributions

Harte Family Tree



The game is the tool through which students read, acquire vocabulary, write, etc., yet it hardly provides any option to promote listening and speaking activities, activities consigned to classroom practice or to advanced students with some high technical skills. In fact, playing the game centres around creating different scenarios and telling stories. Students may be given guidelines on how to

build their house and assessment should be done according to their performance. Games like this rely on simulating a fantasy world in which players can interact as if they were in a real world. This is important for language learning as immersion is often regarded as a requisite for better language learning, unfeasible in the classroom.



Contributions

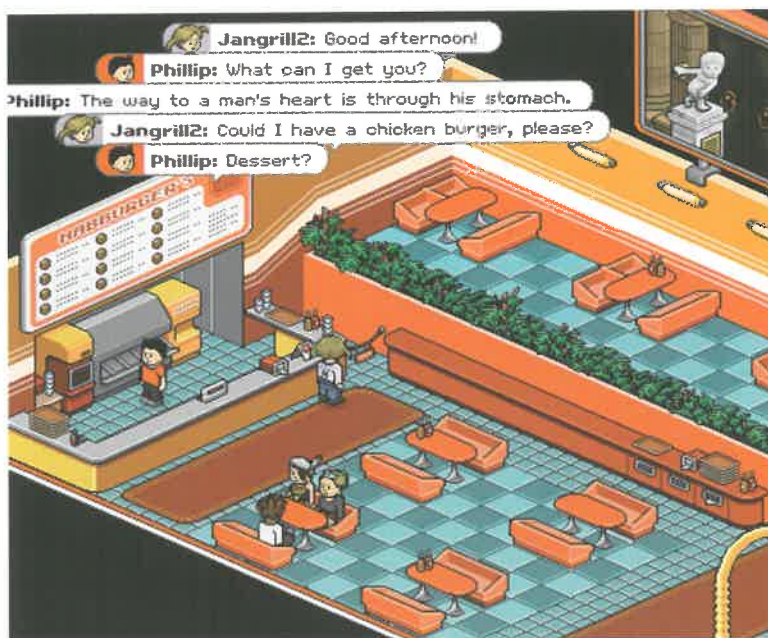
4.2. Whyville

A similar online virtual world is Whyville, the town where teens gather to chat, play, learn and have fun together. Launched a decade ago, it was released after applying research in education and the theories of constructivism and cooperative learning on the web. As in *The Sims*, the player designs their physical appearance and hangs around this microworld performing tasks they would ordinarily do such as playing games, going to the beach, going to the cinema, buying things or even write for the town newspaper. In this context English becomes the lingua franca and a virtual salary is earned by participating in educational activities and games for learning about art, history, science, economics, etc. The game permits registration as a teacher and, thus, to manage the students' accounts and check their performance on this world.



4.3. The Habbo Hotel

A virtual online game aimed at teenagers which provides a social networking environment suitable for role playing in the foreign language is Habbo Hotel. Among the features the game includes are chat rooms within the virtual hotel where the player can meet and make friends. Players can wander round public rooms such as parks, restaurants, cinemas and dance clubs. These rooms have automated robots who shout pre-established utterances when interacting with them. On the other hand, guest rooms are rooms which are customised; that means, players can personalise the room purchasing virtual furniture or restricting access.



Ordering food at the Flava Burger Bar

4.4. Second Life (SL)

SL is an online world with a difference as only English and Chinese languages are used for interaction and it is not a game on its own, although there may exist games being played in SL. This reinforces its potential as a framework for intercultural language learning. In fact, in this virtual world, it allows a context of demonstrating how information is integrated in the physical world. Teaching in SL provides a sense of place and telepresence as pla-

yers are synchronously socializing across the globe. Users can take snapshots, trade, gather objects, store information in the avatar's inventory, interact with other users through instant messaging; text chatting, or even voice chatting so that learners are faced with opportunities to use the language for authentic purposes. As the other multi-user virtual worlds, learners in SL can role play situations and participate in SurReal language quests or scavenger hunts (e.g. guided tours,

going to the restaurant or the bank, etc.). These situations can be exploited in the classroom for recreating real life situations and for knowledge-sharing or essays. The avatars are also a great source for speaking and writing activities as they are the virtual representation of a real person.

Charles O'Donnell in his blog *This is going to be Big* poses 10 reasons to go short on this social experiment of SL. Two major drawbacks for using SL in education come from the risk of entering a world with a for-profit profile. Indeed, SL is a business in itself which has its own currency that can be exchanged into real money. Secondly, there is a lack of context. Since anyone can be whoever they choose and do anything without rules nor control, this has no consistency for educational purposes. Luckily enough, Linden Lab thought of teenagers and created their adolescent version where more restrictions apply, even for adults to register. Another potential barrier is the high technical requirements for the virtual platform to function at its best.

5. Games in the EFL Classroom

5.1. Authentic Activities

Activities need to be felt real or at least have a real application so that learning is enhanced. The material and objects from games are not real but they fit into the player's commitment to that world. In this sense, activities taking place inside the virtual world may not be considered real, yet they should still be viewed as authentic if the player is engaged in the activity. Thus, play and emotion activity-based approaches seem to have a positive influence on language learning. Purushotma states the incapability of students to participate in the target language culture in the foreign language

classroom and encourages teachers to engage students to participate in activities participants of the target language country would grow up with: reading the same websites, having the same social networks and playing the same video games.

5.2. Story in Video Games

MMOG players may exceed traditional reading, writing and technology standards set in the classroom. Throughout the games evolution, games designers have learnt about the importance of integrating storytelling and character development in games. Characters are born with a set of strengths and through the game they will develop in order to become a hero. Sometimes the game starts with a book reading that transports the player into a narrative world. When playing, students are exposed to vast amounts of reading in the foreign language; yet, it is the task of the teacher to design tasks that help not only learning but also assessing. The environment and narratives that online games provide are a catalyst for teachers to encourage writing and elaborate stories about the lives of the characters in text or film format. Activities such as recreating a story as in a theatrical play give students the chance to actively engage in the creation of a story. Purushotma puts forward some activities to be carried out with *The Sims 2* which integrate reading, writing and speaking:

Writing/Reading/Speaking

Simply by playing the [modded](#) version of the game, students will be exposed to copious amounts of reading practice in the foreign language. However, designing specific reading comprehension tasks helps the teacher better assess learning. For example:

Step 1. Student write a description of an imaginary family and household in the foreign language. Include X number of specific details ("The kitchen has a black microwave on top of a blue counter", "There is a father with brown eyes, a mother with red hair, two boys and a baby girl", etc).

Step 1.5. The teacher helps correct any mistakes in the descriptions written by students.

Step 2. The students randomly shuffle descriptions with one another.

Step 3. Use the [cheat mode](#) to give students unlimited money.

Step 4. Students create the family and household outlined in their description.

Step 4.5. The teacher assesses how many of the specific details the students correctly incorporated into their creations.

Step 5. Students again shuffle between computers.

Step 6. Students verbally describe (in the L2, of course) to one another their new family. Students try to discern which family is the one they originally designed.

(note: the teacher should mediate to make sure that students don't end up with their own creations)

Contributions

Speaking



Step 1. Use the video recording tool to record a series of interactions between characters.

Step 2. Have students write a script narrating what the characters are thinking about or saying.

For students who are not comfortable with technology or not as excited about the assignment as others

Step 3. Have the students read the script to the class while playing the video recording.

For motivated students who enjoy using technology

Step 3. Create audio recordings of the character dialogs and thoughts using the free audio recording program [audacity](#).

► see a [video demonstration](#) [source video from [the strangerhood.com](#)]

Step 4. Use the online video editing tool [jumpcut](#) to combine the audio and video.

(alternatively, use the offline tools [Jahshaka](#), [Windows Media Maker](#), [Apple iMovie](#))

► see a [video demonstration](#)

Step 5. Upload your creation to the appropriate exchange community for your language.

If you create a gallery in jumpcut, please email [ravi\(at\)mit\(dot\)edu](mailto:ravi(at)mit(dot)edu) so I can feature it for other foreign language classes to watch

Step 6. Check back regularly to read comments youth in the L2 country may post.

5.3. Socializing

A good digital educational game should also favour socialisation of students. This is often achieved through a set of strategies that include collaboration, competition, negotiation, etc. Most foreign language classrooms already include some sort of social game activities in class and many of them also consign computer games for use outside the classroom. However, few experiences show how teachers are able to connect social activities with digital games. The international demographic character of digital games caters for more opportunities to foster social learning experiences. Indeed, players can make and meet people from around the world and play together as success in the game is becoming more dependent on collaboration between players –massively multiplayer online gaming- rather than on the skills and performance of an individual.

6. Conclusion

Despite being at odds with traditional schooling,

games have eventually been incorporated in the educational system as they are taking a leading role in the new net generations' culture, even many business, religious or military groups are capitalizing on this medium for propaganda. Games are effective learning tools because they provide with a fantasy context, one of the key elements in enhancing motivation. Yet this alone does not necessarily make the game educational. Keeping the player in the zone of proximal development and the adequate level of challenge and engagement makes games a frame for new learning. As not all games are alike, engagement and efficacy can be predicted if the teacher is able to recognize the content and how this is challenged in a particular game. For the foreign language teaching community, the communicative approaches to language learning is not new; the challenge now is to structure lessons and meaningful tasks into the game framework.



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English Vocabulary Teaching and Learning Strategies in Secondary Education

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by María C.
García Herrero

This article aims to be an absolute reflection on my years of teaching practice in Secondary Education, and tries to show an investigation work on my pupils' vocabulary learning strategies in the area of English that I have been carrying out during the latest months. I also enclose a little quiz I created for this project and that has been filled in by about 800 of the aprox.1,300 students of the Secondary School where I work (IES of Cangas del Narcea, in Asturias). It has been a great help to come to conclusions and to get percentages. Apart from this objective proof, every statement included in the article is the result of the study of my teaching experience in three different Autonomous Communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

First of all, I would like to clarify the level and ages of the students who have been the object of my study: Secondary Education is divided into two levels or stages, Compulsory Secondary Education (from 12 to 16) and Bachillerato (from 16 to 18). They are teenagers, and they have their special learning characteristics therefore.

- 1st CSE: 12-13 years old students.
- 2nd CSE: 13-14 years old students.
- 3rd CSE: 14-15 years old students.
- 4th CSE: 15-16 years old students.

- 1st Bachillerato: 16-17 years old students.
- 2nd Bachillerato: 17-18 years old students.

Vocabulary Learning in the area of Foreign Languages is, no doubt, one of the most motivating parts for our pupils, since most of them *are able* of memorizing lists, more or less long, that maybe at first seem to be impossible to assimilate, but thanks to repeated practise and usage of them, they finally remain in their memory.

However has lexical competence traditionally been a little put aside during the Compulsory Education in the area of Foreign Languages, since grammar

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has been always considered much more important. Words are basic parts of thought, and as several studies and myself have observed, there exists a direct relationship between lexical shortage and failure in this area, and students very often fail to apply grammar rules because they do not understand the meaning of the sentence, they do not know the words in it. And as Jesús Moreno, teacher of the IES “La Malladeta” in Villajoyosa (Alicante) says in his article “Propuestas para la Enseñanza de Vocabulario en el Aula”, “For such important mental processes as relating, arranging, classifying and distinguishing, we need words. Making progress in knowledge implies shading, telling in detail, and for that we need to endow pupils with a significant lexical volume, which allows them to express themselves with clarity, propriety and precision”.

Most of my pupils *do* like learning vocabulary, much more than learning grammar or phonetics, for instance. As it has been said in the abstract, this essay pretends to be a personal reflection, therefore what I am going to explain here is the way my pupils learn vocabulary, the strategies I use to help them with this learning, and the way textbooks help students with vocabulary learning in Secondary Education.

2. VOCABULARY TEACHING STRATEGIES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

When I introduce a topic or a unit, I bear in mind the following aspects:

- I follow the textbook directions, since they are a selection of the most common and suitable terms for their level.
- I determine the next frequency of the new terms usage.
- I also determine the utility of these terms.
- I bear in mind the assimilation capacity of my pupils.
- I teach the new vocabulary basing this teaching on the four basic skills of English as a foreign language: writing, reading, listening and speaking (that is, I try to make use of the new terms in an oral, written, listened and visual way).

I always start with a “brainstorming”, through which our pupils will activate their previous knowledge, at the same time as the most advanced pupils will introduce almost forgotten or even new words for the rest of the class. Moreover, If we write them on the blackboard, the terms will visually be etched in their memory.

Apart from the previous considerations, in my opinion, and according to my experience, some other aspects should not be forgotten when teaching vocabulary items, since their usefulness is evident to understand the functioning of the English language:

- Indicating which part of the discourse the item belongs to (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition...).
- Teaching the words or particles which usually go with the term (i.e. to worry *about*, to talk *to*...) as well as the most frequent expressions which include this word (set phrases or collocations), if we consider them useful (i.e. “*little*”- “*little by little*”).
- Explaining their meaning in and out of the context (i.e. *to work* may mean “funcionar” or “trabajar”, depending on the situation).
- Teaching the word pronunciation, which I have moreover generalized with the use of phonetics during the present school year (before this, it seemed to be restricted to high levels). The reason for this initiative is the fact that the Ministry of Education wants to change the curriculum for Secondary Education in the area of Foreign Languages with the increasing importance of Phonetics and pronunciation, as students are intended to be orally examined by the end of their Secondary Education at the P.A.U. (Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad).
- When pertinent, we should talk about the convenience of the word use in certain contexts, indicating if it is *slang*, too formal, etc.

3. THE WAY TEXTBOOKS TEACH VOCABULARY

Textbooks and activity books in Secondary Education offer nowadays a great variety of activities for our students to learn and especially to reinforce vocabulary.

Firstly, I would like to clarify that Compulsory Education textbooks offer a much more basic vocabulary than Bachillerato ones. Compulsory Education vocabulary consists of the typical categories, that is, “Family”, “The House”, “Animals”, “Clothes” or “Food” among others, which increase their difficulty and add new words when the level becomes higher. On the other hand, Bachillerato vocabulary highly increases; terms become much more specialized at the same time as all the vocabulary learnt in Compulsory Secondary Education reinforce. In any case, there is normally a specific section for vocabulary practice.

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Anyway, the exercises are of the same type in both stages. The following are the kind of activities pupils can find in their books to learn vocabulary:

- Readings: they are normally followed by true/false statements, or by questions, so that they can use scanning and skimming strategies.
- Completing Lists or Tables: they are very useful exercises to review old vocabulary.
- Word Puzzles and Word Squares: Students love them, as it is a way of learning by playing.
- Finding opposites or synonyms: from a list of words written at random, and that usually belong to the same semantic field.
- Writing the words under the correct category heading.
- Circling the odd word out.
- Completing the sentences with the words in the box.
- Unjumbling the letters to form words.
- Describing objects, people, places, a picture, etc.
- Labelling pictures.
- Filling in the gaps with a suitable word.
- Matching the parts to make complete words, set phrases, etc.
- Finding adjectives/verbs/prepositions, etc in a text.
- Matching the names with their descriptions.
- Wordbuilding.
- Replacing for a synonym.
- Projects : thematic posters, f.i.

And, of course, we ourselves may add a great variety of games specifically designed to learn vocabulary, which students regard as amusing and useful ones -I often use sets of cards especially planned for every semantic field, for instance, issuing a number of cards between five and ten among the students, so that everyone must invent a story with the assigned words. And compositions are also of great value for the practising and reinforcement of vocabulary and expressions, since they require a great concentration, a work of looking up new words in the dictionary. A good correction and later, a review of mistakes, greatly improve students' linguistic competence. Finally, I have always got great results with graded reading books, where they can extensively practise their vocabulary, and learn new terms.

On the other hand, some textbooks teach learning strategies in a specific section included in every unit, especially in low levels.

To end with this section, I would like to talk about

the vocabulary learning strategies that we can teach our pupils, and that they will be, no doubt, of great utility for them:

1. When taking notes about new words, they should write them with their translation, meanings, and other interesting explanations, such as special uses or expressions. Here, we make use of the notions of monosemy, polysemy, antonymy, homonymy, and so on.
2. When looking up a term in the dictionary, to notice which type of word it is, because it helps knowing about its use or position in the sentence.
3. Illustrating the words with pictures (in low levels).
4. Writing phonetics down when a word has a difficult pronunciation. Also highlighting the stressed syllable or vowel.
5. Circling, highlighting, writing in capital letters, etc, the most difficult or important parts, e.g.. *I want TO go.*
6. Creating "word webs" to group words into semantic fields and to facilitate this way their memorization. Or grouping the words in thematic cards.

Anyhow, it is a question of using methods which catch their eye and raise interest, and at any rate make our pupils remember certain words.

4. LEARNING STRATEGIES

This section refers to the conscious or unconscious way our students have of etching new words in their minds.

To incorporate new words or terms, with respect to the same significant, the pupil should go over the majority of the following stages (Navarro Pablo, 2000):

- Necessity or desire of learning a certain word.
- First encounter and identification or understanding of its meaning.
- Analysis and processing of its meaning.
- Application of learning strategies or studying for the memorization of the word.
- Reencounter with the word in the same context or in different context.

Having success in this process is normally a guarantee for the memorization of a word. To strengthen the permanence of the new terms, some of the following techniques can be followed:

repetition (mentally, aloud, writing), sensorial strategies (association of the new word to a sense), association to a mental image, mnemotechnical and mechanical strategies. Moreover, to end this acquisition-learning process, it is important a periodical repetition, and the effective use in suitable contexts.

5. RESEARCH WORK

To develop this section, I have carried out –as I said in the abstract- an investigation work during the last months in three ways: by taking notes through my observation in class about the manner my pupils learn vocabulary; through their notebook observation (I ask them for it once every term, mainly at the end of it), and finally with an objective quiz I issued trying to get every level. For this part of the project I relied on my workmates' help, since they distributed the test among their students (I only teach five groups belonging to two different levels), so that I could comprise every level of Secondary Education.

A. Class Observation

First of all, I have been observing, as I stated before- the way students learn vocabulary. Not at the beginning of my teaching experience, but during the latest two school years, I decided to ask students for a very organized notebook, and I am not totally sure if it is because of this fact, but I have noticed a higher fluency, and consequently, also a greater mastery of vocabulary by my pupils than in the previous years. I really think that well-organized notes enormously help students to learn more and better. My pupils' notebooks, apart from Grammar, Exercises, Phonetics and Compositions, also include a section for Vocabulary, no matter if they have it in their books. Sometimes we also use pictures to label (with clothes, or the weather, for example) that they stick on their notebooks, mainly in low levels. As I have observed, if I ask for tidy and organized notebooks, my students usually try to do it well, even the worst students, they normally like that, and many times they re-write and highlight their contents, achieving with this a unconscious reinforcement of all the things seen in class, and subsequently of vocabulary.

B. Questionnaire: Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Secondary Education

The following quiz is the one I talked about above. I created it to study the way pupils behave when learning vocabulary. I tested it on about 800 pupils

from every year of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE), and on both the first and the second year of Bachillerato, that is therefore, on the whole Secondary Education to see the differences regarding vocabulary learning strategies. I must also say that only hard-working pupils were chosen to do it, no matter how good or bad their results in the area of English were.

The main and the most notorious conclusions I reached to through the use of this questionnaire were the following ones:

(*Please notice that the questions 5 and 8 admitted one or more answers)

1st Question: The most outstanding fact is the great difference among the boys and girls of 3rd CSE, since a 100% of girls admit jumping new words in a text and keep on reading, while a 0% of boys said 'yes' to the same option. Most students of the other levels try to infer the meaning from the context.

2nd Question: The questionnaire reveals that the students who like vocabulary the most are the boys of 3rd CSE (41, 6%), and the ones who dislike vocabulary the most are the boys of 1st Bachillerato (0% chose it as the part of the area they liked the most). As an average percentage, Secondary pupils prefer "Speaking" over the rest of the parts, and "Phonetics" is the one they like the least.

3rd Question: As it was predictable, a significant 0% of the boys in 1st CSE chose it as the hardest part to study (it contrasts with the 27.2% of girls of the same level). On the other hand, it was in the upper levels that vocabulary was chosen as the most difficult part of English; so we have a 45% of boys and a 55.5% of girls in 1st Bachillerato, and a 60% of boys and a 41.6 of girls in 2nd Bachillerato.

4th Question: Consequently, a 37.5% of boys and a 54.5% of girls in 1st of CSE said that they find vocabulary the easiest part of English to study. It is also remarkable the great difference among boys and girls in 3rd of CSE, since a 50% of boys said it was the easiest part while a 0% of girls said the same.

5th Question: The great importance given by teachers to the students' notebooks in low levels (they are normally evaluated too) is evident in the answers to this questions. So, we have a 87.5% of boys and a 100% of girls in 1st CSE who note down new vocabulary on their notebooks, while in Bachillerato the opposite happens: a 100% of boys in 1st Bachillerato and a 100% of boys together with a 91.6% of girls in 2nd Bachillerato note down

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new vocabulary on their text books. Moreover those boys in both 1st and 2nd Bachillerato never note down any vocabulary on their notebooks. It is also meaningful that the boys in 4th CSE note new vocabulary in the same proportion (80.3%) both on their notebooks and on their textbook. Finally, the percentages of pupils who make some kind of cards to memorize vocabulary is extremely low in every level and both in boys and girls, except for the boys in 3rd CSE (a 41.5%) and the girls in 1st Bachillerato (a 33.3%).

6th Question: Surprisingly, there is a very big percentage in all levels of pupils who learn vocabulary by heart, repeating it aloud or by themselves (it is so evident with that 100% of boys in 4th CSE). Boys in 2nd Bachillerato are the only ones who affirm that they never study vocabulary this way.

7th Question: Generally speaking, the boys are the “laziest” pupils, although not much more than girls when learning vocabulary. Most of them admit leaving the study of new words for the last days before their exam takes place. In higher levels the difference among boys and girls is bigger. It can be seen in the boys in 4th CSE and in 2nd Bachillerato above all, since the 100% of them said that they prefer studying vocabulary just before their exams.

8th Question: In my opinion, it is the most interesting question, since it reveals the different strategies the students use when learning vocabulary. Surprisingly, the boys and girls in 1st and 2nd CSE are the ones who use more devices. They recognize above all, asking their teachers about the new words they see on TV or computers, but a high percentage also look up the words appearing in song lyrics in dictionaries, f.i. the girls in 4th CSE, 1st and 2nd Bachillerato also use a great number of strategies. On the other hand, the ones who use less devices are the girls in 3rd CSE and the boys in 2nd Bachillerato. The most used strategies are trying to know song lyrics, especially 75% of girls in 4th CSE (we must not forget that the great majority of teenagers love music), and above all noting down unknown words that they see on TV or computers to ask their teachers about their meanings (a 75% of boys in 1st CSE, or a 66.6% of boys in 2nd Bachillerato).

9th Question: The types of activities students consider the most useful to learn or practice vocabulary vary depending on their levels and sex. “Fill in the gaps” exercises have been chosen by a 31.5% of boys in 2nd CSE, a 60% of boys in 4th CSE, a 45.4% of boys in 1st Bachillerato, and a 53.3% of boys in 2nd Bachillerato. A 37.5 of boys and a

36.3% of girls in 1st CSE, together with a 27,2% of girls in 2nd CSE prefer crosswords or word squares. Just a 25% of boys in 3rd CSE and a significant 0% the girls in 3rd CSE consider writing compositions the most useful device (in contrast to many English teachers’ opinion). And reading books in English has been chosen by a 30% of girls in 3rd CSE, a 72.3% of girls in 1st Bachillerato, and a 29.1% of girls in 2nd Bachillerato. Generally speaking, students of Secondary Education regard “fill in the gaps” exercises and reading books in English as the most useful activities to learn or reinforce vocabulary, while matching exercises, and completing vocabulary lists are considered the least useful.

CONCLUSION

As I have been saying from the beginning of this essay, this work has been eminently practical, since it has been an attempt to reflect what I see in my classes everyday, that is, the way the textbooks I use introduce new vocabulary, the type of specific exercises, the strategies students use, their preferences, and so on.

Through the use of a questionnaire I wanted to show a series of facts and evidences in the different levels of the Secondary Education. It was a hard work which took me a lot of time, but it was, in my opinion, the best way of getting objective results and conclusions.

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ATTACHED DOCUMENT 1

QUESTIONNAIRE ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES IN CSE AND BACHILLERATO (Thanks you for your collaboration!)

María García Herrero

School Year:

Sex:

Age:

- 1 When you do not understand something in a text and your teacher is not there to help you, what do you do?
 - a. I jump it , and I keep on reading, without paying any more attention to it.
 - b. I stop and I do not keep on reading, because if I do not know every word, I can't understand the text, so I take a dictionary and I look them up.
 - c. I stop to think and I deduce more or less the meaning by looking at what I understand of the rest of the text.

2. Which is the part you like the most in this area?
 - a. Phonetics
 - b. Grammar
 - c. Vocabulary
 - d. Activities
 - e. Listening
 - f. Speaking

3. What is the part you find the hardest to study from the above ones?
4. And which one do you find the easiest?
5. Where do you write down the new vocabulary? (Circle every suitable answer)
 - a. In my notebook.
 - b. I make cards arranged in topics.
 - c. In my textbook.

6. How do you learn vocabulary for your exams?
 - a. By heart, repeating it aloud or by myself many times.
 - b. Writing it down many times.
 - c. I simply review the activities and texts seen in class

7. When do you try to memorize vocabulary?
 - a. That very same day, or a few days after seeing it in class.
 - b. One or two days before the exam.

8. Which of these strategies do you use to learn new words? (Circle every suitable answer):
 - a. I sometimes read books or texts in English, no matter if it is not compulsory for class.
 - b. When I get a song lyrics that I like, I look up some words that I do not know in the dictionary.
 - c. When I see some words or phrases in English that I do not know either on TV or on a computer game, I try to find out their meaning, either looking them up, or by asking my teacher.
 - d. Sometimes I have a look at the dictionary and I learn some new word.

9. Which of the following types of activities do you think of as the most useful to learn or practise vocabulary? :
 - a. Filling in the gaps with vocabulary given.
 - b. Crosswords or Word squares.
 - c. Reading texts.
 - d. Matching (words and pictures, words and their definitions, etc).
 - e. Completing vocabulary list or columns.
 - f. Writing compositions.
 - g. Reading books in English.

ATTACHED DOCUMENT 2

	1º ESO		2º ESO		3º ESO		4º ESO		1º BACHILLERATO		2º BACHILLERATO	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1st QUESTION	A	12,5%	0%	4,54%	0%	100%	19,3%	0%	18,1%	27,2%	0%	4,16%
	B	25%	54,5%	26,3%	15	25%	40,2%	40,2%	18,1%	16,6%	40%	0%
	C	62,5%	45,4%	73,6%	27,2%	75%	0%	0%	63,6%	66,6%	60%	24
2nd QUESTION	A	25%	18,1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6,25%	18,1%	5,5%	40%	0%
	B	37,5%	0%	10,5%	9%	16,6%	30,5%	19,7%	9,09%	5,5%	0%	33,3%
	C	25%	27,2%	26,3%	31,8%	41,6%	19,5%	19,7%	0%	11,1%	20%	33,3%
3rd QUESTION	D	0%	9%	21%	4,54%	8,3%	20,4%	0%	0%	33,3%	0%	20,8%
	E	0%	18,1%	15,7%	22,7%	8,3%	0%	0%	45,4%	11,1%	0%	4,16%
	F	12,5%	27,2%	26,3%	9%	25%	30,5%	40,2%	9,09%	27,7%	40%	8,3%
4th QUESTION	A	12,5%	18,1%	21%	31,8%	25%	0%	0%	43,75%	16,6%	60%	25%
	B	62,5%	36,3%	36,8%	18,1%	33,3%	30,5%	80,3%	45,4%	16,6%	0%	29,1%
	C	0%	27,2%	21%	22,7%	25%	39,4%	19,7%	45,4%	55,5%	60%	41,6%
5th QUESTION	D	0%	0%	0%	4,5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	E	25%	0%	10,5%	4,5%	8,3%	0%	0%	6,25%	11,1%	0%	4,16%
	F	0%	18,1%	10,5%	18,1%	8,3%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6th QUESTION	A	2,5%	9%	10,5%	13,6%	8,3%	40%	0%	18,1%	16,6%	13,3%	0%
	B	12,5%	0%	21%	36,3%	25%	0%	19,7%	0%	55,5%	66,6%	41,6%
	C	37,5%	54,5%	21%	27,2%	50%	0%	40,2%	63,6%	16,6%	20%	25%
7th QUESTION	D	12,5%	9%	31,5%	4,5%	8,3%	10%	19,7%	9,09%	0%	0%	0%
	E	12,5%	9%	5,2%	9%	0%	0%	19,7%	9,09%	0%	0%	25%
	F	0%	0%	10,5%	9%	8,3%	0%	0%	0%	11,1%	0%	8,3%
8th QUESTION	A	87,5%	100%	52,6%	54,5%	58,3%	80%	80,3%	9,09%	33,3%	0%	16,6%
	B	0%	0%	5,2%	4,5%	41,6%	0%	0%	9,09%	33,3%	0%	12,5%
	C	12,5%	36,3%	57,8%	54,5%	75%	40%	80,3%	100%	50%	100%	91,6%
9th QUESTION	A	37,5%	36,3%	42,1%	45,4%	41,6%	40%	100%	36,3%	50%	0%	16,6%
	B	25%	54,5%	21%	22,7%	8,3%	0%	0%	9,09%	16,6%	20%	25%
	C	37,5%	9%	36,8%	31,8%	50%	20%	0%	54,5%	33,3%	80%	58,3%
10th QUESTION	A	50%	81,8%	42,1%	45,4%	66,6%	70%	0%	18,1%	33,3%	0%	20,8%
	B	50%	18,1%	57,8%	54,5%	33,3%	33,1%	100%	81,8%	66,6%	100%	79,1%
	C	12,5%	27,2%	15,7%	22,7%	25%	0%	0%	36,3%	33,3%	33,3%	29,1%
11th QUESTION	A	12,5%	36,3%	21%	54,5%	33,3%	40,2%	19,7%	27,2%	33,3%	0%	58,3%
	B	75%	36,3%	63,1%	63,6%	83,3%	60,1%	59,4%	63,6%	33,3%	66,6%	62,5%
	C	37,5%	54,5%	31,5%	27,2%	16,6%	0%	19,7%	9,09%	16,6%	0%	12,5%
12th QUESTION	A	12,5%	18,1%	31,5%	22,7%	0%	20,1%	60%	45,4%	0%	53,3%	16,6%
	B	37,5%	9%	26,3%	27,2%	16,6%	20,1%	0%	18,1%	5,5%	0%	4,16%
	C	37,5%	36,3%	10,5%	27,2%	16,6%	10%	20%	0%	11,1%	20%	25%
13th QUESTION	D	0%	9%	5,2%	13,6%	8,3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8,3%
	E	0%	0%	0%	9%	16,6%	0%	0%	18,1%	0%	6,6%	4,16%
	F	12,5%	9%	15,7%	0%	25%	0%	0%	9,09%	11,1%	20%	12,5%
G	0%	18,1%	10,5%	0%	16,6%	30%	20%	6,25%	9,09%	0%	29,1%	

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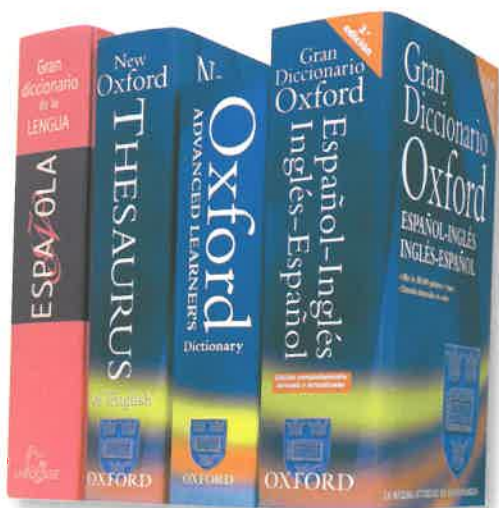
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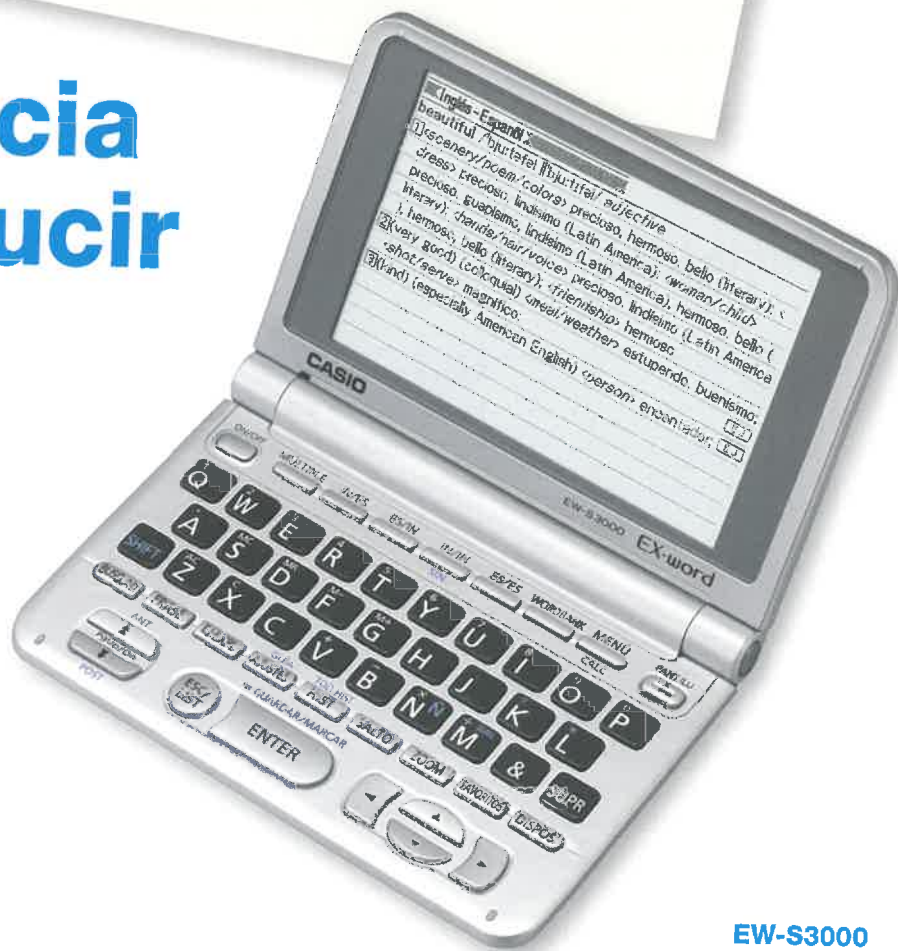
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La diferencia entre traducir y definir

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Musings on the Topic of Behaviour

by Barbara Leonard

Whenever two or three teachers are gathered together it will not be long before the thorny subject of 'behaviour' is raised. When we hear the word we automatically assume that it will be preceded by the adjective 'bad' or, more popular in a British educational environment, the euphemism 'challenging'. Are things really that bad? If they are, what role do teachers have?

Last summer I went to stay with one of my aunts in the tiny Welsh village where she lives in Powys. On one of the many rainy days that beset my visit (it is very green for a reason) she gave me a pocket history of the village school to read. It was with some amusement that I read an entry from the head teacher's daily log. He recorded how he had punished a child for fighting and how, the following day, he had to eject the boy's father from the school when he came to remonstrate with him for punishing his son. The date was 1896: clearly some things have not changed with time.

We all know that the vast majority of children, as is also true of adults, behave within acceptable boundaries. Clearly when this does not happen, it results in tension and upset for all involved as

well as putting a brake on the learning that can take place in such an environment. What I believe has changed to some degree in our more modern culture, especially in Britain, is that our community ties have become weaker. In addition, there has been a strong move to champion the rights of the individual over the needs of the wider community. What started as a reasonable idea that all children as individuals have distinctive needs that should be addressed as such, has mutated into the idea that choice and individualism should become paramount. I lost count of the number of times children I had to discipline told me that I was infringing their human rights.

Any teacher worth their salt sees each pupil as an individual. This is much easier at primary level where teachers get to know the children

Initial summer employment as an English teacher in Lowestoft in the 1970s (on the basis that I had a pulse and English as a first language) was my first tentative step into the world of EFL. On completion of my degree and post-graduate teaching qualifications, I worked at the EOI Drassanes in Barcelona. I then went on to work at several language schools in London before joining forces with ARELS / FELCO to help their drive for higher standards in all member schools. Moving away from London, life took me in a separate direction as I became involved in third-sector management. However, the call of education grew ever louder as my own daughter started school. I retrained and started work in primary education where my areas of specialism were literacy and dealing with challenging children. I now divide my time between Poole and Girona and between teaching English and being a student of Catalan.

very well. A holistic approach is natural and the smaller environment makes this a lot easier. At secondary the numbers get bigger and the task more difficult. Registering children at every class or issuing them with swipe cards to track their movements around a site sums up the problem. As a disenchanted supply teacher commented as she related how the kids got round this by giving the swipe card to someone else to use on their behalf as they bunked off for the afternoon, 'The thing is with kids, they are like water: they will always find the cracks in the system'. Isn't that why teaching is so interesting? The British Government ran a series of advertisements to attract people into teaching using just this idea. It was an object of derision in many a staffroom.

The modern pressurised life that many of us lead means that we simply do not have time to dedicate to strengthening those all-important relationships that are the glue that holds together families, friends, communities and society as a whole. To what extent we can control this as either individuals or teachers is debatable. So many parents told me they were unable to come into school to talk about their child's work because of their working hours. So many children are enrolled for after school clubs as they provide somewhere for them to go until their parents can get home from work. We are all at the mercy of the march of capitalism, although at the time of writing this article it all seems to be imploding.

When society is unhappy teachers, and the educational system as a whole, form an easy target. In the last decade or so the British Government has made endless changes to the education system. There are a lot of votes to be had in promising the earth in educational terms. Largely this has meant changing the working environment from one where creativity and enthusiasm thrived, to one where what has become important is only what can be measured. Children become numbers and teachers become responsible for their 'progress' only in these crude terms.

Even more worrying are the initiatives that are put in place by the British Government listening to the concerns of their many focus groups. Perceive a deterioration in the standard of public behaviour? Introduce citizenship as a school subject. Worried about terrorism? Ask teachers to monitor their classes for any signs that grooming children to encourage them to join extremist groups is taking place. Yes, that really was suggested.

Hey folks – teachers are people too and it would be nice if they were not always made to feel that the fate of a challenged society is their exclusive responsibility. We know that for many children we may be one of the few positive adult models of behaviour but, let's not forget that age-old saying: It takes a village to raise a child.

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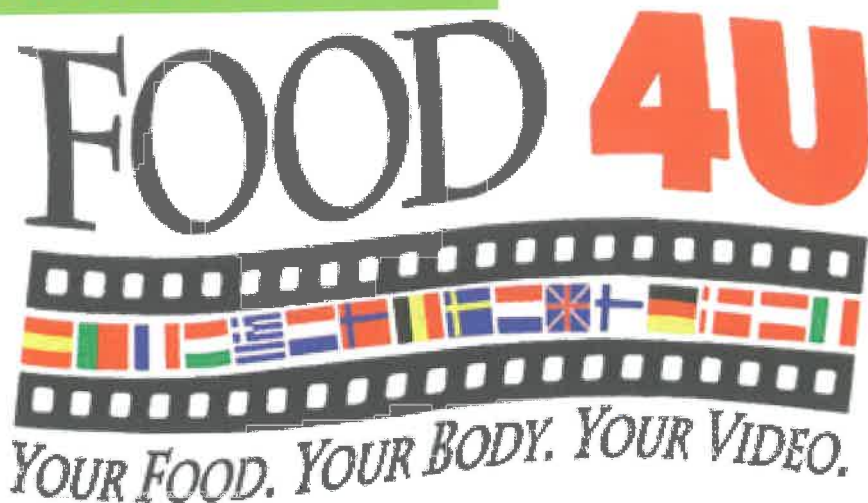


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SPECIAL DISCOUNT
SHOWING YOUR APAC CARD



My experience with students making and advert for the food 4U competition and winning the trip to Italy

by **Mariona Sanchez**

Last course I received a brochure for the festival food 4 u and I decided to take part in the Competition.

Food 4U is an awareness campaign under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of agricultural, nutrition and forestry policies on the importance of an informed food choice. It is a European-wide competition to create publicity spots and an opportunity for students to express themselves in a creative way and to air their differences on the subject of healthy nutrition. Its purpose is to make European students aware of the importance of acquiring healthy habits. All European schools can take part in the competition and all we have to do is an advert promoting healthy habits. The Organization selects two or three adverts from every country and the groups selected get a one-week trip to Italy to join the Festival. Of course there are some rules like using English in the advert, the length of which cannot exceed 40 seconds and the participants of the work, which cannot be more than 10.

Having summed up the main rules one can imagine the first problems a secondary teacher may encounter, such as the limited members of the group, which is what a teacher dreams about, having 10 students! Now I am going to explain step by step what I did with a class of 30 students.

This happened during the third term; usually one should have the whole course to prepare it but I

read the information late... What I did first was to choose the course, I had some batxilleratos and ESO, students from Batx had a lot of work to do, so I chose a group of 4th of ESO which I thought was more appropriate. Then I had to ask the students if they were interested in doing it, the main motivation here is that the organization chooses 2 ads from every European country and just for being selected you get a week long trip to Italy to join the Festival with all the expenses covered -flight, meals, accommodation etc.- and the opportunity to meet students from other countries. Of course, the answer was "YES; we want to take part in it". So the next step was to include a mark for the work done in the evaluation, so that they took it more seriously.

FIRST STEP. HOW and WHEN?

The first problem I encountered was the group class, if only a spot made by ten students was accepted, what could I do with a group of 30 students? Did I have to choose the best students to do it? I could never do that, so I decided to ask the organization if a school could present more than one advert; the answer was that you could present as many videos as you want. So the first problem was solved, I divided the class in 3 groups and each group was going to prepare an advert.

Now that the class group was divided in three groups -of ten students each- each group had to

decide which story to tell and how they were going to do it, but a new problem arose here: when were we going to do this? During class hours is quite difficult because we have a programme to follow so I decided to do it during the B'hours, when the group is split in 2 and you have less students to work with which makes the whole process easier.

The second problem was the resources we had, they had to think of an advert that could take place either in the school or if they wanted to shoot it outside it had to be a park or an area where we could easily arrive without wasting time to get there. Of course, they had to think about the resources we had, we could not afford special effects, expensive costumes, etc.

We had approximately two months to prepare everything, which means more or less 8 lessons if everything went well, if we did not have a holiday, etc... So it had to be very well planned. I divided the tasks into the following steps:

Steps to follow:

- 1- Steps
- 2- Brainstorming approximately two days)
- 3- Story-script one day
- 4- Storyboard one day
- 5- Planning of the shooting who is the director, camera operators, etc
- 6- Rehearsal one day
- 7- paperwork for the shooting
- 8- Shooting one whole afternoon
- 9- Editing role of the teacher
- 10- Award-stay in Italy

The students were in charge of the creation-storyboard-, direction –director-, shooting –camera operators, sound engineers, lighting engineer-. Students were also the spot's actors. Thus, the different roles, specialist in various areas, would bring to life the coordinated and harmonious team, who were working in unison for the successful outcome of the work.

1- STEPS

I devoted one hour to clearly explain all the steps of the process and solve all the doubts they had in order not to waste time when going through the steps: this included an explanation of a brainstorming, story board, different types of shots, how to use the camera, etc.

Of course the schedule could change according to the needs of each group; maybe one group would have many ideas at the beginning of the process and maybe another group would have no inspiration at all.

As homework they had to check different web

pages with adverts to be familiar with the language of advertising.

2- BRAINSTORMING

The following week, the groups, whose members were chosen by me but following their inclinations, started bringing and discussing their ideas. As I had expected, two groups finished the hour without having decided the ad, while one group did, in less than an hour, had a very interesting idea, which they had to develop the following week.

3- STORY SCRIPT

This was the most difficult task for the students, we altered the schedule and it took two hours, some of them even needed three to do it. They had to develop the ideas into a short and comprehensible story and then reduce it because we just had 30 seconds. I am giving you an example of one of them so you have an idea of the process of simplification; One of the adverts wanted to show different people though different ages since the primitive world up till now. They wanted to show all of them except the last one eating healthy food, fruit and vegetables. The last group of people had the choice between fast food and healthy fruit and if they wanted the evolution to continue they had to make the right choice. We did not judge the content of the message but it was clear that showing people from different times in the history of the world was not an easy task to do, apart from the Atrezzo we had just 30 seconds to show different periods of time and all of them had to do the gesture of eating fruit!! It may seem easy but to shoot just one roman eating grapes we could spend about 10 seconds...so they had to reduce the timing of appearances. Finally they solved the problem cutting down some periods of time and reducing it to Homo sapiens, Romans, medieval china, the 60's and 2007.

4-5- STORYBOARD AND PLANNING OF THE SHOOTING

Surprisingly, once they had the story script, drawing the storyboard was not a difficult task to do. Two members of the group were drawing the storyboard following the indications of the other members that were discussing how to apply the script into shots. About the planning of the shooting, two of the groups had the different roles already assigned, one wanted to be the camera, the other the make up, and so on. One of the groups was far behind; they did not have the script because they did not have a clear idea so I had to put pressure on them.

Contributions

6. REHEARSAL

Before shooting the real ad the different groups practiced the whole hour in order to skip all the laughs on the shooting day and to get familiar with the camera. The group I had put the pressure on finally came up with an idea and developed it through the whole hour; their only problem was that they did not have a rehearsal day.

7- PAPERWORK

In order to do the whole work the teacher had to prepare an authorization of image for the parents to sign, another authorization to shoot outside the school, in that case we shot all the spots in a park, and we had to ask for permission of shooting in a park, which I have to admit was the most difficult one to get, because you have to find an appropriate location and not far from the school, otherwise you spend the whole 2 hours getting there. And for some locations you might never get permission, so...fortunately the web page of Barcelona plató makes everything go faster, not easier but faster and finally we were able to shoot in a small park near the school. I have to remind you that it takes time to get the permission and you have to give the exact dates, so one has to plan in advance which dates you are going there and choose another date in case of rain.

8- SHOOTING

In order to do the shooting I needed again the help of another teacher as by law we need more than one teacher to go out with a group of 30 students. The day of the shooting we did not waste time and started early and finished late. It took from 3pm till 6 pm, and one group did not finish the shooting. We placed the three groups in different places of the park, and we ran from one to another to help. They did have a wonderful time when shooting if we do not take into account some arguments they had because of the stress, but all of them when evaluating the process did choose the shooting as the best part of it. They also saw that even when everything was carefully planned they had to repeat and repeat some shots due to the appearance of some "involuntary extras" or due to some English mistakes or due to the lack of fruit: -they had eaten all the fruit when repeating the shots. - Or due to many other things that may happen when shooting.

9- EDITING

As I teach English and not video techniques, I did not have time to teach the students how to edit a film, so the whole process of editing lies with the

teacher. Fortunately there are some very easy programs to edit a short film. I used the easiest one which is Studio 10, it is really easy to use and one does not need to know about complex processes of editing, we just have to cut and paste, and the results are quite satisfying -maybe not a professional finishing but quite satisfactory.

And this is the whole process, once the shooting is transferred onto a dvd and a tape, we sent it to the festival, and luckily we were classified and awarded with the trip to Italy.

10- AWARD-STAY IN ITALY

400 Youngsters from the 15 European countries spent 4-days in Camerota, in the Cilento region, home of the Mediterranean diet. There the Food 4U Video Festival took place with the world preview projection of the 36 finalist commercials. During the stay in Camerota we had different tourist and study activities on the region (excursions and guided tours aimed at meeting to know the historical, artistic, cultural and local wine and food heritage; meeting on topics of inherently nutritional themes and the exchange of experiences among youngsters on their eating habits, teaching workshops and recreational visits on processing typical products.), The award stay concluded in Rome, spending two days discovering the city, with guided tours to the main historical and archaeological Capitoline sites which culminated in the Official award Ceremony that took place in the Auditorium Conciliazione in the presence of different authorities from the Government and dignitaries from the Capital, representatives from Embassies and Cultural Institutes Prom. This included the 15 countries involved, journalists and international television teams, and youngsters from schools in Rome.

The trip was fantastic, very well organized, really a fantastic experience for the students and teachers.

SECOND YEAR.

This course we took part in the competition again, but this time we did it in a different way. Instead of including the activity in the English class we included it in a variable credit in collaboration with the art department. Thus both teachers, the art teacher and the English teacher prepared for the whole year different activities focused on shooting a short film. The third term was exclusively devoted to the preparation of the adverts for the competition. Surprisingly we were classified again and we are going to Italy in October.

