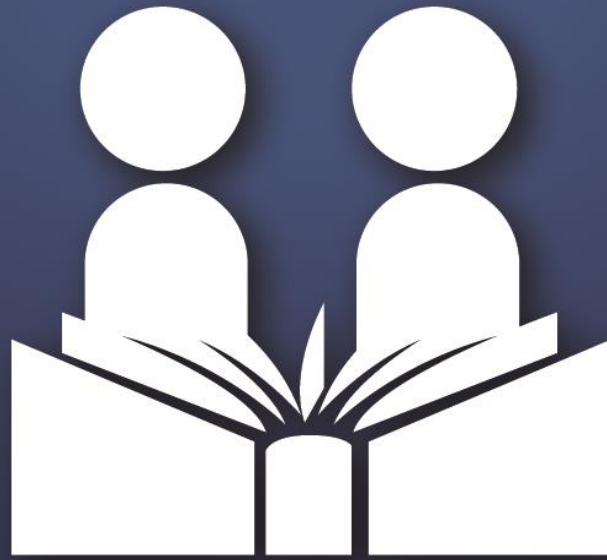# Congress Proceedings

II ENGLISH TEACHING CONGRESS

Huetar Northern Region

Centro de Transferencia Tecnológica y Educación Continua
June 16 - 17, 2016

Effective pedagogical strengths | Innovative tools | Testing and assessment

ADEZN · CTEC · INA Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje · Colypro · TEC Tecnológico de Costa Rica · mep Ministerio de Educación Pública · UNED · U San José · UTn Universidad Técnica Nacional

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Foreword

English is the most widely spoken language in the world, which makes it an essential tool for the development of competencies in socio-economic and educational contexts. The II English Teaching Congress, Huetar Northern Region-Costa Rica seeks to offer an opportunity to enhance pedagogical experiences through dialogue and experience sharing along two days of sessions and activities that will address the challenges that educators face.

The main objective of the congress is to contribute to the improvement of teaching practices. Thus, the collection of papers presented here was organized by an Editorial Committee which was in charge of ensuring the quality of the papers by establishing a set of guidelines for the different kinds of sessions accepted in the congress and going through feedback and revisions cycles so that at the end, both the presenters and the Editorial Committee, gave their best to reach the main goals of this event. Topics such as effective pedagogical strengths for the teaching of English as a foreign language, innovative tools for the teaching of English, testing and assessment of English teaching as a foreign language, and related fields are part of the thematic strands included in this document.

The following collection of academic papers is published in the context of this academic activity, held in San Carlos-Costa Rica, at Centro de Transferencia Tecnológica y Educación Continua (CTEC), Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica. This electronic volume contains the contributions made by researchers and presenters in this regional

congress. Furthermore, it is the written record of the work, experiences, innovative techniques, and teaching tips that were presented to participants, fellow researchers, and colleagues within a frame of rigorous academic regulations and high quality standards.

By publishing this material, we endeavor to provide the participants and teachers of English with valuable consulting material that embraces information, useful tools and ideas in order to complement the teaching of English, improve teaching practices and have advice and feedback about topics discussed in the Congress.

Acknowledgements

Nacional, Sede San Carlos; Licda. Patricia Leitón Montoya, Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje; MSc. Cristian Moreira Segura, Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Sede San Carlos; MA Marlon Pérez Pérez, Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Sede San Carlos; Bach. Erick Salas Acuña, Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Sede San Carlos; Licda. Susan Vargas Blanco, Universidad Técnica Nacional. This Committee sincerely appreciates the hard work and their insight, which contributed to the selection process of the congress' proposals.

Finally, the Scientific Committee wants to acknowledge the two main institutions, which made for proceedings possible. Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica made the allotment of an International Standard Book Number possible for the II English Teaching Congress, Huetar Northern Region. This institution was also in charge of the final edition of the proceedings. In addition, we want to thank Colegio de Licenciados y Profesores en Letras, Filosofia, Ciencias y Artes (COLYPRO) for its collaboration in the digital reproduction of the proceedings of this congress; their contribution is much appreciated.

Content

Assessment and Communication: Going Beyond the Testing Era

Jorge Aguilar-Sánchez
University of Dayton, U.S.A.
jaguilarsanchez1@udayton.edu

Resumen: Esta presentación aborda la necesidad de pasar de una era de la medición a la era de la evaluación. Explora los beneficios de una evaluación continua a través de la observación para promover la adquisición de una lengua en la clase. También promueve el uso de herramientas de evaluación para comprometer a los aprendices con el proceso de adquisición mediante el uso de herramientas de auto-reflexión que les permitan buscar técnicas y estrategias de mejoría. El presentador utiliza este acercamiento para la adquisición de segundas lenguas en el aula apoyada con tecnologías emergentes llamado acercamiento P-E-E-R para la facilitación de la adquisición de segundas lenguas (Aguilar-Sánchez, en progreso). La evaluación se ve como una técnica de recolección de datos para la mejora de los procesos de adquisición.

Palabras clave: evaluación, medición, Acercamiento PEER, pedagogía, tecnologías emergentes.

Abstract: This presentation addresses the need to move beyond the testing era into an assessment one. It explores the benefits of a continuous assessment through observation to promote proper second language acquisition in the classroom. It also promotes the use of assessment tools to engage learners in their acquisition process by using self-reflection tools that allow them to seek improvement techniques and strategies. The presenter uses his approach to instructed-second-language acquisition aided by emergent technologies called the P-E-E-R Approach to Second Language Acquisition Facilitation (Aguilar-Sánchez, 2015, in progress; Aguilar-Sánchez &Donar, 2014). Assessment is viewed as a data gathering technique to the improvement of the acquisition processes.

Keywords: assessment, testing, PEER Approach, pedagogy, emergent technologies.

1. Introduction

In this practice-oriented presentation, each participant explores the pedagogical characteristics of the PEER Approach to Second Language Acquisition Facilitation and explores the ways in which s/he can adapt them to meet students' needs. We will explore specifically the characteristics related to assessment and how it helps us modify our facilitation to make sure acquisition is taking place. We will discuss the two competing set of guidelines (ACTFL for foreign language classrooms and EFR for bilingual or second language acquisition settings) that have been adopted throughout to guide foreign/second language acquisition in the classroom and how we can contextualize and

improve our students' experience in the language classroom through a sound pedagogical approach. We will also discuss government requirements related to assessment and testing and how to adapt our practice to make the learners' experience an enjoyable and successful one.

2. Literature Review

Assessment and testing have seen a good share of change over the years. Assessment, evaluation, and testing of language ability are areas with which we, as language teachers, must be very familiar because they have very different meaning as to the information they provide to us as language practitioners.

A test is an instrument to prove people's capabilities or to establish their credentials (McNamara, 2000). The work of SLA has prompted those in language assessment to take a broader view of what assessment means. They have included more variables when attempting to determine language proficiency and achievement (Cohen, 1994).

The purpose of assessment is to assess learning. It is helpful to have some notion of what the instrument is assessing and how it might be labeled (Cohen, 1994). There are different ways to classify a single assessment instrument. The classification depends on the purposes of the user.

According to Cohen (1994) and McNamara, (2000), the classification can be seen as:

A. For administrative purposes
1. General assessment of a program,
2. placement of students into levels/sections,
3. exemption from taking a class,
4. certification, or
5. promotion.
   Examples of these uses include English placement tests, overall program assessment, and general education assessment, among others. These are usually called *assessment* or *evaluation* tools.

B. Instructional purposes
1. Diagnosis,
2. Evidence of progress,
3. Feedback to the respondent, or
4. Evaluation of teaching or curriculum.
   Examples of these uses include impromptu quizzes, final exams, homework assignments, unit exams, among others. These are usually called *tests*.

C. Research purposes
1. Evaluation,
2. experimentation,
3. knowledge about language learning and language use
   Examples of these uses include grammaticality judgment tasks, surveys, Labovian interviews, identification tasks, oral proficiency interviews, among others. These are usually called *instruments*.

Assessment in general must be viewed as a way to improve our own teaching, not for showing how good we are at teaching (Aguilar-Sánchez, A. 2001 personal

communication); but to show we are helping students move forward in their acquisition process.

3. Context

Participants will create materials based on their needs and interests. The context proposed for this interactive presentation is the need for a holistic approach to assessment in the language classroom. We will discuss the terms relevance, acceptability/validity, comparability, and wash-back effect of assessment tools and how they can help us help learners in the acquisition process. Participants will discuss in small groups what they need to take into account when constructing assessment tools and why it is important to keep the acquisition process and our pedagogical approach in mind. Participants are encouraged to read selected chapters of McNamara (2000), Cohen (1994), Aguilar-Sánchez, Hernández, Cubillo, & Garbanzo, 2009), and Aguilar-Sánchez (2015) before the presentation. Copies will be made available electronically upon request

4. Activities

Activity 1. Contextualization   10 minutes

In groups of 4, discuss the context in which you teach. Use the following activities to guide your discussion:

    a. What is assessment? What is testing? Are they different? How?
    b. What do we seek when we think about assessing progress?
    c. What do we seek when we think about testing students?
    d. What kind of technology do you use for testing? And for assessment?
    e. What do you do with the data you gathered?

Activity 2. Assessing Progress   10 minutes

In different groups of 4, discuss what your pedagogical approach is and what the role of assessment and testing is within its context. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

    a. How do you define your philosophy of teaching?
    b. How do you use the data from your assessments and tests?
    c. What is the role of numbers in your practice and what do you do with them?
    d. How much do you assess and why? How much do you test and why?

Activity 3. Assessment and the English class   25 minutes

We will focus on discussing the following types of issues related to assessment:

    a. Relevance – what for?
    b. Acceptability/Validity – is it measuring what we have taught?
    c. Comparability – as a community of practitioners, are we measuring similar things?
    d. Wash-back effect – negative and positive
    e. Using assessment to promote learning and to avoid being punitive

5. Materials

Participants are encouraged to bring the Programas de Inglés provided by the MEP and the tests or assessment tools they currently use in their classes.

6. Conclusions

This is a highly interactive, hands-on presentation/discussion. Limitations are discussed as the presentation progresses and participants themselves will provide areas of future work.

7. References

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8. Biography

Dr. Jorge Aguilar-Sánchez is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Dayton, Ohio. He has a Ph.D. in TESOL and Applied Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics. His current research focuses on student engagement for instructed language acquisition and the role emergent technologies play as aids in the process and in Best Practices for research design in (Socio) Linguistics. His works appear in journals, chapters of books, and other publication venues.

Communication and Emergent Technologies in the XXI Century Classroom

Jorge Aguilar-Sánchez
University of Dayton, U.S.A.
jaguilarsanchez1@udayton.edu

Resumen: Este trabajo utiliza tres avances en la adopción de tecnologías emergentes, lineamientos para ella, y la necesidad de un acercamiento sistemático a la adopción de tecnologías emergentes para promover la comunicación en la enseñanza de lenguas. Se desprende de la definición de comunicación provista por Savignon (1997) que reza que la comunicación es la expresión, la interpretación, y la negociación del significado. Se trabaja la interrogante del tipo de tecnologías que se pueden adoptar para promover la comunicación y la adquisición de una segunda lengua. Se explora los acercamientos pedagógicos del siglo XX y las formas en las que se pueden adaptar para satisfacer las necesidades de los aprendices. Exploro las características generales del contexto en el que la toma lugar la adquisición y las limitaciones que la infraestructura de un país en desarrollo presenta a la adopción de actividades comunicativas con ayuda de tecnología. Abogo por que la adopción de toda tecnología esté ligada al acercamiento pedagógico al que nos adherimos y a los objetivos que han sido propuestos para la clase. Continúo promoviendo la contextualización de nuestra enseñanza siguiendo lineamientos (ACTFL para las clases de lengua extranjera y MCE para las clases en contextos altamente bilingües) para que nos permitan crear objetivos de aprendizaje efectivos.

Palabras clave: comunicación, contexto, ASL, pedagogía, tecnología.

Abstract: The present talk stems out three findings on emergent technologies, guidelines, and the need for a systematic approach to the adoption of emergent technologies to foster communication in the teaching of world languages. This talk addresses the question of what characteristics from a pedagogical standpoint are needed to achieve a truly communicative goal in the language classroom. It departs from Savignon's(1997)definition of communication as the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning. It addresses the question of the types of technologies that can be adopted to promote communication and second language acquisition. This work explores the pedagogical approaches of the XX Century and explores the ways in which we can adapt them to meet students' needs. I explore general characteristics of the context in which acquisition takes place as well as the limitations that a developing country infrastructure can bring to the adoption of communicative activities with the aid of technology. I advocate that for the adoption of any technology to be used in the classroom it must be closely tied to the pedagogical approach that we adhere to and the student learning outcomes that have been set for the class. I continue to promote the contextualization of our teaching following a set of guidelines (ACTFL for foreign language classrooms and EFR for bilingual or second language acquisition settings) to allow us to create effective student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Communication, context, SLA, pedagogy, technology.

1. Introduction

In Aguilar-Sanchez(2015)and Aguilar-Sánchez and Donar (2014), I argue that one of the struggles we face in an era of technological innovation is the fact that younger generations of students are tech savvy and demand access to information in real time. Not only are we faced with such challenge, our countries' infrastructure, at times, makes innovation in the classroom a little bit difficult. To face these challenges, teachers are forced to find innovative ways, both pedagogically and technologically, in which to help learners in the classroom acquire a foreign or second language. As we know, this is not an easy task.

The present paper presents characteristics present in emergent technologies that allow students to engage in communication. I address what type of technologies could be adopted to promote communication and second language acquisition. I explore the pedagogical approaches of the XX Century and in which ways we, as language teachers, can adapt them to meet our learners' needs. Not only do I explore these pedagogical approaches, but also the general characteristics of the context of second language acquisition and the limitations that a developing country's infrastructure can bring to the adoption of communicative activities with the aid of technology. I advocate the adoption of technology that meets our pedagogical goals and promotes the contextualization of out teaching following our professional organizations' guidelines (e.g. ACTFL[1] for foreign language teaching and EFR[2] for bilingual and second language teaching) while keeping our student learning outcomes at the core of our lesson planning.

2. Communication as negotiation

Over the years, the term "communicative language teaching" has seen changes in its description and tenets. Because such conception has different meanings, which vary from teacher to teacher, I would like to offer the one tenet that guides my teaching and the research I conduct in the classroom. Savignon(1997) defines communication as the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning. Lee and VanPatten (2003) expand on Savignon's definition by stating that expression is the wish of a person to express an idea (e.g. opinion, wish, request, demand) to someone else and that s/he does so. They state that the other person (i.e. the interlocutor) must understand both the message and the intent of the message. For Lee & VanPatten (2003) sometimes the interpretation is partial, and some negotiation is needed.

Lee (2000) provides a definition of negotiation that takes into consideration an interactionist perspective on language acquisition, classroom research, and a social view of communication. He defines negotiation as:

> Negotiation consists of interactions during which speakers come to terms, reach an agreement, make arrangements, resolve a problem, or settle an issue by conferring or discussing; the purpose of language use is to accomplish some task rather than to practice any particular language forms (p. 9).

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[1] American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages
[2] European Frame of Reference

As we can see from Lee's definition of negotiation, language in the classroom changes from an item to be learned to a tool to be used by the learner (i.e. the speaker). Lee (2000) advocates to mimic the reasons for which we communicate in the real world in the classroom. He states that the two most common purposes of communication are psycho-social and informational-cognitive. He describes the psycho-social purpose as the one that involves using language to bond socially or psychologically with someone or some group or to engage in social behavior in some way. The informational-cognitive use of language, he describes, involves communication for the purpose of obtaining information, generally for some other task. Lee (2000) states that psycho-social and information-cognitive purposes can, and often do, co-occur.

Often times, as language teachers, we forget that our students must use the language in order for acquisition to happen and rely heavily on measurement and the rote preparation for such measurement. Lee (2000) summarizes the changes in the perception of teaching in the language classroom as follows:

> …communicative language teaching practices evolved from grammar-oriented ones. As language teachers began to acknowledge that part of their charge was to provide learners opportunities to use the language, they relied on practices and activities that embody questions and answers. In fact, communication was equated with instructors asking questions and learners answering them. This notion that *communication = question & answer* has been rejected … (p. 11)

Lee & VanPatten (2003) reject the notion that communication equals questions and answer as communicative drills because, communicative drills may have the resemblance of real communication, but they fall short of providing learners with opportunities that allow them to work at communicating. Although, I agree with Lee's(2000) and Lee & VanPatten's(2003) description of the language classroom, I disagree with their statement that

> although the instructor may use language for both psycho-social and informational-cognitive purposes, it is doubtful that the learner, especially in the beginning and intermediate stages, would use language for many psycho-social purposes. The classroom context typically does not promote the kind of interaction that requires language to be used psycho-socially. However, the classroom does lend itself exceptionally well to the use of communicative language for informational-cognitive purposes. The classroom is ideally suited to the development and implementation of activities in which learners exchange information for a common purpose (p. 54).

They describe a different language classroom from the one we can call *traditional*. However, when they claim that a language classroom does not promote situations to use language for psycho-social purposes; we, as facilitators, are to blame. I firmly believe and have tried through my years of experience to provide venues in which learners use language for psycho-social purposes as well as for informational-cognitive ones. I refer to this practice as promoting *making language their own* in our learners.

Now, let us situate ourselves in this timeline. Are we still in the grammar-oriented stage or have we moved to the question & answer stage? Have we move towards a more informational-cognitive style? Or have we reached the point in which our classrooms reflect real-life situations in which learners take control of their language acquisition?

3. Facilitating acquisition versus teaching languages

I take a Vygotskyan approach to learning. Vygotsky & Cole (1978) focus on social processes that contribute to cognitive development, so learning and cognitive development are interrelated. For them, cognition develops as a result of social interaction. What better way to socialize than through the use of language.

In Constructivism, a theory of knowledge by Piaget (1967), humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences (i.e. context) and their ideas (i.e. how they view the world). Piaget's theory of knowledge is not a pedagogical approach. On the contrary, it is a set maxim that have influenced many pedagogical approaches to learning. Piaget's theory of learning has as central tenets the processes of *accommodation* and *assimilation* through which the learner constructs new knowledge from what they experience. *Assimilation* refers to the individual's alignment of their experiences with their internal view of the world. *Accommodation* refers to the process in which the individual changes to accept the new knowledge as part of their view of the world.

Wertsch (1985), Glasersfeld (1991, 1995), and Holt & Willard-Holt (2000) describe the following assumptions in social constructivism:

1. it acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner (i.e. individual differences), but encourages, utilizes, and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process;
2. it encourages the learner to arrive at his or her version of the truth as influenced by his her background, culture or embedded view of the world (i.e. social interaction);
3. the responsibility of learning should reside increasingly with the learner through his/her active participation in the process;
4. the teacher's role changes from that of the know-it-all who talks during the entire class time to that of a facilitator who assesses learners' progress constantly;
5. motivation for learning is strongly dependent on the learner's confidence in his her potential for learning. This assumption is similar to Vygotsky's(1978) zone of proximal development or, in our cases, Krashen's (1985, 1992) i+1 hypothesis;
6. learning is an active process and collaboration is required. Learners with different skills or levels of language ability, in our case, collaborate in tasks and discussions to arrive at a shared understanding of the truth; and
7. assessment and learning are seen as inextricably linked and not separate processes.

The assessor (i.e. facilitator) enters into dialogue with the learner to find out their current level of performance on any task and sharing with them the possible ways in which that performance might be improved.

4. The Flipped Learning Approach

Modern versions of Social Constructivism have made it to the XXI Century classroom and are becoming, if I may say, more popular than the original. A version of this type of pedagogical approach is the FLIP Learning Approach (EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, 2012; Flipped Learning Network, 2014; Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013). The FLN (2014, p. 1) defines this approach as an approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.

The proponents of this approach distinguish, and I agree with them, that Flipped learning is not the same as a flipped classroom. The FLN (2014) state that these terms are not interchangeable and that flipping a class can, but does not necessarily, lead to Flipped Learning. They state that Flipped Learning teachers incorporate the following four pillars[3]:

1. A flexible environment in which the classroom is arranged to **accommodate learning** in different ways and educator are flexible in their expectations of student timelines for learning and in their assessments of student learning;

2. The Learning Culture is shifted, deliberately, to a **learner-centered approach** and in-class time is dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth and rich learning opportunities are created. Students are actively involved in knowledge **construction** as they participate in and evaluate their learning in a manner that is personally **meaningful**.

3. Educators work with Intentional Content. In other words, they constantly think about how they can use the model to **help students** develop conceptual understanding, as well as procedural **fluency** by determining what they need to teach and what materials students should explore on their own before coming to class to use the knowledge they acquire.

4. Educators become Professional Educators. Professional Educators **continually observe their students**, providing them with feedback relevant in the moment, and assessing their work while reflecting in their practice. Professional Educators connect with others, **accept constructive criticism**, and **tolerate** controlled chaos in their classroom and take less visibly prominent roles in their classrooms, but remain the essential ingredient that enables learning.

5. The P-E-E-R Approach to Second Language Acquisition Facilitation

The P-E-E-R approach is founded in Constructivism (Piaget, 1967), the Communicative Approach proposed by Sauvignon(1972, 1976, 1997); Processing Instruction (Lee & VanPatten, 2003); and a sound and deep knowledge of assessment and measurement. This approach, while not envisioned as a flipped learning environment, has all it four pillars and can be said to be a flipped learning approach to the acquisition of second languages. I also would like to state that, although related at the core, it was not based on Peer Instruction (Mazur, 1997). Similar to Mazur's naming of his approach as a social

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[3] All emphasis in words is mine to highlight Constructivist characteristics of the Flipped Learning Approach

constructivist approach, I came up with mine as a need to emphasize the social nature of the use of languages.

In Aguilar-Sánchez (2015) and Aguilar-Sánchez & Donar (2014) I present this approach as an alternative for traditional approaches to the teaching of world languages. The word P-E-E-R stands for Preparation, Exposure, Enforcement, and Review. Thus,

1. Learners are encouraged to be prepared and must be prepared for specific class-content at home.

What this means is that they must browse, look for familiar words, familiar structures, find new items, among other activities that will allow them to actively participate in the class.

2. Learners must be exposed to the content as much as possible during the class period and outside of it.

Facilitators must ensure that contact time includes enough exposure to the language and that time is managed to avoid gratuitous group work (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Facilitators must ensure that the target language is used at all times. At this point, I want to point out that it is not the facilitator's use of the language that this piece of advice refers to, but the learner's use of the language. The more the learners use it, the faster the acquisition happens. We move away from the Atlas Complex (Lee & VanPatten, 2003) to a facilitator's role in the classroom. This role also encourages collaboration and communication in the classroom rather than a passive/receptive role on the part of the learner.

3. As facilitators, we must enforce both language use, as personal communication, and content review at all times.

We must create meaningful activities and not mechanical drills. Homework assignment must be linked to the objectives of the class (i.e., meaning-bearing activities) at all times. The classroom must be transformed from a teacher-centered/podium-centered classroom to a collaborative environment where language acquisition takes place. Activities must require the use of the target language outside of the classroom as well. Language must become a tool that learners use as their own for communication purposes.

Finally,

4. Learners must review and use old content during and after their first exposure (i.e. recycling).

Recycling does not mean repeating content or explanations. It means the presence of old structures in new content carefully designed by the facilitator to promote the use of old structures and allow re-accommodation with the new one in the learner's language. Homework assignments must always have items that make use of previous content to

provide an indirect review. In other words, there must be a sequence or path that will lead the learner to a clear goal, language proficiency.

The P-E-E-R approach relies heavily in three readings of content. These are not readings in the literal sense, but rather review and exposure to the content. The first reading happens during the preparation stage, the second during class time, and the third one happens during homework assignments. All three readings create a learning environment that facilitates second language acquisition (See Figure 1).

It also relies heavily on the role of the facilitator as, what FLN (2014) refers to as, a Professional Educator. Language facilitators live in a community of practice. This community of practices is called a Professional Learning Community (DuFour, 2004) by proponents of new standards for teaching in the United States. Facilitators share their successful lesson plans and materials; they view the classroom as a community where all stakeholders share equal responsibility for learning. Teaching switches from a private enterprise to a public one where all participants share the same responsibility and desire for improvement. Facilitators have a sound foundation in Second Language Acquisition research and pedagogical approaches that have lead us to where we are today. As in the flipped learning approach, facilitators consistently use assessment data to improve the learning environment.

Learners are referred to as builders of knowledge and are encouraged to make hypotheses as to how languages work. They are guided to acquire the skills needed to take full responsibility for their own acquisition process and little by little are immersed in more challenging situations where they are forced to use the language they are acquiring in real-life situations. They are guided in the discussion of learning strategies that work and do not work and how to use them to complete the acquisition process.

Measurement and testing are replaced by assessment tools that allow both learners and facilitators to talk about processes and stages in the language acquisition process. Because learners assume their responsibility in the learning process, all assessment procedures have face validity and learners understand what their performance means in terms of what they need to do to improve and move forward in their learning/acquisition process. Not only is face validity a reality, reliability is achieved by the sharing of assessment tools and data among facilitators.
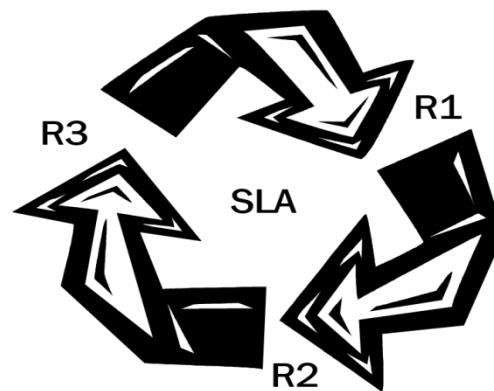

Figure 1. Recycling and the three Readings

In sum, our role as language acquisition facilitators is to create the environments in which communication as negotiation of meaning occurs.

6. Student Learning Outcomes and the communicative-oriented classroom

Aguilar-Sánchez (2015) put together a set of guidelines for the creation of sound Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the communicative-oriented classroom in the PEER Approach to Second Language Acquisition Facilitation. I proposed to always work with the goals we set for learner's performance at the end of each course. In other words, our student learning outcomes.

I advocate for making sure that SLOs contain the When, the What, the How, and the Where of a learning lesson. As facilitators, it is imperative we know where we want our students to go in their learning/acquisition journey. SLOs must be observable and measurable. Some researchers recommend the use of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) to find the different domains of higher-level thinking. My suggestion is to think of how observable the behavior is and ask yourself how you are going to gather the data to determine whether the outcomes are being performed. If it is difficult to observe, it is difficult to measure.

Student Learning Outcomes must be designed with the acquisition process in mind. We have moved from a Behaviorist approach to learning to a Constructivist approach to acquisition. Therefore, memorization of terms should not be one of our goals. Performance and proficiency-based goals should be the norm in our classrooms. The American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages provides a set of guidelines of performance/proficiency-based description by levels. The European Common Frame of Reference also provides a set of performance/proficiency guidelines. Whichever you choose to follow, use them as your guide to the language acquisition stages and, when possible, as your basis for establishing good SLOs.

Due to space constraints, I will give a summary of Aguilar-Sánchez' (2015) guidelines for the creation of sound student learning outcomes for the communicative-oriented class. I put forward the elements that we need to keep in mind when writing SLO's as:

The *When*: SLOs can be set for a particular lesson, for a unit, or for a semester. The higher the level, the more generic they become. Ideally, we would have General Outcomes per level and a more specific one for each course or lesson. Therefore, the time framework is very important because it tells us when we want to assess learning. The *When* is particularly important when creating Proficiency-based curricula because it provides the proficiency-levels, and it is not content-based. It also helps with the articulation of courses in a particular curriculum. In Content-based curriculum design, it helps to have the language SLOs clearly stated to articulate how the content of each course helps the language acquisition process. In other words, it helps with the sequencing and offering of content courses.

The *What*: determined by the proficiency level we want to achieve. It can be content-based (e.g. grammar, reading, writing, etc.), or it can be performance level (e.g. critical thinking, discourse strategies, sociolinguistic competence, etc.). This is the point at which Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) comes in handy. The *What* is determined by the verb we choose. Verbs represent the observable and measurable behaviors we want from our

learners. So, we have to choose them accordingly. If we choose a verb like "understand", we will face the challenge of determining how a learner shows understanding (i.e., the observable behavior). But, if we choose a verb such as "pick"; we can easily picture and measure the behavior.

The *How*: is often times neglected because of the belief that content trumps process. In the P-E-E-R approach, as can be seen in the description, content does not trump process. On the contrary, the process through which we reach our goals is as important as the content we use. The reason why the *How* is as important as the *What* stems from the necessity to collect data to determine progress in the acquisition process. When data are collected systematically, facilitators are able to make informed decisions with regards to the class, the sequence of events, and the curriculum as a whole. Data-driven decision-making is key to the implementation of this approach. Therefore, a good understanding of measurement and assessment is necessary to complete the cycle of learning.

The *Where:* Context is very important for the implementation of the How because as it can provide great opportunities, it can also pose great limitations, especially when we talk about the adoption of technology.

As facilitators, we often brainstorm as to what tools will help us facilitate learning and how we go about measuring progress. Testing, sometimes disguised as assessment, has been the only tool language teachers use to measure achievement in the past. Unfortunately, the focus has been solely on achievement and not on the process of acquisition. This is a key tenet to adopt to be able to move from a Behaviorist approach to learning to a Constructivist approach to second language acquisition. As we all know, we over-rely on testing and tend to forget that assessment is the use of the data collected to help learners achieve goals by modifying our practice to meet their acquisition needs. Although societal beliefs lean heavily on scales and numbers, our job is not just assigning a grade and moving on without regard to the learning process. On the contrary, all learners' progress must be the focus of our planning.

7. Emergent Technologies and their roles in the communication-oriented classroom

In the field of the use of technology for learning, researchers have found that

1. emergent technologies such as iPads increase student engagement and collaboration within the classroom by acting as a facilitator rather than a clunky barrier like some of the current technology that is used in classrooms (Rice, 2011),

2. technology can be used to engage students in reflection regarding their study habits and innovations such as online games have served to reveal to students the inadequacy of their study habits or the incompleteness of their content knowledge and that these games have helped them reevaluate their study methods to better prepare themselves for exams (Paul, Messina, & Hollis, 2006); and

3. computers will not replace instructors any time soon; they are not better than instructors at delivering grammar instruction when using processing instruction, and that some grammar instruction could be removed from the classroom and placed on the computer (Aguilar-Sánchez, McNulty, & Lee, 2007).

Emergent technologies play a key role at this stage because by trying new technologies in the classroom, teachers tend to change the way they teach (Aguilar-Sánchez & Donar, 2014), which results in a new approach to collaboration in the classroom, where the teacher or the technology becomes a facilitator. This new role, of a facilitator, allows teachers to become aware of their learners' needs by stepping aside and seeing the process of learning take shape in front of them or by being participants in a new learning experience with their students as peers.

As I advocate in Aguilar-Sánchez (2015), as we think about adopting a tool to help us facilitate second language acquisition in the classroom; we must ask the following questions:

a. Will the tool allow us to include all learners?
b. Will the tool encourage engagement?
c. Will the tool be learner and learning-centered?
d. Will the tool function well in the classroom? What do we need to make it so?
e. Will the tool engage students outside the classroom?
f. Is the tool able to cater to all learning styles?
g. Can data be collected on the use of the tool?
h. Can the tool help us measure learning (i.e. assess)?
i. Do we have enough working understanding of the technology itself? If not, how or where can we get trained?

Researchers have been working on the discovery of the characteristics of emergent technologies for facilitating learning. Here are a few examples of their findings and how they can contribute to create a language acquisition friendly environment in different contexts.

7.1 iPads/Tablets
In the past four years or so, iPads have become very popular in classrooms around the United States. Rice (2011) makes a summary of what some colleges have learned through their experimentation with iPads. She mentions that some studies show that iPads increase student engagement and collaboration within the classroom, saying that they acted as facilitators rather than clunky barriers like some laptops in a group setting. She noted that observers to the classes that use iPads reported that students with iPads seemed to be more engaged in classroom activities. Others, she reports, see the value in the ability to transport the iPads as tools onto field trips and in other group settings.

Work (2014) works with the selection of iPad apps that work for a proficiency based lesson. She cautions us that it is crucial to understand that technology in general, and iPads and apps more specifically, should not merely be used for technology's sake, but that they need to support the course or lesson objectives. She continues by stating three points to take in to account. The first one is that any work done with the iPad should be carefully integrated into existing lessons and curricula. The second one is that it should fulfill a clear pedagogical objective. She continues by stating that teachers need to test and evaluate apps for appropriateness in terms of content and student age and be familiar with how to use the app and its features in order to be able to explain it to their students. She concludes that one of the most important goals in foreign language education is to encourage our students to learn to use language for real-life

communication and that utilizing apps and iPads in and outside of the classroom can serve a variety of objectives. These include to use language for a real purpose; to practice a variety of skills, get learners ready for the 21st century, to foster creativity and individuality, and to encourage higher-level problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Enriquez (2010) studied how tablet PCs and wireless technology can be used during classroom instruction to create an Interactive Learning Network (ILN) that is designed to enhance the instructor's ability to receive active participation from all students during lectures, to conduct immediate and meaningful assessment of student learning, and to provide needed real-time feedback and assistance to maximize student learning. There were two different case studies in higher education campuses in the western United States. The author used a diagnostic test at the beginning of the experiment to see if there was a difference in prior student knowledge between the universities but there were none found. To study the impact of the ILN instruction model, there were two studies done. Study 1 compared two circuit courses at a university one in the spring of 2006, which used the ILN model; and the spring of 2005, which was a traditional instructor centered classroom. The second study compared two circuit courses from the two institutions in the spring 2006 semester, a class that used the ILN model, and a class that used the traditional model. For each case study data were collected and compared through scores of students on 15 homework sets, four quizzes, four tests, and a final examination. A two-part attitudinal survey about the use of tablet PCs was administered at the end of class from the two experimental groups. Results from the survey showed that students viewed the tablet PCs as helpful in improving student performance and the instructor's teaching efficiency, as well as creating a better learning environment. The author also mentions that students responded to the open-ended questions with comments indicating that there was increased attentiveness and focus during lectures, real-time assessment of their knowledge through polling, immediate feedback on their work, increased one-on-one time with the instructor, ease of communication with instructor, and quick assistance when needed.

Enriquez summarizes that the interactive learning environment resulted in improvements in the student performance compared with the traditional instructor-centered learning environment. This can be attributed to the enhanced two-way student to instructor interaction, individualized and real-time assessment and feedback on student performance, increased student engagement, and enhanced and more efficient delivery of content. Enriquez (2010) is a very important study for the present investigation. Without looking for key pedagogical factors that influence the use of technology and by inadvertently changing his pedagogical approach with the aid of technology, he discovered that his students were able to perform better in traditional tests.

7.2. Learning Management Systems

Nelson, Arthur, Jensen & Van Horn (2011) investigated ways to make students become more engaged with subject topics, how information could be presented in multiple ways, and how to collect information from students in various forms. They started with the idea that no textbook series met all of their criteria, so they decided to use digital resources instead. In order to achieve their goal, they created a virtual environment. The first stage was a storage and sharing platform where teachers could place their lesson plans, study guides, rubrics, PowerPoint presentations and any other necessary class information

and/or materials called Curriculum Loft. The creation and use of such a virtual environment, they state, makes it clear to students and parents what is expected of students and explains how students are able to gain information and express their knowledge throughout the course.

The second stage was to find a reliable source for digital information. They opted for NetTrekker from Thinkronize, Inc. NetTrekker is a database of peer-reviewed digital resources that teachers can use. Teachers are able to search by age group and subject. The program also organized the information so they could see who evaluated each resource, the readability of the resource, the rating of the resource, teacher-recommended resources, student-recommended resources, or titles. They linked NetTrekker to the Curriculum Loft. Nelson et al. (2011) collected data through surveys given to students in middle and high school as well as teachers. Teachers reported that students were more likely to read or skim the articles while students reported higher interest in their subjects that used this method. Students' responses indicated that they thought their courses were more relevant because they were applying more 21st century skills, such as problem solving and working collaboratively with others. Their answers also included their perception that because information was presented in a variety of ways, it allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.

Nelson et al. (2011) concluded that because students live in a digital world, they access information for personal use and move through a tremendous amount of data to find what they are looking for. The digital platform and database show how students can successfully use technology and provide flexibility for the teachers when it comes to planning and delivering information to the students. Currently, these types of platforms are called Learning Managing Systems or LMS. Among these platforms, we find Moodle, D2L, Blackboard, Oncourse, and others.

7.3. Emergent Technologies and Student Engagement

Aguilar-Sánchez and Donar (2014) searched for characteristics, from a pedagogical point of view, present in emergent technologies that allow students to be engaged in their studies inside and outside of the classroom, and students' preferences in regard to emergent technologies to be engaged in outside of the classroom. They studied data from students who completed an advanced Spanish grammar course (n= 63) at a Midwestern University in the United States. Data were collected over the course of six semesters. The authors stated that demographics were not collected due to the nature of their study.

They used the PEER approach to the facilitation of second language acquisition (Aguilar-Sánchez, in progress). Four technological advances (iPads, SmartBoard, SmartPen, and Concept Maps through Prezi) were selected to create materials to engage students inside and outside of the classroom. Activities were created according to the characteristics of each of the emergent technologies that were selected. In their study, iPads were used as means to search information and sometimes to create materials in groups (e.g. picture story-telling, response to questions via Socrative, among other apps). They report that students were encouraged to use the iPads to study or to summarize the material for future reference. They also report that SmartBoard activities were created to present content in class and that these activities allowed students to interact with the content that was presented to them in the classroom, but not outside of it. Such presentations, they explain, included vocabulary games and jigsaw puzzles, among

others. SmartPens, which are pens that allow for the recording of audio and the visual recording of your handwriting, were used as lecture-capture devices. A third technology included the capturing of lectures. They explain that lectures were captured with a SmartPen and were converted into what are called PenCasts. PenCasts are PDF documents with audio and interactive visuals of the user's handwriting. Aguilar-Sanchez and Donar (2014) later uploaded recorded lectures into the Learning Management System called Desire 2 Learn (D2L) for students to use them for review or preparation for class. The last technology they used was Prezi, a presentation web-based program; and it was used to engage students in deep reading. Students were required to use Prezi to prepare presentations in groups of selected readings every week as they describe in their paper.

Data were collected via a preference survey in which the researchers asked students for the frequency in which they used, during the course, the technologies at hand and the usefulness, to the student, of such technologies. Their results show that students prefer technologies that allow for interactivity and immediate feedback for classroom work, and for engagement outside of the classroom they split between time spent on an activity and the availability of non-interactive activities. They present the following advantages and disadvantages of each emergent technology.

For PenCasts, they note that not only do they capture the explanation of the professor; they also capture the writing that is undertaken to explain it. They explain that this tool proves to be very powerful to help students revisit the lectures while also allowing them to revisit explanations. In addition, they state that PenCasts also serve as a source of audio to develop listening skills. All PenCasts were done in the target language. SmartBoard activities, as they point out, were interactive inside of the classroom, but non-interactive outside of it. However, they explain that students were able to view the material that was presented to them with all the annotations that were made in class and argue that students prefer this type of material because it triggers recall of the explanation or activity done in class. For Prezies, they describe that because they were done in groups; the negotiation of what went on in each Prezi and the value of the explanation from reading gained seems to be one of the reasons why students regarded them as useful. iPads, they discovered, were the least useful technologies due to the limitations they present. They argue that Instructors are tied to applications that sometimes cost money, and iPads seem to be regarded as personal items and not learning tools. They suggest that future research should focus on the comparison of particular Apps and their pedagogical usefulness rather than the use of the iPad itself.

Aguilar-Sanchez and Donar (2014) conclude that while some students prefer interactive activities, others prefer the static material due to a preconception of the worth of time spent in the class, and that because each of the activities and the technology to deliver them were selected following a sound pedagogical approach, tied to a student-learning outcome, and to how it was going to benefit language acquisition; the pedagogical approach is still at the forefront of any decision-making regarding teaching. They explain that these technologies seem to have been selected because they were the ones, from a teacher perspective, that best matched the needs of the students. They suggest that to select any emergent technology, teachers must have a clear understanding of how such technology will aid the learner in the acquisition process, and not just as the means of instruction. Their suggestion is the basis for what follows in this paper.

7.4 Summary

All of these studies and technologies share characteristics of importance for us to achieve our goal of a communicative language classroom where acquisition is at the core. They call for the use of technology as an aid to fulfill our learning goals in the proficiency oriented classroom. They all shed light on the importance of transferring the responsibility for learning to the learner while promoting a change in the mentality of teachers. A mentality that moves from the Atlas Complex (Lee & VanPatten, 2003) to that of a facilitator of learning (Aguilar-Sánchez, 2015, in progress; Aguilar-Sánchez & Donar, 2014; DuFour, 2004; Flipped Learning Network, 2014; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Mazur, 1997; Piaget, 1967). They also use technology with a purpose and not just for technology's sake or fashion. It is clear that each researcher had carefully selected how each technology was going to help the learner achieve his/her goal.

8. Conclusion

Contextualizing and adopting emergent technologies should not be a foreign part of our lesson planning; on the contrary, it should be at the core as long as our goal remains the learner's success and language acquisition. However, in order to be successful in adopting such innovative tools, we must reflect upon our current practices and views regarding teaching, second language acquisition, and the learner.

It is imperative that we reflect on the type of teachers we are and to what pedagogical approach we attach. We need to ask ourselves whether we are in the grammar-oriented or the question & answer stage, or whether we use an informational-cognitive style, or even, whether our classroom reflect real-life situations in which learners take control of their language acquisition. After answer these questions, we must reflect on our pedagogical practices and how they benefit or do not benefit our language learners. Finally, we have to reflect on our practices as a community and whether we can collaborate to create a stronger community of practitioners.

If our goal is communication as the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning (Savignon, 1997) and we want to promote a learner-centered classroom; then, we must choose technologies that have the characteristics to achieve such goals. Not only should we choose technologies that provide the venues for language use, we must select the technologies that promote collaboration and reflection regarding the production of new knowledge. These technologies must also provide us with the necessary data to help learners identify areas of improvement and areas of success.

Technology must be viewed as a tool to help us carry out each activity and each activity must be tied to a student-learning outcome that has language acquisition at its core. As I concluded in Aguilar-Sánchez (2015), the pedagogical approach is, and will remain, at the forefront of any decision-making regarding the facilitation of language acquisition. Technologies must be selected because they are the ones, from a facilitator perspective, that best enhance the acquisition process and not the delivery of content. Our classrooms must reflect our conviction that language acquisition is possible even when resources are limited by focusing on the acquisition process and the learner as the most important stakeholder. By sharing our strengths with other professional educators, we multiply our efforts and strategies while all other limitations become obstacles that we can easily overcome as a professional learning community.

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10. Biography

Dr. Jorge Aguilar-Sánchez is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Dayton, Ohio. He has a Ph.D. in TESOL and Applied Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics. His current research focuses on student engagement for instructed language acquisition and the role emergent technologies play as aids in the process and in Best Practices for research design in (Socio) Linguistics. His works appear in journals, chapters of books, and other publication venues.

Processing Instruction for Grammar Instruction: A focus on Acquisition

Jorge Aguilar Sánchez
University of Dayton, U.S.A.
jaguilarsanchez1@udayton.edu

Resumen: En esta presentación interactiva, los participantes serán introducidos a un acercamiento a la adquisición de lenguas extranjeras orientado en la gramática. La Instrucción basada en el Procesamiento (PI) es un tipo de instrucción de gramática cuyo propósito es el afectar la forma en que los aprendices ponen atención al input. Está basada en el input, en oposición al output, es consonante con la teoría general de la adquisición y la enseñanza de lenguas comunicativa (VanPatten, 1996). Es un tipo de instrucción enfocada en la forma que se predica en el modelo del procesamiento del input (Wong, 2004). La Instrucción basada en el Procesamiento es un acercamiento motivado en la psicolingüística para el enfoque en la forma para el cual la meta principal es la enseñanza de la gramática sin sacrificar ni la comunicación ni las actividades centradas en el aprendizaje. Incluye la explicación gramatical explicita y la práctica de la misma, pero un tipo de práctica gramatical especifica llamada input estructurado (Lee& Benati, 2007). Los participantes crearán actividades de gramática para facilitar la adquisición del inglés mientras promueven la comunicación en la lengua meta. La Instrucción basada en Procesamiento ha sido prueba de ser una herramienta eficiente para el contexto costarricense (Aguilar-Sánchez, Hernández, Cubillo, & Garbanzo, 2009).

Palabras clave: Instrucción basada en el Procesamiento, Gramática, Adquisición de Segunda Lengua, Pedagogía.

Abstract: In this interactive presentation, participants will be introduced to a grammar-oriented approach to the acquisition of foreign languages. Processing Instruction (PI) is a type of grammar instruction intended to affect the ways in which learners attend to input data. It is input-based, as opposed to output-based, and is consonant with both general second language acquisition theory and communicative language teaching (VanPatten, 1996). It is form-focused instruction that is predicated on a model of input processing (Wong, 2004). Processing Instruction is a psycho-linguistically motivated approach to focus on form, whose main aim is to teach grammar without sacrificing either communication or learning-centered activities. It includes grammatical explanation and grammatical practice, but a specific type of grammatical practice called structured input. (Lee & Benati, 2007). Participants will be creating grammar activities to facilitate English grammar acquisition while promoting communication in the target language. Processing Instruction has proved to be an effective tool for the Costa Rican context (Aguilar-Sánchez, Hernández, Cubillo, & Garbanzo, 2009).

Keywords: Processing instruction, grammar, second language acquisition, pedagogy.

1. Introduction

In this workshop, explore the pedagogical characteristics of Processing Instruction, and the ways in which they can be adapted to meet students' needs. We will analyze general characteristics of the context in which acquisition takes place, as well as the limitations that we face as teachers of English in the developing world. We will discuss the

importance of contextualizing the acquisition process to the setting characteristics. We will discuss the two competing sets of guidelines (ACTFL for foreign language classrooms and EFR for bilingual or second language acquisition settings) that have been adopted throughout to guide foreign/second language acquisition in the classroom, and how we can contextualize and improve our students' experience in the language classroom.

2. Context

Participants will create materials based on their needs and interests. The context proposed for this interactive presentation is the pedagogical approach and its characteristics. Participants will discuss in small groups as to what they need to take into account when adopting this pedagogical approach and why. Participants are encouraged to read Aguilar-Sánchez, Hernández, Cubillo, & Garbanzo, 2009) and Aguilar-Sánchez (2015) before the presentation. Copies will be made available electronically upon request.

3. Activities

Activity 1. Contextualization   15 minutes

Instructions:

In groups of four, discuss the context in which you teach. Use the following activities to guide your discussion:

  a. What is the layout of your classroom?
  b. What kind of technology do your students use for personal use?
  c. What kind of technology does your institution offer to complement your teaching?
  d. What kind of technology do you use for personal use?
  e. What kind of technology do your students have at home for personal use?

Activity 2. Pedagogical Objectives   15 minutes

In different groups of four, discuss what your pedagogical approach is and what the role of grammar is within its context. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

  a. How do you define your philosophy of teaching?
  b. To what theory of learning do you attach (Constructivism, Behaviorism, and an eclectic one)? Why? What pedagogical approach do you follow?
  c. What is the role of grammar in your pedagogical approach?
  d. What is the role of assessment and measurement in your pedagogical approach? How much do you do and why?

Activity 3. Creating Processing Instruction Activities   60 minutes

We will focus on creating the following types of activities:

  a. Explicit Grammar Explanation
  b. Affective Activities for Structured Input
  c. Referential Activities for Structured Input
  d. Mini-lessons to show participants' production

4. Materials

Participants are encouraged to bring the Programas de Inglés provided by MEP and the textbooks, if any, that they use in the classroom.

5. Conclusions

This is a highly interactive, hands-on presentation/workshop. Limitations are discussed as the presentation progresses, and participants themselves will provide areas of future work.

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7. Biography

Dr. Jorge Aguilar-Sánchez is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Dayton, Ohio. He has a Ph.D. in TESOL and Applied Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics. His current research focuses on student engagement for instructed language acquisition and the role emergent technologies as aids in the process and in Best Practices for research design in (Socio) Linguistics. His works appear in journals, chapters of books, and other publication venues.

Task-based Activities and Communication in the Foreign Language Classroom

Jorge Aguilar Sánchez
University of Dayton, U.S.A.
jaguilarsanchez1@udayton.edu

Resumen: En esta presentación interactiva, los participantes aprenden a crear actividades basadas en la tarea para facilitar la adquisición de una segunda lengua. Las actividades se crean como parte del Acercamiento P-E-E-R para la facilitación de la adquisición de segundas lenguas (Aguilar-Sánchez, en progreso) y está contextualizado al sistema educativo de Costa Rica. A los participantes se les alienta a crear sitios colaborativos con Google Docs, Facebook, y otros repositorios que estén al alcance. Estas actividades se crearán utilizando las tecnologías emergentes que estén disponibles para los profesores y los aprendices en cada contexto.

   Palabras clave: Acercamiento PEER, pedagogía, actividades basadas en la tarea, tecnologías emergentes, colaboración.

Abstract: In this interactive presentation, participants will learn to create task-based activities to facilitate second language acquisition. Activities will be created as part of the P-E-E-R Approach for Second Language Acquisition Facilitation (Aguilar-Sánchez, in progress) and will be contextualized to the Costa Rican foreign language education system. Participants will also be encouraged to create collaboration sites through Google Docs, Facebook, and other repository venues easily accessible to them. These activities will be created using emergent technologies available to the teacher and learner in each context.

   Keywords: PEER Approach, pedagogy, task-based activities, emergent technologies, collaboration.

1. Introduction
In this workshop, each participant explores the pedagogical characteristics of the PEER Approach to Second Language Acquisition Facilitation and explores the ways in which s/he can adapt them to meet students' needs. We will explore general characteristics of the context in which acquisition takes place as well as the limitations that we face as teachers of English in the developing world. We will discuss the importance of contextualizing the acquisition process to the characteristics of setting. We will discuss the two competing set of guidelines (ACTFL for foreign language classrooms and EFR for bilingual or second language acquisition settings) that have been adopted throughout to guide foreign/second language acquisition in the classroom and how we can contextualize and improve our students' experience in the language classroom through a sound pedagogical approach.

2. Context
Participants will create materials based on their needs and interests. The context proposed for this interactive presentation is the pedagogical approach and its characteristics. Participants will discuss in small groups as to what they need to take into account when

adopting this pedagogical approach and why. Participants are encouraged to read Aguilar-Sánchez (2015), Aguilar-Sánchez & Donar (2014), and selected chapters of Lee (2000) before the presentation. Copies will be made available electronically upon request.

3. Activities

Activity 1. Contextualization   15 minutes

In groups of four, discuss the context in which you teach. Use the following activities to guide your discussion:

        a. What is the layout of your classroom?
        b. What kind of technology do your students use for personal use?
        c. What kind of technology does your institution offer to compliment your teaching?
        d. What kind of technology do you use for personal use?
        e. What kind of technology do your students have at home for personal use?

Activity 2. Pedagogical Objectives   15 minutes

In different groups of four, discuss what your pedagogical approach is and what the role of grammar is within its context. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

        a. How do you define your philosophy of teaching?
        b. To what theory of learning do you attach (Constructivism, Behaviorism, and an eclectic one)? Why? What pedagogical approach you follow?
        c. What is the role of grammar in your pedagogical approach?
        d. What is the role of assessment and measurement in your pedagogical approach? How much do you do and why?

Activity 3. Creating PEER Activities for the English class   60 minutes

We will focus on creating the following types of activities:

        a. Facilitating acquisition through well-structured classes
        b. PI for grammar instruction
        c. 3 Readings in each activity
        d. Activities that encourage collaboration and engagement
        e. Mini-lessons to show participants' production

4. Materials

Participants are encouraged to bring the Programs de Inglés provided by MEP and the textbooks, if any, that they use in the classroom.

5. Conclusions

      This is a highly interactive, hands-on presentation/workshop. Limitations are discussed as the presentation progresses and participants themselves will provide areas of future work.

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7. Biography

Dr. Jorge Aguilar-Sánchez is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Dayton, Ohio. He has a Ph.D. in TESOL and Applied Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics. His current research focuses on student engagement for instructed language acquisition and the role emergent technologies play as aids in the process and in Best Practices for research design in (Socio) Linguistics. His works appear in journals, chapters of books, and other publication venues.

Tips for TOEIC Candidates

Danilo Alpizar Lobo
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Sede San Carlos
dalpizar@itcr.ac.cr

Resumen: El Test de Inglés para Comunicación Internacional (TOEIC) diseñado por The Educacional Testing Service (ETS) es una prueba de dominio del idioma Inglés que mide las habilidades cotidianas de escucha y lectura de las personas que trabajan en un entorno de trabajo internacional. La certificación TOEIC es la más utilizada en el mundo. Más de 7 millones de candidatos de todo el mundo hicieron el examen en 2014, permaneciendo como el examen más utilizado para la evaluación de dominio del inglés en el campo profesional. El Plan de Formación 2016-2018, por el Ministerio de Educación Pública de Costa Tica, surge en primer lugar a un cambio en el plan de estudios de inglés que requiere un personal competente especializado en la mediación educativa y la mejora del dominio lingüístico. El objetivo de este artículo es proporcionar a los candidatos a la prueba TOEIC con las tácticas o recomendaciones para lograr un exitoso desempeño en la prueba.

    Palabras clave: objetivo, candidatos, rendimiento, competente, formación, tácticas, consejos.

Abstract: The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) designed by The Educational Testing Service (ETS) is an English language proficiency test that measures the everyday listening and reading skills of people working in an international workplace environment. The TOEIC is the official English language certification most used in the world. More than 7 million candidates worldwide took the exam in 2014, remaining the most widely used test for evaluating English proficiency in the professional field. The Training Plan 2016-2018, designed by the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica, has emerged firstly due to a change in the curriculum of English, requiring competent staff specialized in educational mediation and improving the linguistic domain attaining greater linguistic command. The aim of this article is to provide TOEIC candidates attending the presentation with tactics or tips towards their successful test performance.

    Key words: Aim, candidates, performance, competent, training, tactics, tips.

1. Introduction

Efforts have been made by the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica together with the four public universities which are part of CONARE (Universidad Nacional, Universidad de Costa Rica, Universidad Estatal a Distancia and Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica) to help English teachers improve their linguistic skills, and prepare for the TOEIC Test. Based on the results obtained in a diagnostic exam applied by MEP to its English teachers in 2008, the Ministry began a training process to improve their language skills in 2010.

Teachers applying for tenure positions in English teaching jobs have to take the *TOEIC test a*nd achieve a B2 level of proficiency, in accordance with the European framework of reference for language proficiency testing. However, each year hundreds of English teachers take the test and only a few of them reach the goal of achieving the passing grade.

This presentation aims to provide participants with strategies or tactics towards a successful listening and reading performance when taking the TOEIC test. It is intended to guide learners through a thorough understanding of test directions and task requirements. This way, TOEIC test takers who have become familiar with the test format should then be able to concentrate on improving their overall language skills.

2. Literature Review

Since 1979, the TOEIC test scores have informed decisions regarding recruitment, job placement, promotion, and training. The test has been widely recognized as a worldwide standard to assess international English use. Designed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) the test has been adopted in some 150 countries around the world as the global standard for English communication skill assessment. Many companies, schools, and other organizations, as well as individuals, are currently utilizing the test as an effective way to raise the motivation to study, and as an opportunity to check the English skill levels of their workers and students.

Today, the TOEIC test is an internationally accepted, multiple-choice test of general English proficiency. It is marketed as an indirect, yet highly reliable measure of non-native speakers' abilities to communicate in an English-speaking work environment.

The TOEIC test consists of two parts, each with 100 questions. The listening comprehension section has four subtests and lasts 45 minutes. The structure/reading comprehension section has three subtests, and lasts 75 minutes.

TOEIC test items are described in the following section (adapted from the TOEIC Examinee Handbook, The Chauncey Group Ltd. 1996).

PART 1 – Listening Comprehension pictures: For each question, there is a photograph in the test booklet. Examinee hears 4 short statements, and must choose the statement which best describes the photograph. These statements are not printed in the test booklet. Settings include offices, street scenes, restaurants, laboratories, etc.
PART 2 – Listening comprehension, question – response: For each item, examinees hear a question, followed by 3 responses. Neither the question nor the answer is printed in the test booklet. Examinees must choose the correct answer to the question.
PART 3 – Listening comprehension, short conversation: For each question, examinees hear a 3-part exchange; they then read a short question and 4 possible answers to the question. Situations encompass work-related discussions, meeting and business trip plans or schedules, requests for information at airports or train stations, etc.
PART 4 – Listening comprehension, short talks: For each item, examinees listen to a short talk; printed in the exam booklet are 2 or more questions related to the talk. Each question has 4 possible answers. Talks include public announcements, news reports, meeting discussions, public service bulletins, and commercials.
PART 5 – Reading comprehension, incomplete sentences: Each question is an incomplete sentence. Four options to complete the sentence are listed underneath. Examinees must choose the correct word or phrase that completes the sentence. Missing items are either based in word meaning or form, collocations, or grammatical structure.
PART 6 – Reading comprehension, error recognition: Each item has four words or phrases underlined. Examinees must identify which of the four is incorrect. They need not correct the sentence; only identify which item needs to be corrected. Types of errors are similar to the missing items in Part 5.
PART 7 – Reading comprehension: This part of the test is comprised of a variety of reading material taken from a business context or everyday matters, such as notices, letters, forms, advertisements, newspapers, schedules, forms, and applications. For the questions related to each text, the examinee must choose the correct responses from a choice of 4. The correct answer is based on what is stated or implied in the text.

3. Context

While preparing for the TOEIC it is important to do constant practice under test conditions. That means taking practice tests with the same time limits and surroundings as if it were the real exam. So you need to take all parts of the test to get used to the quick transitions, fast pace and the tricks that can appear in the test. Candidates for the TOEIC are guided through a step-by-step description of the listening and reading test parts, complemented with the tactics or tips to go with each.

3.1 Listening comprehension — 100 questions (45 minutes). This section is only heard once and can be rather fast.
– Photographs (10 questions)
– Question-response (30 questions)
– Conversations (30 questions)
– Short talks (30 questions)

3.1.1. Listening Comprehension photographs: Create as many true English sentences about a photo as possible. In order to do well on the true/false section, practice quickly coming up with as many true English sentences in your head about a given photograph as you can. The best way to answer the questions for this part is to look at the whole picture and find out what is happening**.**

✓ Think to yourself: who, what, where, why?
✓ Before the recording starts, look at the photo and make as many sentences as you can in your head about what is happening there.
✓ When the recording starts, decide if each sentence you hear is false, maybe true or true. You might find that writing an X, question mark and check mark on the page with your finger will help you remember each one.
✓ Even if you are sure that one given answer is the correct one, listen to the other answers to make sure, and check yours.

3.1.2. Listening comprehension, question – response: This part is made up of 30 different questions. Take what you already know and use prediction skills to imagine the correct answer *before* hearing the different options.

When studying for this section it is a good idea to play the recording and listen to the question. After you have heard it, pause the recording and brainstorm a few answers. The TOEIC Listening is only heard once, and it can be rather fast at some points. So be sure to watch out for:
✓ words that sound similar but have different meanings
✓ wh- questions: who what, when, where, why, what
✓ tag (tail) questions
✓ yes/no questions that may not have yes/no answers

3.1.3. Listening comprehension, short conversation: Examinees hear a 3-part exchange. Then they read a short question and 4 possible answers.

The examinee will hear a short dialogue and then answer three multiple-choice questions. For this part, the questions and answers are in the test booklet. The examinee will need to use his/her short-term memory to succeed. It is important to watch out for:
✓ similar-sounding words
✓ inaccurate words
✓ word order
✓ words that change the meaning
✓ negative words (hardly, not, etc.)
✓ words associated with frequency (always, never, sometimes, etc.)
When studying for this section, it is best to look at the questions before listening to the dialogue.

3.1.4. Listening comprehension, short talks: Find Keywords in Part 4 questions before listening. The examinee hears three short talks about different scenarios. When

studying for this part, it is important to look at the questions and try to underline all the keywords in the questions and in the answer choices. This exercise will encourage skimming through the questions and the answers as quickly as possible for there are no breaks between the questions, and the recording is quite fast.

Questions ought to be read beforehand, and finding the keyword if time allows doing so. It is important to listen to the entire talk before choosing an answer. If running out of time, it is recommended to guess an answer.

3.2. Reading comprehension — 100 questions (75 minutes)
– Incomplete sentences (40 questions)
– Error recognition or text completion (12 questions)
– Reading comprehension (48 questions)
- Double passages

3.2.1. Incomplete sentences. To do well in this part, the examinee should know the various parts of speech and how they are used to form a grammatically correct sentence. In particular, be careful of
- ✓ Two-part phrasal verbs
- ✓ Incorrect use of prepositions
- ✓ Incorrectly placed adjectives
- ✓ Incorrect word forms
- ✓ Incorrect grammatical tense
- ✓ Incorrect transition word such as *however*, *furthermore*, etc.
- ✓ Incorrect conjunctions such as *and*, *but*, etc.

You need to review your grammar thoroughly to get a high score in this section.

3.2.2. Error recognition or text completion: Read the entire passage once very carefully (30 seconds per passage). Read the text a second time to determine its purpose and understand the main ideas. Then read a third time and without looking at the answer choices, try to guess the missing part in each blank. Then look at the answer choices and select what you think is the best answer. Try not to spend more than 2 minutes on each text.

3.2.3. Reading comprehension. In this part, you will read a selection of texts, such as magazine and newspaper articles, letters, and advertisements. Each text is followed by several questions. As in all reading comprehension exercises, a variety of skills are required to deduce the right answer. These include skimming, scanning, paraphrasing, and understanding vocabulary in context. A clue is that the order of the questions follows the order of the information in the reading passage.

3.2.4. Double passages. This part features a selection of texts, such as magazine and newspaper articles, letters, and advertisements. Each text is followed by several questions. In the paired passages, the examinee is asked to make connections between the two related texts. On the actual test, there will not be time to read every word. The tactic is to practice scanning and reading quickly for details.

4. Conclusions

The most recent educational policies should target new paths to ensure individual competitiveness and citizens' insertion to the globalized world. More organizations recruiting their staff want to determine whether an employee is suitable for a particular task. The Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica is requiring that English teachers who want to apply for a tenure position must take the TOEIC test and get a minimum score of B2 in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages. Nowadays, the TOEIC test is an internationally accepted, multiple-choice test of general English proficiency. It is marketed as an indirect, yet highly reliable measure of non-native speakers' abilities to communicate in an English-speaking work environment.

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6. Biography

The presenter graduated as an English teacher from Universidad de Costa Rica in 1981 and then obtained his Master's Degree in ESL from West Virginia University, USA in 1984. He has been a professor at Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica since 2000. He has been involved in teacher training both at UCR and at TEC with the CONARE-MEP English teacher-training program.

Increasing Student Talking Time

Joel Alvarez Gonzalez
University of Panama, Peace Corps Panama
Ja40003@gmail.com

Resumen: Al final de este taller, los participantes comprenderán la diferencia entre el tiempo de habla del maestro en el aula, y el tiempo de habla del estudiante. Aprenderán por qué aumentar el tiempo de habla de los estudiantes es importante, además de nuevas estrategias para limitar el tiempo del maestro y aumentar el de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Tiempo, estrategias, estudiantes, maestro, aula, hablar.

Abstract: By the end of this workshop, participants will understand difference between Teacher Talking Time (TTT) and Student Talking Time (STT). They will learn why increasing student talking time is important, as well as learn strategies to limit TTT and increase STT.

Keywords: Time, strategies, students, teacher, classroom, talking.

1. Introduction

Teacher Talking Time (TTT): Refers to how much the teacher talks during a lesson. This will vary according to the stage of the lesson and the level of learners. For example, a teacher may need to speak more when providing explanations and examples early in the lesson.

Student Talking Time (STT): Refers to how much the students talk during a lesson, whether participating in a class discussion, working in groups, etc. Ideally, 50% (beginners) -80 % (intermediate to advanced learners) of talking time should be Student Talking Time, while STT should be all in English.

2. Context

This presentation is aimed at Costa Rican English teachers with various linguistic skills.

3. Activities

This workshop will emphasize actual activities on the teaching experience. It will provide participants with a wide variety of communicative activities and strategies for incorporating more student talking time. Participants will be encouraged to work on different activities and participate actively both individually and in groups – and, most importantly, to learn a lot!

4. Materials

Game: Tennis, Elbow, Foot
Aim: Builds Vocabulary
     Improves Spelling
     Develops Critical Thinking Skills

Builds Collaboration
May be a good review of previously studied vocabulary.

Level: All
Time: 15 minutes, at the beginning or end of class
Materials: board, markers for each group, eraser

Instructions:
To start: The teacher models by putting "tennis, elbow, foot" and continues with words that are associated with the previous word, i.e. "…ball..." No word can be repeated. Teacher must explain that common words among the groups are not counted as points.
The goal is to write as many words in 2 minutes as possible.

1) Break class into two teams. If the class is large, then break class into three groups.
2) One member of each team goes up to the board and writes the word given by the teacher. Then s/he continues writing words, each one associated to the previous until the 2-minute time is up.
3) The teacher then compares the words from all competing groups and erases common words. Groups get points for all words that are different from their team members.

A Kinesthetic version of this would be:

Clap Snap Association- played with Tennis, Foot, Elbow
Description
This is an explicit activity. It is done with a rhythm where students tap out a particular rhythm at the same time as creating a stream of words as described above.
Here is how to do the rhythm. Each beat consists of 4 phases:
>   Slap both hands on your thighs
>   Clap your hands
>   Snap your left hand fingers
>   Snap your right hand fingers

With every right hand snap, a word should be thrown to your neighbor.
Suggestion to make it easier: once the rhythm is established, you can leave out the snaps. This will make things more understandable.

<div align="center">Movement Activities</div>

Charades
Skills: Speaking   Materials: None
Objective: Review vocabulary   Time: 10 – 15 minutes
First, break the students up into two teams. Team 1 sends a volunteer to the front of the class. The teacher gives them a word to act out (TPR) and team 1 has 15 seconds to guess that word. If team 1 does not guess it correctly in the given time, team 2 has a chance to steal the point by guessing correctly. Then team 2 sends a player to the front to do the same. You can play for a definite amount of points or time.

Simon Says

Skills: Listening, speaking   Materials: None
Objectives: Review vocabulary   Time: 20 minutes
Pick a student to be "Simon". "Simon" then orders all sorts of different things to be done, which must be obeyed only when the order begins with "Simon says". For instance, "Simon says: 'Thumbs up!' which, of course, everyone obeys; then perhaps "Thumbs down!" which should not be obeyed, because the order did not begin with "Simon says". "Simon" (who could also be the teacher) can give commands using phrases/words, and the class is expected to do the TPR movement for that phrase or word. In addition, "Simon" could do the action and the class has to say the word.

Find Someone Who BINGO

Skills: Speaking and Listening   Materials: A Bingo card for each student
Objective: Review vocabulary words or phrases   Time: 10 – 15 minutes
Bingo cards are made with information such as "someone who was born in the same season as you," or "someone who has been bungee jumping." When a student finds another person that the descriptor fits, then s/he has that student's initial in the space.

Get up and Move IF...

Skills: Listening   Materials: None
Objectives: Review vocabulary   Time: 20 minutes
You will need everyone to sit in chairs arranged in a circle. One person is in the middle. Remove that person's chair. Now there is one less chair than there are students (18 students in the class? 17 chairs in the circle.) The person in the middle needs to say a sentence "Get up and move if…" followed by a statement that applies to someone sitting in a circle "Get up and move if you like hojaldres"; or "Get up and move if you are wearing the color red." The person in the circle who can identify with that statement has to move from his or her seat and sit in a different chair. The person in the middle will need to try to sit down. One person will remain standing. The standing person starts a new round by saying a different statement. People cannot move to seats on their immediate left or right. For example, they can sit two seats away, but they cannot move to the left or right of their current chairs.

Speed Dating

Skills: Speaking and Listening   Materials: None
Objective: Information questions   Time: 5 – 15 minutes
Divide everyone into two groups. Have one group make a circle facing outward. The second group then makes a circle around the first group and faces inward. Everyone should be facing someone from the other circle. Every person can talk to the person across from them for a minute or two before you yell, "SWITCH", and the outer circle moves to the left or right a few steps. Give them a topic to talk about each rotation, or else questions you are working on in class.

Around the World
Skills: Listening, speaking   Materials: None
Objectives: Review vocab, grammar concepts, or dialogue   Time: 30 minutes
The first two students stand up, one student next to the other at their desk. The teacher asks a question and the first student that answers correctly moves on to the next desk where both students stand, thereby going around the world (class) until everyone has a chance to play. You can show a flashcard, ask a familiar question, or present part of a dialogue and the students have to answer the question correctly. If both players do not know a word or letter within 5 seconds, show the class and see who knows. This can keep all the students engaged. Stand in front of the class so all students can see. Keep it moving fast. The game will finish when everyone has had a chance to compete, and the students have been ''around the world'' (or around the classroom).

Fly Swatter
Skills: Listening, Reading   Materials: Whiteboard, markers and a flyswatter (optional)
Objectives: Review vocabulary   Time: 10 – 15 minutes
Write the vocabulary words your class in learning in English on the board in random spots. 20 words in total is a good number for this activity. They can be verbs, nouns, adjectives or any other kind of word. Form the class into two teams and have them line up with the first person in the line about ten feet from the board. You can mark the spot with a small piece of tape or just use a chair. The first student in each line will have a fly swatter in hand. (The students can just use their hands if necessary) The teacher will call out a word, the students will have to find it, and the first to slap it wins a point for his or her team.

Sentence Builders
Skills: Reading, Grammar   Materials: At least 2 sets of words on small pieces of paper
Objectives: Create a sentence using proper syntax and word order.   Time: 20 minutes
Use this fun ESL writing game when you have a large class of students. It is useful for teaching or revising vocabulary and sentence structure. Before you start the writing game, prepare at least two sets of words on small pieces of paper. One word should be written on each piece of paper, and all sets should be identical. Separate the students into teams. Hand out one set to each team. Make sure each student has one word. Students in each team must arrange themselves to make a sentence out of their words. They may have to answer the teacher's question by arranging themselves into a sentence that answers the question. The winner is the first team to write a clear and correct sentence. That team gains a point.

SAMPLE Find Someone Who… Bingo Card

Topic: Sports
Questions: Do you like to _____?
Responses: Yes, I like to _____.
                 No, I don't like to _____.

play basketball?	play golf?	play baseball?
play volleyball?	play soccer?	go swimming?
play tennis?	go bowling?	go cycling?

SAMPLE Find Someone Who… Bingo Card

Topic: Sports
Questions: Do you like to _____?
Responses: Yes, I like to _____.
                 No, I don't like to _____.

play basketball?	play golf?	play baseball?
play volleyball?	play soccer?	go swimming?
play tennis?	go bowling?	go cycling?

5. Conclusions

A teacher's role is to consciously build strategy into the lessons to help students develop their own learning strategies. First, teachers need to learn about their students' backgrounds, identify student problems, and find out what strategies learners are currently using. This may be done through observation, by informally talking with the students, interviewing them, or having formal consultations. Then teachers need to help students figure out which strategies might work best for them. As students become more adept at identifying and using strategies for themselves, they become better self-learners.

During this session, we expect participants to brainstorm some ideas about
• Diagnosing learner needs and strengths
• Using a wide range of activities
• Drawing topics and activities from many sources.
• Creating activities to transfer language skills.
• Activate students' background knowledge about the content they already know, so that they can transfer it to new domains (e.g., crocodiles, lizards, folktales.)
• Strategically forming student pairs and groups for support and use of shared knowledge
• Using graphics and multimedia (photos, video, images, and student work on the walls) to facilitate understanding.

The paper will end with concluding remarks about the presentation. Limitations of the work may also be mentioned. The paper should be between 4 and 10 single-space pages in length. Appendices may be added if required. It cannot exceed 20 pages

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7. Biography

Joel Álvarez holds a B.A in ESL from the University of Panama. He also holds a Master's degree in TESOL from Universidad Latina de Panama and a Master's degree in Higher Education from the University of Panama, as well as a MBA from Laureate International University. He was the Logistic and Academic Coordinator at the English for Life Program in Panama. Joel has participated in different Graduate seminars in Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Colombia, Canada, and The United States. He was the Panama TESOL President from 2013-2015. He is currently the Program Manager for the Teaching English and Leadership Program at the Peace Corps Panama.

Teaching and Assessing English Language Learners

Joel Alvarez Gonzalez
University of Panama, Peace Corps Panama
Ja40003@gmail.com

Resumen: Esta presentación está diseñada para mejorar la enseñanza y la evaluación. Los participantes llevarán a cabo diferentes actividades para desarrollar habilidades de comunicación oral e interactuar en diferentes situaciones de la vida real. Los participantes estarán orientados en la organización y la comprensión del vocabulario nuevo para ser utilizado fuera del aula.

Palabras clave: Evaluación, habilidades, enseñanza, motivación, aprendizaje.

Abstract: This presentation is designed to improve teaching and assessing skills. Participants will perform different activities to develop oral communicative skills and interact in different real-life situations. Participants will be guided in organizing and understanding new vocabulary to be used outside the classroom.

Keywords: Assessment, skills, teaching, motivation, and learning.

1. Introduction

Methods and strategies to learn new vocabulary words will be explained, as well as how to asses students' learning. Participants will understand the importance of small group collaboration through hands-on experience for acquiring new vocabulary skills. Vocabulary and idiom activities will reinforce comprehension for ESL learners.

2. Context

This section should include aspects such as the linguistic level of students the activities are addressed to, age, programs or courses, linguistic abilities approached and, any other data you may consider important.

3. Activities

This presentation will emphasize on actual teaching experiences. It will provide participants with a wide variety of tips and strategies for clear, effective teaching.

4. Materials

The next sites all have many activities for learners.

http://www.englishclub.com/index.htm
http://www.manythings.org/
http://www.learnenglish.de/
http://a4esl.org/

The following are all teacher resources.

http://www.eslcafe.com/teachers/
http://abcteach.com/
http://www.eslgold.com/index.html
http://school.discoveryeducation.com/
http://esl.about.com/

5. Conclusions

Teaching and Assessing English language Learners has been a great opportunity to implement student-friendly activities based on interactive classrooms. Participants are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning, participation in this session, and integrity in their behavior during working times.

In order to integrate the teaching and assessing instruction, teachers should consider taking these steps:

1. Learn more about the various ways to integrate language skills in the classroom (e.g., content based, task-based, or a combination of both)
2. Reflect on their current approach and evaluate the extent to which the skills are integrated
3. Choose instructional materials, textbooks, and technologies that promote the integration of listening
4. Reading, speaking, and writing, as well as their associated skills of syntax, vocabulary, and so on
5. Teach language learning strategies and emphasize that a given strategy can often enhance performance in multiple skills.

Many decisions must be made when assessing language learners.

1. What skills should be tested?
2. How many items of each type should be there?
3. Should the rating be holistic or analytic?
4. What level of confidence is necessary for the results?
5. How much time should students have?
6. What special considerations should be taken into account?

Research shows that a positive classroom atmosphere characterized by high expectations, teacher warmth and encouragement, pleasant physical surroundings, and so on, enhances all kinds of learning.

Some important considerations to accomplish this are as follows:

• Setting ground rules well in advance
• Providing well-planned activities
• Showing respect for each student
• Providing non-threatening activities
• Being flexible
• Accepting individual differences
• Exhibiting a positive attitude
• Modeling thinking skills
• Acknowledging every response
• Allowing students to be active participants
• Creating experiences that will ensure success at least part of the time for each student.

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7. Biography

Joel Álvarez holds a B.A in ESL from the University of Panama. He also holds a Master's degree in TESOL from Universidad Latina de Panama and a Master's degree in Higher Education from the University of Panama, and a MBA from Laureate International University. He was the logistic and academic coordinator at English for Life Program in Panama. He has participated in different Graduate seminars in Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Colombia, Canada, and The United States. He was the Panama TESOL President from 2013-2015. He is currently the Program Manager for the Teaching English and Leadership Program at the Peace Corps Panama.

How to Gamify the ESL Classroom

Max Arias Segura
Ministry of Public Education, Costa Rica
max.arias.segura@mep.go.cr

Resumen: La gamificación es el empleo de mecánicas de juego en entornos y aplicaciones no lúdicas en contextos aprendientes con el fin de potenciar la motivación, el esfuerzo individual, el trabajo en comunidades aprendientes, el aprendizaje significativo y valores. Se trata de una estrategia emergente y poderosa que invita a los facilitadores a romper con el paradigma positivista de la educación y entrar a espacios aprendientes más flexibles, caóticos, disruptivos y biopedagógicos. El acto de gamificar el aprendizaje es una oportunidad de creativizar e innovar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés a nivel áulico y responder a las necesidades de los aprendientes del siglo XXI.

Palabras clave: Gamificación, Comunidades Aprendientes, Creatividad, Innovación.

Abstract: Gamification is the use of game design elements and game mechanics in non-game contexts with the aim of boosting motivation, individual effort, work in learning communities, significant learning and values. It is a powerful and emergent strategy that invites teachers to break down the application of a positive paradigm in education and enter into more flexible, chaotic, disruptive, and bio-pedagogical learning venues. The act of gamifying learning is an opportunity to innovate, co-create and cre-activate the learning teaching process of English for the 21st century learner.

Keywords: Gamification, Communities of Practice, Creativity, Innovation.

1. Introduction

The term "gamification" has emerged in recent years as a way to describe interactive online design that plays on people's competitive instincts and often incorporates the use of rewards such as points, payments, badges, discounts, and even free gifts to drive action; and status indicators such as friend counts, retweets, leader boards, achievement data, progress bars, and the ability to "level up."

While some people dismiss gamification as a fad, neuroscientists are discovering more and more about the ways in which humans react to such interactive design elements. They say such elements can cause feel-good chemical reactions, alter human responses to stimuli – increasing reaction times, for instance – and under certain conditions improve learning, participation, and motivation. Gamification is not, however, just about status, community building, and marketing. Game-like approaches to education and problem solving are rolling out in new ways. To cite one prominent example, researchers at the University of Washington made headlines in 2011 with their game Foldit. It generated a crowd-sourced discovery of the mystery of how a key protein may help cure HIV. The game drew 46,000 participants whose game-play took just 10 days to solve a problem scientists had been working on for 15 years. For this reason, scholars and educators too have become interested in harnessing the potential of gaming mechanics and sensibilities as tools to advance learning. A 'serious gaming'

movement has emerged to use gaming techniques to such realms as education programs on subjects like English teaching. Therefore, a question arises: Will the use of gamification spur second language acquisition? The answer is yes. For this reason, the objective of this paper is to provide ideas about how to gamify the ESL classroom.

2. Context

The art of gamifying the learning-teaching process is open to many possibilities and it will be determined depending on the level of your learners, the age of your students, the course type or English program you are teaching, and the linguistic skills you want to work with. In this regard, the teacher has to carefully consider these aspects in order to plan a gamified activity for success. The game mechanics most likely to be used by teachers are:

Cascading Information Theory – breaking up information into bits so that each bit can be effectively learned; not delivering all the information at once. We do this all the time; it is called curriculum.

Achievements – where learners have accomplished something, and they know it. These may be made visible in a variety of ways. Teachers tend to do this a lot with their learners. Game theory calls those who are greatly motivated by achievement relative to others "Achievers" or "Killers." Both need to know that they are better than others are, but the latter ("Killers") want to have more power than others do, or they want to have power over others. Good teachers try to channel this desire for control into helping others. Sometimes it works.

Community Collaboration – working together to solve a problem or do a task. We call it "group work" in teaching. In game theory, "Socializers" are especially motivated by this. Women are more likely to be socializers and be motivated by collaboration than young men, particularly "Achievers" and "Killers."

Points – giving numerical value for actions. We call them grades. We tend not to give points to a group or for routine activities, but we could.

Loss Aversion – not getting a reward, but avoiding punishment. Grading is often how teachers implement this.

Behavioral Momentum – the tendency of people who are doing something to keep doing it. This works in tandem with what SCVNGR calls Fun Once, Fun Always – activities that remain enjoyable, even with repetition. Classroom routines would fall into this category.

The technical strategy consists on rewarding learners upon accomplished achievements. Some of these are as follows:

Point achievements

Value is given to some actions which are cumulative

Levels

Different levels are defined for users to achieve in order to advance

Rewards

As long as users achieve objectives rewards are given. These are sort of a collection.

Gifts

Motivational prizes are given to users

Classifications

Users are classified based on achieved scores, highlighting the best players

Challenges

Competitions among users, the best obtains points or prizes.

Missions

Users have to solve or overcome a challenge in solitude or team work.

3. Activities

Usually when one thinks of gamification, the first idea that comes to mind is technology use. However, you do not necessarily need to use technology to gamify your class. For instance, some of the activities you can use are as follows:

Name: Story Cubes (Speaking and Writing)
Time: 80 minutes
Materials: 9 paper cubes
Grouping mechanics: small groups
Procedures:

1. Roll all 9 cubes and look at the face up images. Pick an image that will be the starting point for your story. Beginning with "Once upon a time…" make up a story that somehow links together all 9 face up images.
2. Think up a title or theme for a story. For example, "The Beach", then roll all 9 cubes and try to tell a story that relates back to the title or theme.
3. Divide the cubes evenly among the players (it is ok if some get more than others.) Starting with one player and continuing in a circle, take turns rolling the cubes and adding to the story based on the face up images. Stop after all 9 cubes have been rolled, or continue rolling for additional rounds.

Name: Game boards
Time: 80 minutes
Materials: customized boards
Grouping mechanics: small groups
Procedures:

1. Introduce the game board. Explain what you see on the board. This includes any graphics or writing on the board. Identify the start and end points on the game board. Note any special spaces such as "Move Ahead 2".
2. Introduce the game pieces. These include items such as a spinner, a die (or dice), pawns, and tokens.
3. Read the game directions. Have the students repeat the directions back to you to make sure they understand how to play.
4. Practice playing the game without the prompts/cards from the game.

4. Materials

Cube
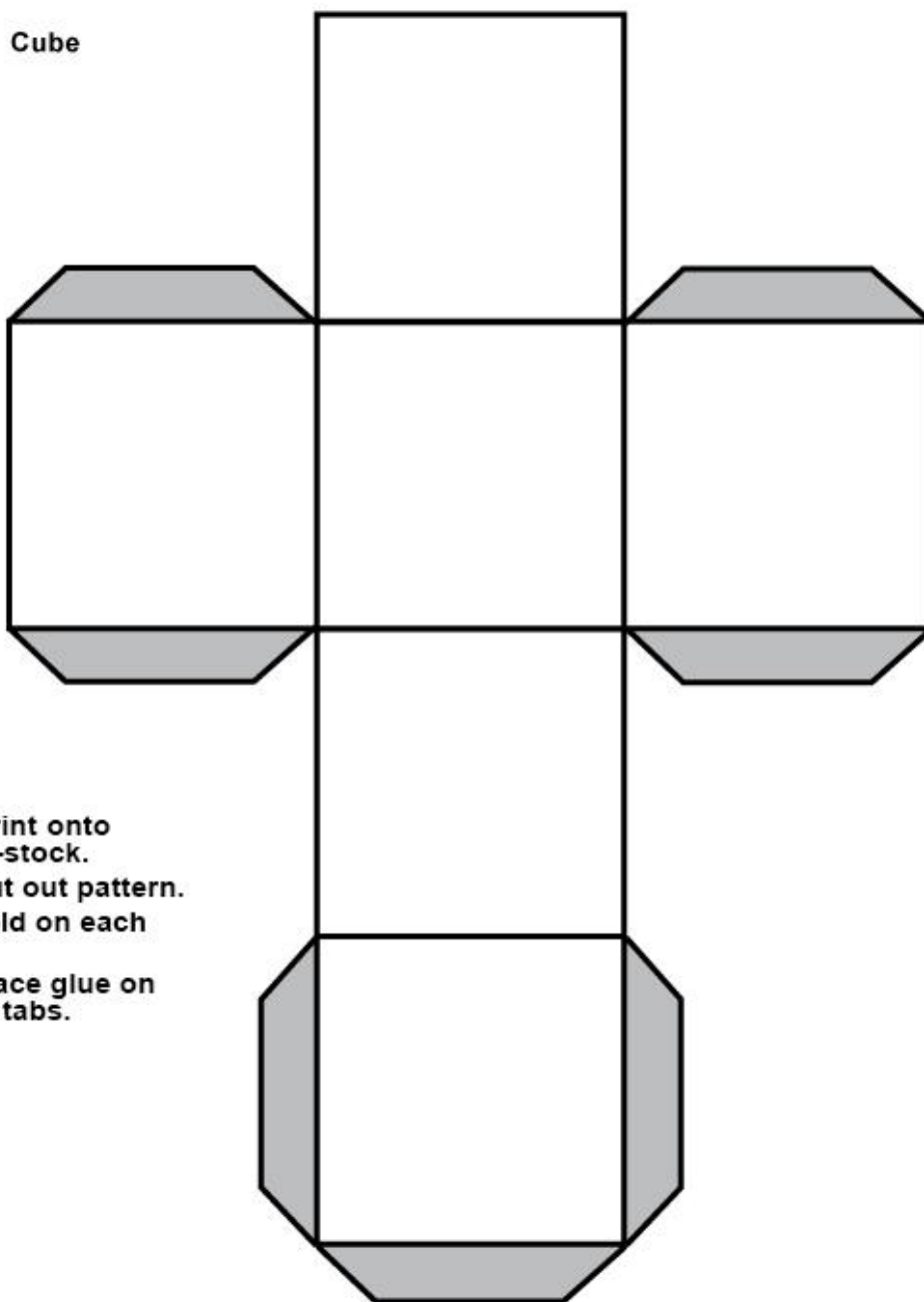
1. Print onto card-stock.
2. Cut out pattern.
3. Fold on each line.
4. Place glue on gray tabs.

Web pages
http://www.edutopia.org/blog/gamification-in-education-vicki-davis
http://blog.tophat.com/4-ways-to-gamify-learning-in-your-classroom/
http://ed.ted.com/on/uk36wtoi
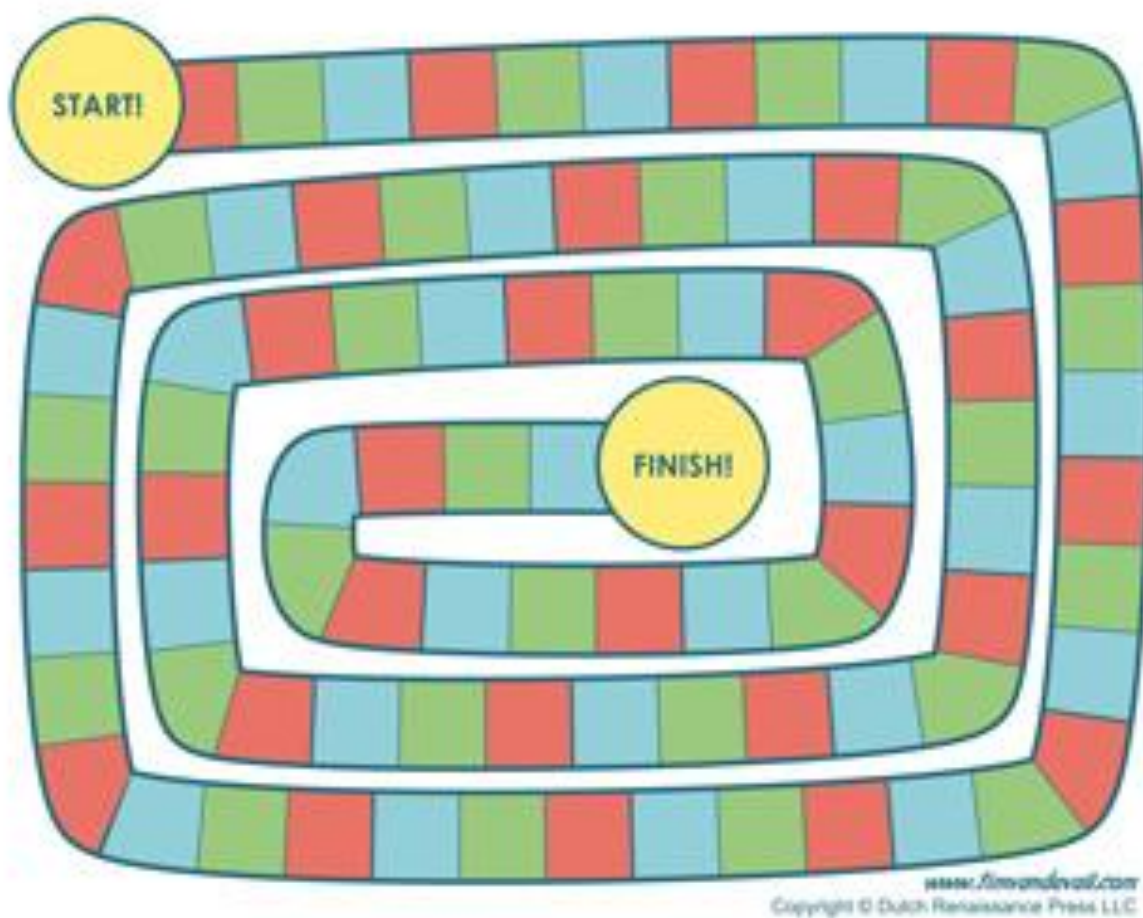
5. Conclusions

In summary, gamification is an umbrella term due to its flexible framework, as part of a pedagogy centered on learners and their learning process. This workshop presentation emphasized the use of gamification not in the usual way, which is based on the use or incorporation of technology. Its innovation lies on the application of game-like procedures to cre-activate the English learning process with a dose of intellectual joy as part of a motivational trigger.

There are benefits embedded in this emergent perspective. For example, students' engagement and motivation increases due to the use of games. Moreover, learners increase their opportunities to acquire English fluently and accurately.

On the other hand, some of the limitations of using gamification lie in the fact that it demands an investment of time for planning and adapting the content in a gamified game. It may also be noted that the game is just a reward and punishment system with icing. Others put forth the idea that students should be motivated by a desire to learn, not by some external tool. We also hear that games breed competition or that they lead to students learning about the game rather than the course matter.

These criticisms have merit. We do see many gamification efforts leading to those outcomes. However, we believe that this is because those games are badly designed, not because gamification or using games in education is inherently a bad practice.

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7. Biography

Max Arias Segura is a Regional English Advisor in Liberia, Guanacaste. He has worked in Education for about 19 years at different levels, ranging from elementary education to universities. He majored with a BA, a *Licenciatura* and a Master's Degree in English Teaching, in addition to a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and Administration, and a Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Pedagogical Mediation. Among his areas of interest are methodology, learning, and assessment.

ESI Schools: An Educational Adventure

Paola Artavia Moya
MEP, DR Occidente, Costa Rica
paola.artavia.moya@mep.go.cr

Alberto González Céspedes
MEP, Costa Rica
alberto.gonzalez.cespedes@mep.go.cr

Resumen: La propuesta ESI (Escuelas con Énfasis en Segundo Idioma) constituye un plan piloto que integra teoría reciente sobre el aprendizaje de segundos idiomas y se nutre de experiencias exitosas a nivel mundial y local. Consta de dos etapas: inmersión y progreso del inglés. El cambio más significativo es la inclusión del estudio de "Phonics", para familiarizar a los estudiantes con las letras y fonemas. Se complementa con el uso de "Active English", método basado en la programación neurolingüística. A su vez correlaciona las 4 destrezas comunicativas, las competencias para el siglo XXI, la metodología CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Language) y la alfabetización tecnológica. En general se trazan dos grandes objetivos: primero, graduar estudiantes de sexto grado con un nivel promedio A2 en el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia y segundo, generar insumos pedagógicos a través de la práctica, para que el MEP los utilice en un posible enriquecimiento de nuevos programas.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza del inglés, aprendizaje de segundos idiomas, Estrategias Siglo XXI, inglés como lengua extranjera, CLIL.

Abstract: ESI (Schools with emphasis on Second Language) is a pilot plan that integrates recent theory about learning second languages and draws on successful experiences at a global and a local level. It consists of two stages: immersion and English progress. The most significant change is the inclusion of "Phonics" to familiarize students with letters and phonemes. It is complemented by the use of "Active English" a method based on neurolinguistic programming. Moreover, it correlates all four communicative skills, 21st century skills, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Language) methodology, and technology literacy. Overall, there are two main objectives. First is graduating sixth graders with an average level A2 under the Common European Framework of Reference; and second, devising educational inputs through practice, to be used by MEP for potentially enriching new programs.

Keywords: English teaching, second language learning, 21st century skills, EFL, CLIL.

1. Introduction

This pilot plan proposed by the Ministry of Education in the Western Region was created upon the reflection of various teaching practices that have been effective in different contexts of this region. This challenging experience called Escuelas ESI dares to implement some innovative techniques and systematize a number of good practices in the classrooms of five different schools located in different districts.

This Project has a theoretical foundation based on CLIL Approach, 21st century skills, critical thinking, learning techniques and phonics, as well as successful experiences proposed by the Ministry of Education and the different actors involved in the Project.

The pilot program has two stages known as English immersion and English progression. Stage one maximizes exposure to listening (decodification of exposed language), the implementation of different ludic techniques (Active English) and the use of phonics in the 1st Cycle.

Stage two relates all four linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) representing communicative situations in a cooperative and realistic way. In this stage, 21st century skills and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Language) are incorporated, and content-based classes are integrated into the experimental groups.

In both stages, the use of TICs or other meaningful technology is practiced by both teachers and students using elements offered by each context.

In general, this program has two macro objectives: graduating sixth grade students with an A2 level based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and generate some systematic pedagogical experiences that can help EFL teachers all around the country improve their teaching experience in second language acquisition.

2. Justification

Within the context of globalization, a second language is essential because languages are used in almost all areas of knowledge and human development. Learning other languages is also crucial for the success and development of novel students. Learning a second language is no longer considered a luxury as it was a few decades ago, but today bilingualism is considered essential not only for personal development, but also for countries' economies to boom. New jobs, new technologies and openness to other cultures require citizens to be able to communicate in two or more languages.

Learning other languages provides a myriad of benefits for people. For instance, it enhances personal development, exercises the mind, provides access to the world's cultural diversity, fosters an understanding of the world from other perspectives, and contributes to national development, among others. As Julia Montufar has said: "People who are restricted to a monolingual education and culture are in a significant danger, since they cannot deal with the increasingly common and complex demands of our society" (2011).

In Costa Rica, most of the students in elementary schools have at least five 40-minute lessons each week for 10 months for six years, a proper amount of time to achieve a basic linguistic level. The question is, why do the kids in most of our elementary schools do not attain even the minimum level to understand a second language after all these years?

Based on this main question, a regional advisor for the Ministry of Education has decided to invest time and effort in order to design an educational proposal that

somehow certifies the learning of a second language in an EFL context. This pilot plan proposed for several schools in the Western Region is not only intended to provide a linguistic approach that encompasses the different stages of second language acquisition, but it also aims to train students with capabilities going beyond mere memorization.

A lasting, comprehensive learning is intended though a variety of techniques and resources that can be easily found in most public schools, for instance a teacher with an acceptable linguistic level, infrastructure, language or computing labs, a TV set or some other technological items, libraries, among others.

This pilot program intends to maximize all those sources in order to improve the linguistic skills to acquire a second language in every student. The proposal is nurtured by successful previous experiences in some communities where the Ministry of Education has tried to increase the language level with plans, projects and workshops.

Most of those previous educational experiences proposed by the Ministry evidenced a positive impact in the language acquisition process. However, they have not been maintained due to financial issues. ESI takes the most important elements of each experience and systematizes them into a cyclical approach proposed by the authors.

ESI Schools project

General Objective
To form school-age students with sound language skills, enabling them to communicate basically and accurately in a second language.

Specific objectives
- Maximize existing human, technical and physical resources in each school working with the program.

- Develop an exit profile for ESI students, whereby at the end of the process they have acquired a language base of A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference.

- Establish a sound linguistic basis in early childhood, through the appropriate use of phonology and gaming pedagogy.

- Use consistently technology and multimedia resources available for schools to enhance the students' language skills.

- Develop an appreciation for their own culture, as well as respect and tolerance towards those cultures under study.

- Implement innovative methodologies to acquire long lasting knowledge and language skills.

Background and proposal
Instrumental or communicative use of a second language has become essential in the workplace, as well as in a context of globalization. It is not a secret that there is a need to improve not only teaching methodologies, but also some other aspects such as the use

of resources or the educator's linguistic quality to strengthen language acquisition among schoolers.

In the Public Education System, most children stay around 6 years receiving English classes at least twice a week, and yet at the end of the process they hardly understand very easy questions or at least try to answer them. Due to this fact, the Ministry of Public Education, the Government of Costa Rica and some other organizations involved in language teaching (Fundación CRUSA, Costa Rica Multilingüe, CONARE, etc.) have recently started implementing various plans and initiatives to promote multilingualism. A higher number of English lessons and new programs in so-called Bilingual Public Schools was implemented as well. That is the case of Zeta Trece in San Carlos and the Central School in Jacó, Puntarenas.

New methodologies have been introduced based on MEP programs. This is the case with inclusion of high level literature with "Moving into English" by Harcourt Mifflin (2008); "Active English" (2009); introduction of ICTs using different software (Cyberlab, created by UCR/MEP, EILE, DynEd, Imagine Learning); and "Tell me more" −with funding from the IDB− (2010), all of which are now part of Costa Rican English classrooms.

Besides those programs some workshops have been offered by foreign organizations and Governments (Costa Rica Multilingüe initiatives, VEF, VIF, Peace Corps volunteers, US Embassy cooperators, etc.) Some rural areas have benefited from cooperation programs such as Jumpstart, a strategy also organized by Costa Rica Multilingüe.

An ambitious teacher training program was also launched as a strategy to strengthen the teachers linguistic and pedagogical skills (CONARE/MEP). As a result, all in-service teachers have taken the TOEIC language test since 2008.

Despite all these initiatives and proposals (all of them valid and very important for improving the teaching and learning of second languages) it has not been enough to bring about qualitative changes in language teaching, perhaps due to a fragmentation of the proposals. Systematization, consistence, and the experiences of several teachers who have worked for MEP for more than a decade are the key elements to promote a feasible change.

This pilot program uses a foreign language learning method intended for students to acquire problem solving and "know-how" skills. The program has two major educational purposes. First, to train students to acquire actual (oral and written) communication skills in English at the end of primary education. On the other hand, it aims to create educational inputs from experiences in five different communities. This knowledge and results could be used by MEP to enrich the programs and methodologies are currently in use in the first and second cycles.

Schools involved in the ESI program are located in communities with a high tourist visitation impact, or in socio-culturally deprived areas, areas nearby bilingual schools where continuity is given to the process, or areas with a productive structure that requires citizens trained to master other languages in order to contribute to community development. This pilot plan was launched in the first quarter of 2013 and will remain in force until the last quarter of 2018.

3. Literature Review

In Costa Rica, the Ministry of Public Education has implemented a 5- lesson week curricula in most of the primary schools around the country, in blocks of 2- 3 or 1-1- lesson studies per group. In less fortunate schools, students receive just three lessons or less per week (Lora, 2011).

The international professional organization Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL, 2006), has adopted five levels of language proficiency that reflect characteristics of language performance at each developmental stage based on this progressive model in some countries. These language proficiency levels are intended to highlight and provide a model of the process of language acquisition. The levels are as follows (ESI project students in third grade would be initially ranked at Level 1.):

1. **Level 1-Starting.** At Level 1, students initially have limited or no understanding of English and they rarely use it for communication. They respond non-verbally to simple commands, statements, and questions. As their oral comprehension increases, they begin to imitate the verbalizations of others by using single words or simple phrases, and they begin to use English spontaneously. At the earliest stage, these learners construct meaning from text primarily through illustrations, graphs, maps, and tables.

2. **Level 2-Emerging.** At Level 2, students can understand phrases and short sentences. They can communicate limited information in simple everyday and routine situations by using memorized phrases, groups of words, and formulae. They can use selected simple structures correctly, but still systematically produce basic errors. Students begin to use general academic vocabulary and familiar everyday expressions. Errors in writing are present that often hinder communication.

3. **Level 3-Developing.** At Level 3, students understand more complex speech but still may require some repetition. They use English spontaneously but may have difficulty expressing all their thoughts due to a restricted vocabulary and a limited command of language structures. Students at this level speak in simple sentences, which are comprehensible and appropriate, but which are frequently marked by grammatical errors. Proficiency in reading may vary considerably. Students are most successful constructing meaning from texts on which they have background knowledge to build upon.

4. **Level 4-Expanding.** At Level 4, students' language skills are adequate for most day-to-day communication needs. They communicate in English in new or unfamiliar settings, but have occasional difficulty with complex structures and abstract academic concepts. Students at this level may read with considerable fluency and are able to locate and identify the specific facts within the text. However, they may not understand texts in which the concepts are presented in a decontextualized manner, the sentence structure is complex, or the vocabulary is abstract or has multiple meanings. They can read independently but may have occasional comprehension problems, especially when processing grade-level information.

5. **Level 5-Bridging.** At Level 5, students can express themselves fluently and spontaneously on a wide range of personal, general, academic, or social topics in a variety of contexts. They are poised to function in an environment with native speaking peers with minimal language support or guidance. Students have a good command of technical and academic vocabulary, as well of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. They can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured texts of differing lengths and degrees of linguistic complexity. Errors are minimal, difficult to spot, and generally corrected when they occur.

Revised in 2006, the TESOL standards include three goals that reflect three overarching areas of student competence in social language, academic language, and socio-cultural knowledge. Each goal is supported by three standards. According to TESOL, when students meet these standards, they will be proficient in English as a second language. Nine content standards indicate more specifically, what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction. The standards in Goal 1 focus on using English to accomplish personal and social interaction tasks. The standards in Goal 2 are concerned with using English to further academic learning and to accomplish academic tasks. The standards in Goal 3 address the cultural parameters of using English with others, including non-verbal communication. The third standard of each goal specifically targets the use of learning strategies to enhance knowledge of English for social, academic, and socio-cultural purposes.

In addition to TESOL, there is the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), a consortium of states dedicated to designing and implementing high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English learners. The WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards are recognized worldwide for their innovative approach to measuring academic language development in English (WIDA Consortium, 2007a, 1). WIDA provides an outline for proficiency levels as demonstrated in Table 1 (WIDA Consortium, 2007b, p. iii). Students in third grade in the ESI Project would be noted initially at Level 1.

Table 1.

WIDA Outline for Proficiency Levels

6 **Reaching**	• specialized or technical language reflective of the content area at grade level; • a variety of sentence length so varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level; • oral or written communication in English comparable to proficient English peers.
5 **Bridging**	• technical language of the content areas; • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports; • oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers when presented with grade level material.
4 **Expanding**	• specific and some technical language of the content areas; • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs; • oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with occasional visual and graphic support.
3 **Developing**	• general and some specific language of the content areas; • expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs; • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede communication, but retain much of its meaning when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with occasional visual and graphic support.

2 **Beginning**	• general language related to the content areas; • phrases or short sentences; • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with visual and graphic support.
1 **Entering**	• pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas; • words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-questions, or statements with visual and graphic support

Technology and English Language Development

Technology has been a major source for improving curriculum and student achievement, and therefore may be a tool to enhance the English language among bilingual students according to new models and by using different techniques based on 21st century skills. An examination of the salient characteristics and benefits of a technology-enriched curriculum for English language learners (ELLs) underscores the pivotal role technology can play in second language teaching. Research in second language acquisition has clearly suggested the need of comprehensible input in order for second language learning to take place (Krashen, 1989).

Adding technology, the use of specific software as a tool to increase ELL oral language development may begin to narrow the academic gap between groups of students. Students who are exposed to different types of English acquisition activities or technology while still enhancing their own native language may benefit the most. Levy (1997) defined CALL as "the search for and study of application of the computer in language teaching and learning" (p.1).

ESI project for elementary school students in Costa Rica is important to conduct experimental studies, or at least these descriptive investigations to determine the effectiveness of using specific software and 21st century skills (Quesada, 1998).

The use of technology in classrooms has been a powerful tool for teachers, because it has allowed them to make real-life, meaningful connections for their students. At the same time, it has been powerful for creating relationships for the project.

Description of Intervention

Treatment A provides schools with books, specific software and a TV set, tests, assessment tools, and training to support teachers. The age-appropriate courses develop those English language skills necessary for success in school and in professional life. The instructional design pioneered is a significant advance over traditional textbook-based language instruction. Its brain-based, blended progressive approach is supported by extensive, real-world experience with millions of learners around the world. The language models and multi-skill activities in the core courses keep students engaged at an optimum level. Interesting topics, effective language sequencing, coordinated classroom activities, and an appropriate use of technologies all foster learning and make it rewarding and enjoyable. Treatment A was to have included technology-based instruction every day, or five days per week, for 25 weeks.

In the **Control or Comparison** classrooms, **typical English instruction** in Costa Rica is based on the English language development curriculum guidelines of Costa Rica's Ministry of Public Education (MEP). According to MEP ("Relanzamiento de la Educación Costarricense", 2010), the process of teaching English to children in the 1st and 2nd Cycles of the national educational system is based primarily on the fact that childhood is the best time to acquire a foreign language. It was the 1st cycle in which the students in the ESI project participated. Thus, the teaching of English at this point responds to the following basic needs:

- sensitiveness to other cultures and broader knowledge of the world
- discovery of new ways of communicating with others (through linguistic, social and cultural options)
- providing children with tools to cope with the challenges of this century
- development of critical thinking skills and study techniques.

The study of English as a foreign language at an elementary level will expose learners to new educational experiences. The aim is for learning English to become a motivating, simple, interesting, and creative process. Furthermore, it is expected that in the context of elementary schools where language learning takes place, using English for communicative purposes will strengthen self-confidence and personal development, as well as students' self-esteem. This involves cognitive, socio-affective and linguistic skills to make the teaching and learning process more effective. The purpose of studying English in our curriculum is oral and aural communication. Listening and speaking skills are therefore emphasized in the 1st Cycle.

According to MEP, the main objective of learning English is to enable students to understand and communicate basic ideas orally. In the teaching of English in the 1st Cycle, oral and aural skills of the language are the object of study. Emphasis is placed on the two basic linguistic abilities: *listening and speaking*, *i.e., the focus of the curriculum.* Students acquire a basic communicative competence by integrating oral and aural skills only through listening and speaking. However, in the ESI program reading is emphasized in these first stages. Learners demonstrate improvement of communicative abilities in the oral and aural skills by performing real, meaningful language situations.

The following is a general view of how these skills are developed.

Listening. Listening is one of the most important skills that have to be developed in the early stages of language learning. Students should be prepared to: (a) understand basic speech in different environments (background noise, distance, unclear sound); and (b) understand speakers with different regional English accents.

Some specific listening activities that should be used are:

1. distinguishing between sounds, stress and intonation patterns
2. answering questions
3. listening to songs, poems, descriptions, short conversations, stories and the like
4. following instructions and commands.

Teachers expose their students to a considerable amount of meaningful language input by listening to conversations, descriptions, directions, songs, sports activities, videos and any other forms of authentic spoken material. Activities geared towards developing comprehension should:

1. meet the students' needs and interests
2. be designed according to the students' level
3. provide students with practice in listening
4. make use of background knowledge
5. provide learners with the necessary steps for developing the activity

6.   be consistent with objectives
7.   be evaluated
8.   be integrated with speaking and motor skills.

Speaking. The productive skill, i.e., *speaking,* emerges little by little in a process that includes the repetition of certain sounds and/or a combination of them in context at a very early stage. Isolated words appear in a meaningful context, where the child pronounces the word and the adult utters it in a context as many times as necessary. The child's speech improves according to the quality of the input provided by the teacher, along with his or her support and patience to higher levels of language.

The Syllabus is focused on oral communication. Therefore, speaking is vital to attain communicative competence. Students should be provided with a variety of opportunities to use the language. To promote the development of this skill, teachers must be aware of the following principles:

- Speaking is acquired through listening and practice
- Supra-segments of language intonation, pitch, rhythm are learned by listening to good language models such as native speakers and non-native speakers
- Learning to speak English provides an opportunity to know the world around us
- Learning to speak English means using appropriate language in different situations
- Students must speak English in class as much as possible
- Language tasks must be authentic and meaningful

Some specific speaking activities that should be used are:
1. descriptions
2. dialogues
3. role plays
4. information gap
5. games
6. dramas
7. storytelling.

Reading. In the first stages, reading is emphasized through the use of phonics.
The Control classrooms included teacher-led instruction every day or five days per week for 25 weeks.

4. Context

Overall expectations of the ESI program

By the end of sixth grade, students will:

- Listen and respond to a variety of short, simple spoken texts and media works,
- Express ideas and opinions on familiar topics, using correct pronunciation and appropriate intonation
- Read a variety of short texts and media works and demonstrate understanding through oral and brief written responses
- Produce short pieces of writing in a variety of forms

- Identify and use appropriate language conventions during oral communication activities, in their responses to reading materials, and in their written work.

Specific Expectations

Listening

- Follow instructions to perform a sequence of tasks
- Demonstrate an understanding of short-spoken texts and media works (e.g., stories, songs, poems) by answering questions, identifying words and expressions, retelling stories, identifying the main idea.

Speaking

- Ask and respond to simple questions to clarify understanding of familiar topics
- Use visual and verbal cues (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice) to communicate information
- Express ideas on familiar topics.

Reading

- Read a variety of simple written materials (e.g., stories, poems, myths, short articles) for different purposes (e.g., to obtain information, to build vocabulary and knowledge of language structures)
- Demonstrate comprehension of a range of short texts (e.g., by answering questions or retelling the story.)

Writing

- Write short, simple texts in a variety of forms (e.g., greeting cards, rhymes, letters, invitations, stories), following a model
- Organize information to convey a clear message (e.g., present facts or describe events in their proper sequence)
- Write brief descriptions of people, places, and situations.

The implementation of the program suggests an exit profile of A1 students at the end of first grade, and A2 at the end of the second cycle.

All the students' activities are aimed at the proposed levels of A1 and A2 bands, based on the standards of the Common European Framework of Reference. This is the fourth year of implementation, and for that reason, most of the students' ages range from 8 to 10 years old.

All resources used have been chosen through teacher teamwork based on a formal book assessment. The software and textbooks that have been used these years are mainly focused on developing functions and language, rather than content (EFL textbooks from South Korea).

Each year the researcher has conducted different kinds of tests to have reliable and valid evidence of the students' linguistic development.

5. Activities

The activities in the workshop offered by the authors includes a theoretical foundation and the partial results obtained by the teachers in the ESI project.

1. The presentation begins with a short video about what ESI schools are.
2. Then the presenters talk about the methodology and implementation of ESI schools in the Western Region.
3. Each stage of ESI program is exemplified with an activity or sample for the audience to understand the process. The presenters bring their own material for all these activities.
4. The presenters show some of the partial results, limitations and conclusions.
5. There is a period of questions.
6. Some copies with suggestions are handed out to the audience.

6. Materials

Photocopies with suggestions and important web pages are required. A CD with ESI materials will be provided to the advisors of the Northern Region.

7. Conclusions

Some of the findings in the first, second, and third year are presented in brief as follows:

In the first year (2013) there was an increase in listening, while the second year (2014) remained the same. However, in the third year (2015) students started to replicate patterns and generalize phonological rules on their own. They started to produce short sentences as well.

While planning was intended to be made in groups, it is too difficult for teachers to work with a program that does not match their teaching style. For this reason, planning is always made in group but its contextualization depends on each teacher´s population and needs.

It has been found that an excessive number of lessons in early levels is not significant due to the short attention span in children under 7 years of age. However, language acquisition seems to be more meaningful in periods when a child achieves such attention levels.

Motivation, more exposure to sounds (phonological awareness and phonics) and kinetics activation activities (active English) seem to be essential in early stages. This silent period can be extended until the 2nd Cycle in some cases. Learners must be taught to speak, although this is not key in the first two years of exposure to a second language.

Children need certain tools to decode words. If they decode words, they can understand what they are reading without any problem: anxiety is reduced, while confidence, spelling, grades, and comprehension improve.

The patterns that are not already taught are somehow acquired when literature is included in the phonics lesson (not isolated words but in context).

Pronunciation in the experimental groups is 65% better when compared to the control groups.

The use of software related to their studying material has been a key element for the students' motivation.

Chunks of learning are better understood and memorized than isolated words.

Costa Rican students seem to acquire a second language more confidently when the linguistic order of the macro skills is altered as follows: listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Most of the students in all five different schools have reached the A1 level by third grade.

Limitations will be determined at the end of the study. For the moment, effective time in the classroom and research have been the most significant issues for this study.

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9. Biography

Paola Artavia Moya loves teaching as well as learning. As a pedagogical advisor, she is dedicated to learning about everyone else's teaching experiences and trying to solve potential problems her colleagues face every day at school. Using creativity and innovation along with her co-workers makes her feel that every effort at the Ministry of Public Education is really worth it. She is always looking for ways to engage students and motivate them through meaningful pedagogical experiences.

Alberto González Céspedes is a passionate educator. He loves teaching as well as learning anything related to education and change. He graduated as an English teacher at the Universidad de Costa Rica and subsequently obtained a scholarship to Japan, where he learned many of his current beliefs about innovation and education. He feels a special appreciation for the environment and the future generations as well as the arts, science and language acquisiion new theories.

Action Research: Using Students Linguistic Repertoire to Teach Spanish Literacy in a First Grade Two-way Classroom

Ana María Chacón, Ed. D.
Framingham Public Schools, Barbieri Elementary, Massachusetts, USA
amchacon@framingham.k12.ma.us

Resumen: En este artículo se describe la importancia de llevar a cabo la investigación de acción para responder y entender preguntas relevantes o problemas que los estudiantes demuestran en el aula. En este artículo se ilustra el ejemplo de cómo una maestra de primer grado aplicó el modelo lógico durante su investigación. El objetivo fue determinar las fortalezas orales del español de los estudiantes para utilizarlas en beneficio/progreso de los demás, y determinar sus debilidades para guiar las prácticas de enseñanza y lograr fortalecer sus capacidades verbales. Con el fin de desarrollar una visión más completa de los antecedentes lingüísticos de cada estudiante, esta maestra estudió la información sobre el idioma de origen de los estudiantes. También analizó fragmentos de producción oral de los niños para estudiar su idioma actual. Guiada por los resultados obtenidos la investigadora planificó y ejecutó estrategias de intervención para fortalecer el lenguaje oral de sus alumnos.

Palabras clave: investigación, alfabetización, desarrollo oral, enseñanza, intervención.

Abstract: This article describes the importance of conducting action research to answer relevant questions about issues or problems that students display in the classroom. This article illustrates how a first grade teacher used the logic model during her research. The goal was to determine the strengths of the Spanish-speaking student to use them for the benefit/progress of others, and their weaknesses to guide targeted teaching practices to strengthen their oral abilities. To develop a clearer picture of each student's linguistic background, this teacher studied the student's home language. She also analyzed excerpts of children's oral production to determine their current language complexity. With this information, the researcher planned and implemented interventions to strengthen her students' oral skills.

Keywords: Research, literacy, oral development, teaching, intervention.

1. Introduction

Public schools are mandated to have school-wide improvement plans in Massachusetts to better their academic performance. In our public elementary school, one of five improvement goals for the last two years has been related to oral language development. The school recognizes that one the primary objectives in education is to teach students language and literacy skills that will permit them to function effectively in their personal and professional lives. The skills that go beyond their daily use at home, but that will allow them to be successful in society[4]. As a dual language/bilingual school, this goal is tied to the development of two languages: L1 majority language (English) and the target/minority language L2 (Spanish). To achieve this goal, our school's focus

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[4] Cloud, N., Genesee, F., & Hamayan, E. (2000). Foundations. *Dual Language Instruction, A Handbook for Enriched Education*, Boston, MA: Heinle.

has been to implement academic conversations, to build vocabulary, and to use bridging strategies that compare and contrast these two languages.

In keeping with school improvement goals, teachers usually plan their professional and student goals by relating them to the school ones. For the last two academic years, I have focused both my professional and student goals on fostering oral language development in my first grade classroom. For my professional goal, I took an academic conversation course and was part of two book studies, one on bridging and another one on vocabulary development. I also took a summer workshop on bridging between two languages sponsored by the Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education (MABE). After this workshop, MABE offered support to participants willing to conduct action research on this topic.

This is how the idea of this project was born. I wanted to further learn about the concept of bridging, which was completely new for me, and felt that the opportunity to personally use it in my classroom was a practical way of doing so. I had finally found a way to tie my individual goal for the school improvement plan to my student goal by using action research in my classroom. The purpose of this study was to analyze my students' linguistic repertoire to better inform my instruction in literacy. More specifically, I wanted to identify the strengths of my Spanish-speaking students and use such strengths for the benefit/progress of less knowledgeable students. I would also determine the oral weaknesses of the Spanish speakers to guide my teaching in a more targeted, effective way that would better reach both populations within my classroom.

Due to the fact that I teach in an 80/20 Spanish immersion first grade classroom, my final goal was to strengthen all of my students' verbal abilities, both my Spanish speakers, who are developing these two languages at the same time, and my English speakers, who started learning Spanish in Kindergarten. My long-term goal was to find ways to improve the minority language so that Spanish speakers would be prepared to use academic skills and linguistic knowledge in the 50/50 model used in third grade. Using an additive and positive perception of bilingualism, I wanted to identify the Spanish speakers' strengths so they could use them to help their classmates and feel proud that they know an extra language.

2. Main body

As suggested by Ferrance (2000), action research is a disciplined inquiry that fosters teacher reflection on one or more given issues in order to modify teaching practices in a classroom, school or district. Such a reflection is based on multiple sources of data by one or more persons in the school/district who are interested in finding causes and solutions for such issue or issues. Action research is a process that begins by identifying a problem or issue. It then continues with the collection, organization, and interpretation of data. Finally, the researcher acts on the evidence and evaluates results.

The Biliteracy Action Research Logic Model guided this research due to the fact that this investigation was conducted in a two-way, bilingual school. This model adds the explicit study of classroom content and resources, along with strategy use and interventions (Appendix A).

MABE representatives helped narrow down my research question based on my student needs and questions that concern me as a teacher. In the end, I decided to investigate how to use my students' oral linguistic repertoire to teach Spanish literacy in my first grade two-way classroom. I wanted to find out how to be equitable towards my native Spanish speakers. I wondered if I was using their cultural and linguistic wealth during my instruction. Because Spanish is part of their culture and, in many cases, part of their daily family life, I decided to focus the action research only on L2 native

speakers. I sought to improve their Spanish at the pace of which they were capable. My goal, after answering these questions, was to better understand my students' oral language used during classroom interactions, reflect on the strategies and activities used at the time, and to plan curricular changes that could positively impact their oral development.

2.1. Classroom context data

Although I had taught this group of children for about five months, after taking the course on bridging, I realized I did not really know much about their language production and their families' funds of knowledge, as was suggested in chapters 2 and 5 in Beeman and Urow's book[5]. Therefore, I decided to ask short, open-ended questions during home interviews of my Spanish speaking families. I visited 15 homes in sessions of 20 minutes, during which I taped our conversations about the way in which they supported their children's Spanish and academic achievement. I wanted to know their country of origin, how long they had lived in the United States, what their education level was, and current employment. I was able to witness the language families used to communicate with each other.

Data from the interviews demonstrated that I had many incorrect assumptions about the linguistic background of the Spanish speakers. For example, since a girl we will call K's Spanish grammar was "low" according to my regular observations at school, I had assumed that parents only spoke with her in English. To my surprise, her mother, the child's main caretaker, did not speak English at all; they only communicated with each other in Spanish. The child's many cousins only spoke English, so it was through her extended family that she learned the language. Since only the mother and a couple of other family members spoke Spanish, the child felt more comfortable with English. In fact, during the interview, the child switched to English with me. The child, though young in age, was the one who helped mother with most oral communications, including with doctors, phone calls, etc., and although she had learned Spanish as her first language at home, her dominant and social language was then English, as described in Wong Fillmore's research (1991 & 2000).

Another example that clearly showed my incorrect assumptions about families was Y's. I had assumed that her parents spoke Spanish at home since her oral Spanish was flawless, with rich vocabulary, great background knowledge and strong grammatical skills. To my surprise, I discovered that the parents barely spoke Spanish at home. From the interview, I learned that the mother had the child as a teenager, so the paternal grandmother was the primary caretaker. The grandmother had been the one to teach Spanish to the child while her young parents felt more comfortable speaking English because they were second-generation Spanish speakers.

Table 1 presents classroom's linguistic context and composition based on the information compiled during open interviews and based on guidelines on chapter 2 by Beeman and Urow (2013).

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[5]Beeman, K. & Urow, Ch. (2013). Teaching for Biliteracy. Strengthening Bridges between Languages. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.

Table 1

Linguistic Composition of the classroom					
Sex	Language at Home	Dominant Language	Bilingual Type	English Language Learners	
8 boys	7 English	11 English	10 sequential	12 Ells	
15 girls	5 Spanish	12 Spanish	13 simultaneous	11 Non Ells	
	11 both	2 both			
Total				23 students	

For example, half of the children used both languages at home to communicate with parents. Though only a few students spoke only Spanish at home, half of all the students were considered English Language Learners (ELL) at the time, despite the fact that they spoke both languages at home. Only two of the students were considered fully bilingual, yet half were simultaneous bilinguals. They were learning both languages more or less at the same time, displaying similar developmental stages of oral production as monolinguals, but shared vocabulary and syntax between the two languages. The others in the class were considered sequential bilinguals, as they learned one language first and acquired the second one later. Data showed that learning two languages is a complex, multi-layered process, and, as teachers, we should not categorize students as simply English or Spanish speakers. Interview data also reminded me that I should not compare oral development of my bilinguals to that of monolinguals in other parts of the world, as suggested by Beeman and Urow (2013), because they are learning two different language systems.

From the interviews, it was also evident that families tried to support Spanish development as much as possible and considered knowing two languages as positive for their children's lives and for future job opportunities. Most were willing and/or able to share their funds of knowledge during school activities related to curricula. In the future, I would have to do a better job in integrating families' respective skills and education, both from their country of origin and from their new communities in the United States, into my curricular instruction (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002).

2.2. Oral language data collection and analysis

For three months, the researcher and the school's literacy coach collected excerpts of children's oral production during paired conversations and think-pair-share activities at the rug area. They wrote down as many oral interactions as possible on post-its. On each note, they wrote children's words verbatim, the date and the context of the activity in which the students were participating at that time. Then those excepts were transcribed and categorized by using common forms of Spanish and English together; forms such as code-switching, linguistic borrowing, calques, and semantic extensions. Please refer to Appendix B for examples of linguistic creativity for each category. Results showed that students indeed used both English and Spanish in a typical fashion for children learning two languages, as suggested by Beeman and Urrow (2013):

> Our students live in bilingual contexts where they continually witness their languages interacting, and this interaction has a major impact on their oral development. (p. 69)
> There were also examples of linguistic creativity, typically made at different

developmental stages by developing Spanish speakers; for example, "S" said: "Yo hallé esto rompido". While retelling a traditional tale, "A" explained: "Primero la viejita ponió al hombre adentro del horno".

In addition, some students used phrases typical of English speakers learning Spanish as a second language made by students who were classified as English language learners. Their ELL classification indicated they did not have enough English to make these errors. For example, ¿Qué es eso para? – David **What is this for?** Another example is: "Entonces, se salió afuera y pasó a un animal – un perro y un gato…Entonces, vio a un niño y a una niña". – Marlon (1/9) **Then is incorrectly used as 'entonces'.**

Excerpts indicated that, during classroom activities where there was reading (Read Aloud) and conversation with explicit facilitation by the teacher, students were able to produce grammatically clear Spanish utterances. Children made an extra effort to speak in Spanish, and they did it successfully, if supported by sentence starters. The last finding was that Spanish speakers reviewed directions for a given activity in English, the more proficient language of the peer, and then both used Spanish to engage in the assigned activity. Here are a few examples:

- Now you say to me….*Yo pienso que es en la casa. Al final, el lobo se quemó la cola. - K*
- You're '*A*' (Spanish pronunciation). Now say to me…*yo pienso que…* - N
- You have to say the *pan de jengibre*, not the other one. You have to say the whole thing….*Y, el parte cuando él saltó…* - N

2.3. Strategy and intervention

The classroom teacher is probably the most effective element in education. He or she has the power to implement new strategies, improve methods or decide if a technique is not appropriate for students. This is the importance of action research, the idea that only teachers are able to make change, because they are the ones who engage with the students every day. This is opposed to top-down methods of standardized teaching styles, an un-nuanced approach to a very much-nuanced profession. Results from this study have guided the researcher's teaching practices in a more targeted and explicit way for developing oracy. These are some of the activities/strategies included in lessons as a result of this action research:

a) Word walls included not only sight words, but also cognates. At the beginning, students did not seem to understand that languages like English and Spanish may have some words that are spelled nearly the same and often have the same meaning (i.e. autor-author, agosto-August). After grasping the concept, children were able to independently discover cognates during regular class conversations or read aloud (Appendix F). When the list grew longer, children analyzed similarities and differences in the languages. The idea behind creating such a chart was to show them that they could use their knowledge from one language to figure out the meaning of new words in the other language. They also discovered that there are false cognates such as carpet, which, in English, means rug and, in Spanish, means folder, so they should not be used interchangeably.

b) Differentiated sentence structures for L1 and L2s supported language production. In all conversations, children used sentence frames and sentence starters to answer questions in Spanish. The complexity was based on the children's dominant language. The teacher modeled how to use these starters first (Appendix E). Sentence structures were posted with clear intention based

on the activity's objective and based on the grammar or vocabulary the teacher wanted the children to practice. At the beginning, it was hard to figure out relevant sentence frames; however, with practice, this became easier and more automatic, although some of the sentence starters became permanent classroom charts. These were created by the researcher's first grade team because they could have been used in more than one content area; for example, narration charts that included transitional words (first, then, later, after, finally, in the end), comparison charts, or opinion charts. Please refer to Appendix H.

c) Production of lexical arrays. Since Spanish language models in an English speaking community/society are limited, language excerpts showed that Spanish speakers needed to be explicitly taught the nuances of the language and the richness of vocabulary. These lexical arrays were taught in context and with examples found in books or during conversations. For example, children learned how to use the following array during Math activities, comparing things and describing objects: igual, similar, parecido, semejante, lo mismo, equivalente, idéntico (equal, similar, alike, analogous, the same, equivalent, identical). With the help of children, the researcher created small posters with a list of slightly different adjectives to describe book characters. For example, for our traditional tale unit, children learned that the wolf could be feroz, enojado, furioso, bravo, enfadado, rabioso, disgustado, molesto, irritado (fierce, angry, furious, dauntless, enraged, rabid, disgusted, annoyed, irritated), all of which were adjectives that meant the same thing, but with slight differences. This was added to different lists we had used in past years that described one character in many different ways: feroz, enojado, feo, furioso, malo, hambriento, triste, fuerte, cansado inteligente, malvado, bravo, rápido, feo (fierce, angry, ugly, furious, bad, hungry, sad, strong, tired, smart, wicked, brave, fast, ugly).

d) Tier 2 vocabulary of words taken from reading books aloud. A great read aloud that my team used for Families in Social Studies is "Choco encuentra una mamá". This is an excellent book in which to talk about adoptive children and different kinds of families. For this book, tier 2 words were averiguar, agradable, caluroso, sollozos (ascertain, pleasant, war, sobs), which a Spanish speaker should know, despite not being colloquially or frequently used in social conversations. They must therefore be taught explicitly. The school's first grade team, including myself, is in the process of choosing tier 2 words for every anchor text that we use across the curricula.

e) Content and language objectives. Research for Better Teaching presented in our school suggested that teachers include smart objectives (clear, measurable, short) before each lesson/unit. This provides context for teachers to plan activities and students to know what they must do in order to reach the final goal. In other words, it provides a clear path for the lesson. The objectives included Tier 3 academic language (included verbs from Bloom's taxonomy such as: analyze, identify, explain, compare, classify, manipulate, describe, evaluate, create, etc.). I explained what the objective meant and repeated it several times within different contexts during the lesson. After a while, children used some of these words to explain their thinking (Appendix E).

f) Bridging activities at the end of both Science and Social Studies units from English to Spanish or vice-versa, depending on which language in which the unit was originally taught. For example, we learned about solids and liquids in English, thus the bridge was done in Spanish thereafter. At the beginning, these bridges were planned to study vocabulary differences between the two languages

(Appendix C). Later on, as children and researcher felt more comfortable with this new concept, grammar use was compared and contrasted during bridging.

g) Timelines to show verbs in past, present and future. The timeline was created to show a pictorial and concrete way to show that verb endings change depending on the time (Appendix D).

h) Chart of verbs in the past. More explicit teaching about verbs in the past was needed since this tense is used in personal narratives, opinion writing, and the retelling of stories. At the start of the year, children were prompted once a week to say what they did over the weekend or the day before. When the list grew longer and children were able to use different verbs in the past, this activity was incorporated in daily calendar routines that would take 3 minutes at the most. Children were comfortable in using this growing list and seemed very excited when they "discovered" a new verb. The teacher illustrated the concrete examples the children gave so it would be easier for them to remember the meaning of each word. (Appendix G).

i) Patterns of the language during whole group activities.

j) Academic conversations and think-pair-share activities so that children may retell, elaborate and paraphrase ideas.

3. Conclusions

Due to time constraints and the constant struggle to fulfill curricular obligations, it is very hard to pause and give thought to teaching practices. Participating in this action research provided the great opportunity to reflect upon how much I was and was not doing regarding oral development.

It also helped me to have a heightened awareness of the importance of social language/academic language exposure and the precision of vocabulary. Since models of the minority language (Spanish) are limited in quantity and quality, my role as a Dual Language program teacher is extremely relevant because I can provide explicit, relevant and rich activities in the context of the classroom. I need to plan activities that allow students to practice the richness and depth of the language.

Two-way programs have the advantage that the children, in addition to the teacher, can be true models for teaching the target language, if given the right tools and freedoms. An evident increase in turn and talk activities amongst varying L1 and L2 partners to ensure the practice of the language has been a result of this project.

To conclude, teaching two languages is not a cut-and-dry process, but a multi-faceted evolution, during which the teacher must put careful thought into the planning of activities that foster oral participation and the love for the language.

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5. Biography

Ana María Chacon holds a BA, M.Ed. and Ed. D in Education/Curriculum and Instruction. She has worked as college professor, principal, head teacher, TLA mentor teacher, and literacy lead teacher. She has many years of experience in areas such as Teaching English as a Second language, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education and Dual Language Instruction. Dr. Chacon is currently teaching first grade in a Dual Immersion program and conducting action research in her classroom.

6. Appendices

Appendix A
Biliteracy Action Research Logic Model
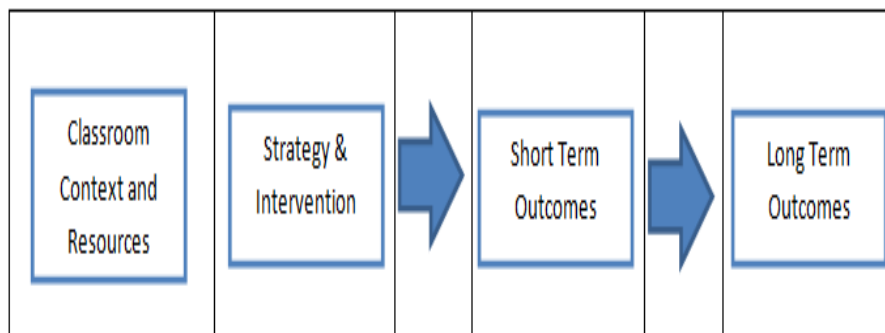
Adapted from SERVE Logic Map (Example) and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Logic Model.

Appendix B

Examples of linguistic creativity

| Code-switching	Linguistic borrowing
Porque puso mucho **cajun pepper** y mucho picante – Y (12/23) Mi mamá hizo la **signed it** –A (10/24) Yo tengo un diente que está **wiggly** – J 10/20 Ésta porque aquí me gusta los **words… oh**… las palabras. – M (1/6)	I don't **jumpear** from there – D 10/14 Oh, **forgamos** la merienda – D 10/20
Semantic extension During ELD class: "What is a period, a little circle, **a dot?**" – S Other kid: "punto" "Oh yes, **a dot"** – S 10/15/14	**Calques** La vieja… ese libro tiene una vieja y ese libro tiene una vieja, son igual – A (12/22) (…are the same) El objetivo es para comparar las diferencias y similitudes entre los dos libros – Y (12/23) (the objective is to compare)

Appendix C

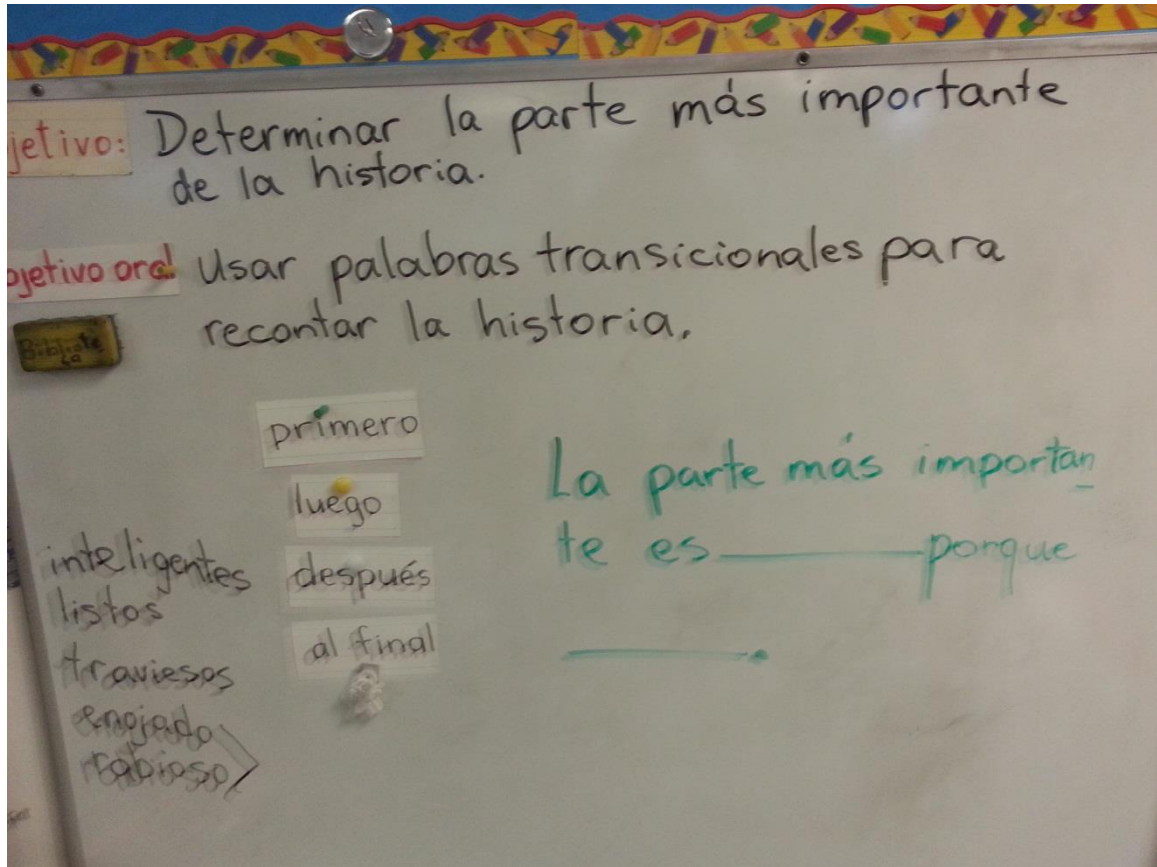Example of a bridging activity in Science
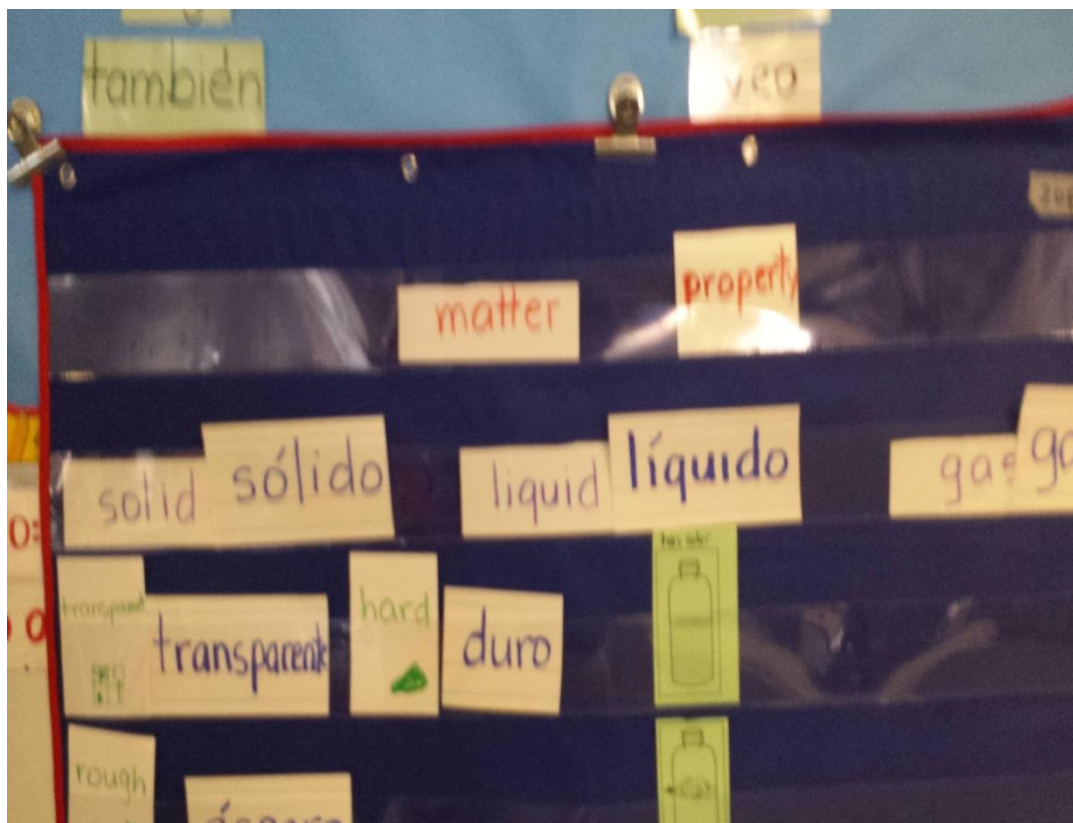
Appendix D
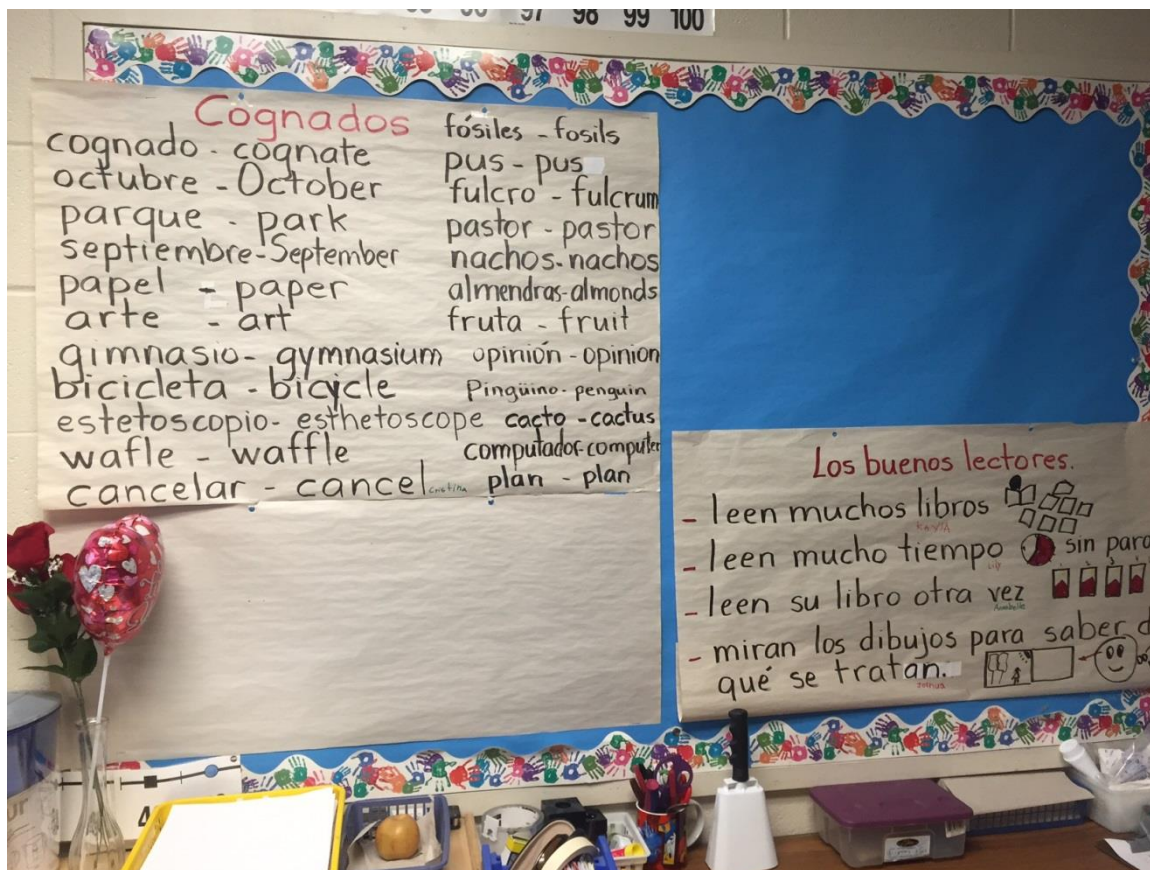
Time line for verbs
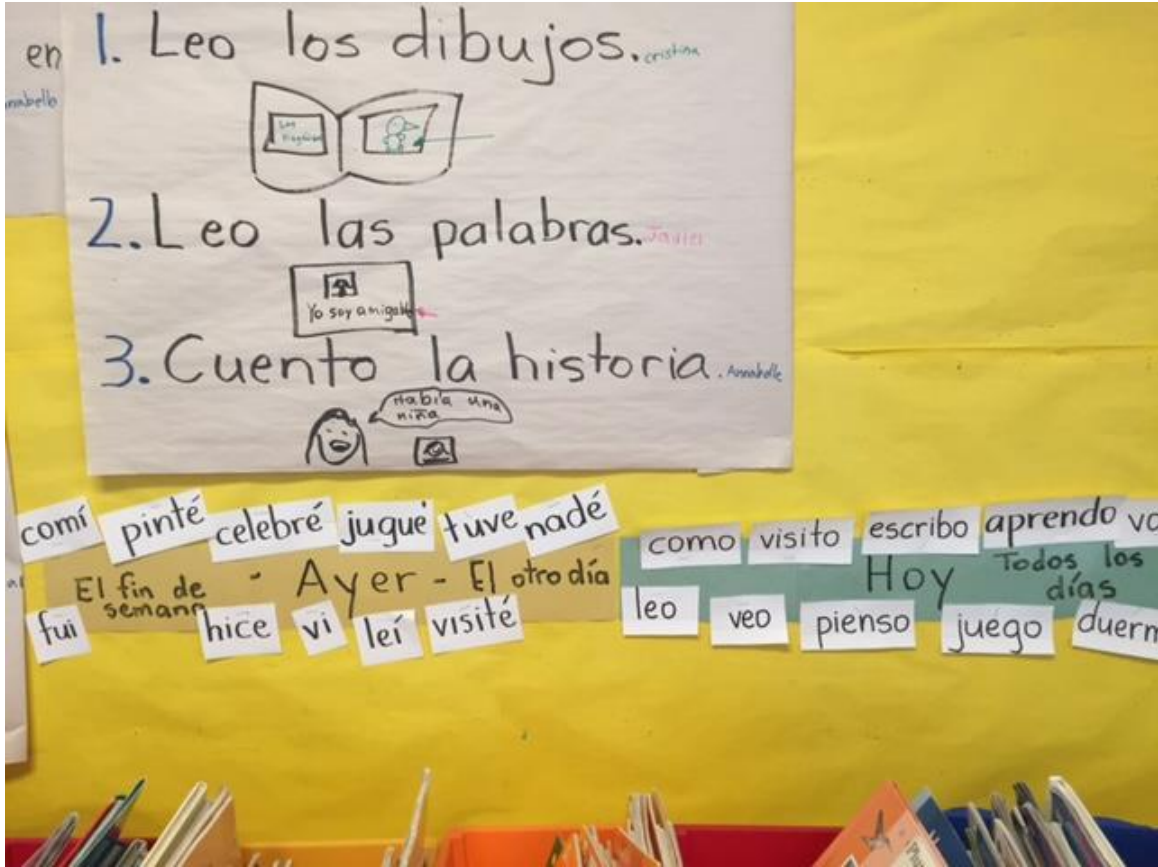
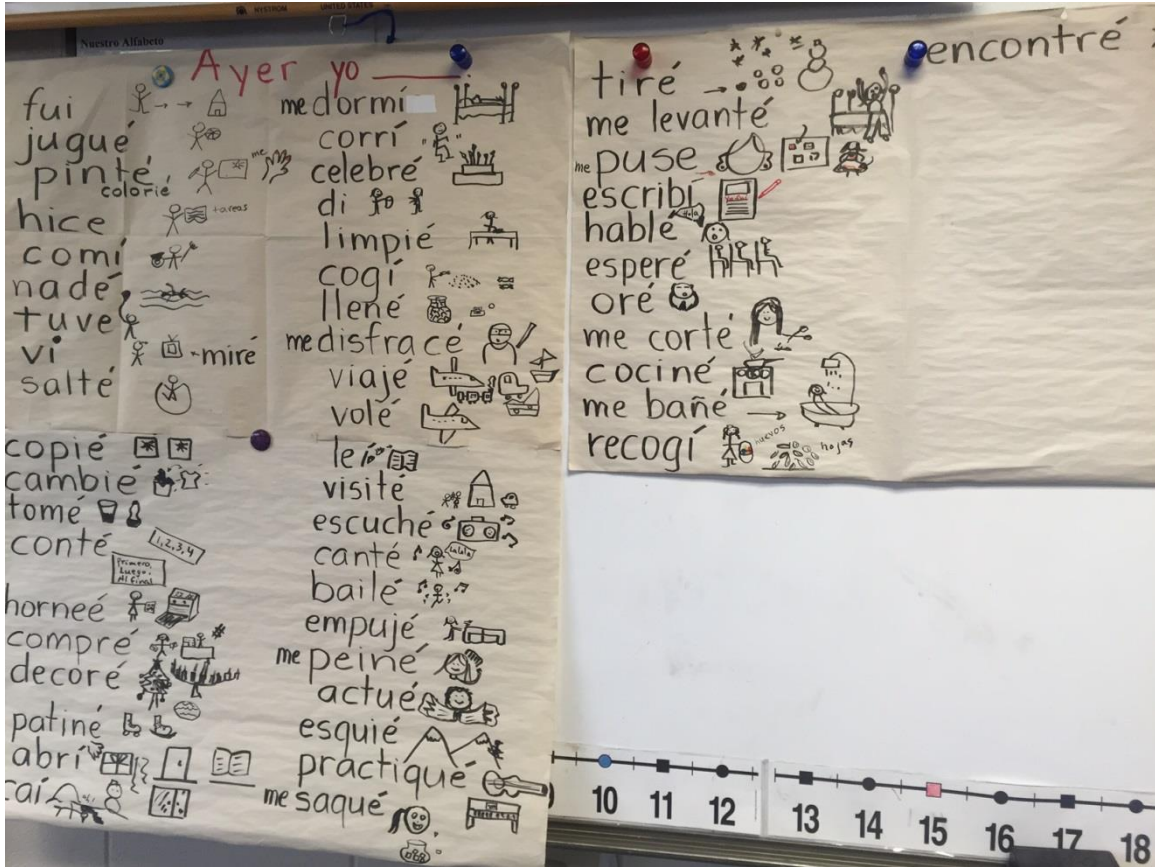Appendix E

Example of content and language objectives
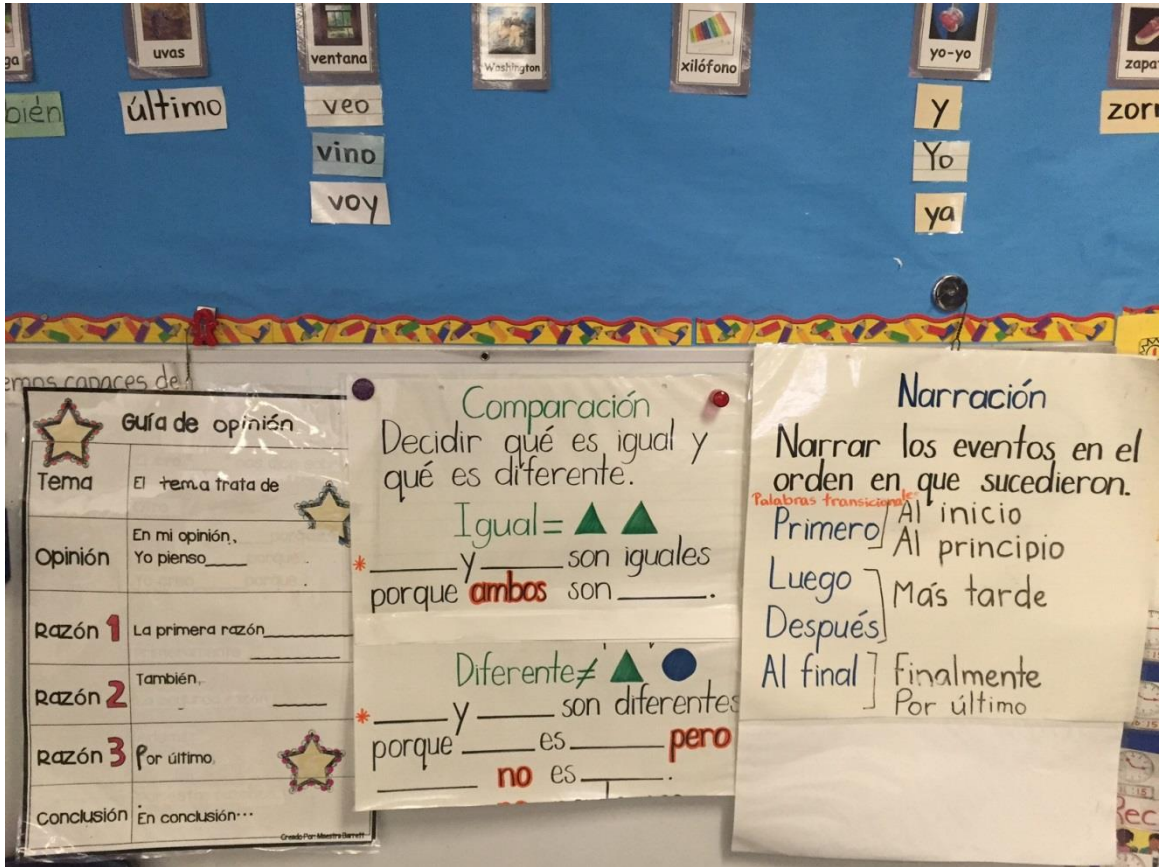
Appendix F

Cognate list created by students

Appendix G

Chart of verbs in the past

Appendix H

Permanent Sentence Frames Class Charts

Sheltered Instruction: A Model Lesson using the TWIOP Model in a First Grade Classroom

Ana María Chacón, Ed. D.
Framingham Public Schools, Barbieri Elementary, Massachusetts, USA
amchacon@framingham.k12.ma.us

Resumen: Esta sesión práctica presenta una lección modelo para demonstrar la aplicación de la "instrucción estructurada" (sheltered instruction) para el aprendizaje del segundo idioma y contenido académico. Se presentarán ejemplos de cómo introducir un nuevo concepto o destreza al cumplir un requisito obligatorio del distrito de utilizar un programa de escritura específico. Esta lección incluye objetivos de contenido y de lenguaje oral para promover tanto el aprendizaje académico como la producción oral del estudiante. Estos componentes guían de manera clara y concisa la actividad del alumno y del maestro. La lección también incluye una lista de posibles estrategias a incluirlas en la instrucción estructurada.

Palabras clave: instrucción estructurada, desarrollo académico, desarrollo oral, lección práctica, enseñanza.

Abstract: This practice-oriented workshop provides a model lesson on how to use sheltered instruction to learn a second language and academic content. The presenter uses examples to introduce a new concept or skill while fulfilling a mandated requirement of using a specific writing program. The lesson includes content and oral language objectives that promote both academic learning and student oral production, components that guide teacher and student activity in a focused and clear way. It also includes a list of components/strategies that a sheltered instruction lesson should include.

Keywords: Sheltered instruction, academic development, oral development, practice lesson, teaching.

1. Introduction

An elementary school teacher constantly has to adapt programs imposed by the district or Department of Education to meet the academic needs of the students in a dual language program. Our district uses Lucy Calkin's as the main writing instructional program. To include all the elements of a mini-lesson in a short time is usually a considerable challenge because it is not only already difficult to teach first graders who are learning to read and write, but also to instruct in an integrated group in which Spanish and English are L1 and L2s. The best way to achieve this adaptation is to use the TWIOP (Two Way Instruction Observation Protocol) to include sheltered instruction strategies for oral language and academic content development.

This practice-oriented workshop provides a model lesson to demonstrate, with explicit examples, how to use sheltered instruction in a dual language classroom. The lesson includes content and oral language objectives that promote both academic learning and student oral production. These two components guide teacher and student activity in a focused and clear way to achieve high levels of content and academic instruction. The presenter uses actual student examples, pictures, body movement, traditional materials, realia, and other mediums to introduce a new concept or skill

while fulfilling the mandated requirement of using a specific writing program, Units of Study for Primary Writing (Calkins, 2003).

2. Literature Review

When teaching in a dual language program, teachers must take into account that, through lessons, students should not only learn the content, but also the native and non-native academic language. Sheltered instruction makes standards-based content instruction accessible. According to Coleman & Goldenberg (2010), a student not only has to understand text or the teacher's curricular presentation, but should also be able to express thoughts about the content by using academic language. Sheltered instruction strategies offer comprehensible input for any content area, meaning the second language speakers understand the content main idea by building the students' background knowledge when relating to their personal experiences.

In order to make this possible, there should be explicit language instruction that is directly tied to content instruction. Teachers should develop language objectives other than their content objectives to guide L2s to explain their ideas within higher level thinking activities. Students should be able to compare, contrast, describe, sequence, and explain cause and effect by using sentence frames when speaking about the academic content. Besides objectives, a sheltered instruction lesson includes examples, materials, and information embedded in the contexts to allow L2s participate in more cognitively demanding tasks (Echevarria & Graves, 2014).

3. Model Lesson

Lesson's general description:

Lesson's objective: This practice-oriented workshop will provide a model lesson for parents in a dual language program. Presenter will demonstrate the use of TWIOP sheltering techniques for learning in a second language.

1) Introduction: (15')

Sheltered instruction is an approach to teaching English language learners, which integrates language and content instruction. The goals of sheltered instruction are:

1. to provide access to mainstream, grade-level content, and
2. to promote the development of English language proficiency.

This approach uses the SIOP protocol.

TWIOP: Protocol based on sheltered instruction adapted to two way/immersion programs to coordinate instruction to facilitate transfer of skills and promote language and literacy development in both languages, by considering cultural exchanges as well.

Strategies:

Focus on language

Plan for peer interaction

Support meaning with realia

Activate prior knowledge and/or create shared knowledge

Make text accessible

Developing student-learning strategies

Bridging the two languages

Affirm identity

2) Model lesson Presentation (20') Attached next.

3) Discussion about strategies: In a small group, setting shared your observations about the lesson and the strategies used during it. (15')

4) Whole group discussion: share ideas and comments about the lesson and TWIOP strategies. (10')

Model Lesson Presentation
Unit: Small Moments (book 2) - Lucy Calkins Writing Program
Theme: Ways of stretching a Small Moment
Lesson topic: Reveal the inside part of a story
Grade level: First grade
Language of instruction: Spanish
Number of students: 24
Duration: Mini lesson-20mins (Children would write a story for 20 minutes after this lesson).

STANDARDS for content/academic learning:
<u>State/Town English Language Arts Standards of Learning- Writing-</u>
Standard: *Writing - Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.*
19.5 Write or dictate stories that have a beginning, middle, and end.
19.7 Write or dictate letters, directions, or short accounts of personal experiences that follow a logical order.

Standard: *Consideration of Audience and Purpose - Students will write for different audiences and purposes. (See also Standards 3, 6, and 19.)*
20.1 Use a variety of forms or genres when writing for different purposes.

Standard: *Standard English Conventions - Students will use knowledge of standard English conventions in their writing, revising, and editing.*
22.2 Use correct standard English mechanics such as: • printing upper- and lower-case letters legibly and using them to make words; • separating words with spaces; • understanding and using rules for capitalization at the beginning of a sentence, for names and places ("Janet," "I," "George Washington," "Springfield"), and capitalization and commas in dates ("February 24, 2001"); • using correct spelling of sight and/or spelling words; and • using appropriate end marks such as periods and question marks.

Standard: *Organizing Ideas in Writing - Students will organize ideas in writing in a way that makes sense for their purpose.*
23.1 Arrange events in order when writing or dictating.
23.2 Arrange ideas in a way that makes sense.

<u>English Language Learning Standards:</u>
Standard: *Discussion - Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.*
1.1 Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion (raising one's hand, waiting one's turn, speaking one at a time).

<u>English Language Frameworks: (grades) (for Native Spanish Speakers):</u>
Although the lesson will be fully taught in Spanish, the ELPBO benchmarks for English Language Learners are included here because the skills children learn in their first language are transferrable into their second language skills in later years (major justification for the creation of Two-Way programs.)

Listening and Speaking (S)

S.1. Vocabulary: Students will comprehend and communicate orally, using English/Spanish vocabulary for personal, social, and academic purposes. (FL 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7; ELA 4)

S.1.1. Demonstrate comprehension of everyday words and phrases, using pictures, actions, and/or objects.

S. 1.3. Demonstrate comprehension of vocabulary essential for grade-level content learning, using pictures, actions, and/or objects.

S. 1.13. Demonstrate understanding of academic content words and phrases in selected concept-based categories.

S.2. Social Interaction: Students will comprehend and communicate orally, using spoken English/Spanish for personal and social purposes. (FL 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8; ELA 5, 6)

S.2. 21. Demonstrate comprehension of explanations or instructions, when clarification is given.

S. 2. 22. Demonstrate comprehension during most interpersonal interactions, when clarification is given.

S. 2.24. Express one's own opinions, preferences, and wishes related to familiar topics.

S. 2.29. Respond during interpersonal discussions and interactions.

S. 2.30. Initiate conversations, attend to speakers, take turns, and close conversations **INTERMEDIATE** in culturally appropriate ways.

S. 2.31. Use culturally acceptable gestures, distances, and body language in familiar settings.

S.3. Academic Interaction: Students will comprehend and communicate orally, using spoken English/Spanish to participate in academic settings. (FL 1, 2, 5, 6, 7; ELA 1, 2, 5)

S.3.1. Demonstrate comprehension of oral directions that include visual cues.

S.3.2. Demonstrate comprehension of one-step oral directions.

S.3.3. Demonstrate understanding when simple information is given.

S.3.16. Retell events in a simple or familiar story using relevant words and phrases.

S.3.23. Identify and follow classroom expectations and conventions.

S.3.24. Use appropriate words, phrases, and expressions to interact with peers and adults.

Writing (W)

W.1. Prewriting: Students will plan for writing in English by building on prior knowledge, generating words, and organizing ideas for a particular audience and purpose. (ELA 4, 20, 23; FL 7)

Planning:

a. Identify the audience for and the purpose of a writing task (such as *narrating, describing*).

c. Identify the criteria for completing a writing task.

Organizing ideas:

b. Organize ideas to write an account of a personal experience in a way that makes sense.

c. Arrange events in sequential order when writing or dictating a personal or familiar experience.

W.2. Writing: Students will write in English for a variety of purposes with clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail. (ELA 19; FL 1)

Writing a story:

a. Draw or sequence pictures to tell or retell a story.

b. Dictate sentences to tell or retell a story in chronological sequence.

c. List details that describe story events.
Write a story that has a beginning, middle, and end.

Objectives:
Content: After this lesson, students will include internal and external events by stretching their Small Moments into at least three written pages.
Language: The students will be able to:
L1- describe with own words their feelings and thoughts as their internal part of the story. Yo me sentí _____ porque _____.
L2- use the following sentence structure: Yo me sentí _____ (Use the poster to find appropriate word to fill in the blank).
Cultural: Students will be able to draw experiences from their personal backgrounds in order share their internal and external events during the lesson's Active Engagement element. Children will listen to others' points of view, thoughts, and feelings during this time.

Differentiation:
L1 students (Spanish Speakers) will be able to expand their ideas and vocabulary to their individual potential during the writer's workshop time. They will be able to describe their personal feelings and thoughts as their internal part of their written story.
L2 students (English Speakers) will be supported by a poster that will help them identify the words that describe their feelings. Teacher will help individual children who need extra help during conference time. Children will be able to receive help from their bilingual partners during writing time.

Flexible grouping:
Students will be alternating from whole group instruction to bilingual partners during the mini-lesson and shared time. During the writer's workshop time, children will work individually on their stories. If they do not know something, they can ask their friends for help. The teacher will have at least three individual conferences.

Key vocabulary:
- Content vocabulary: adjectives that describe feelings: happy, sad, angry, surprised, excited,
- Academic vocabulary: Stretch a story, internal and external part of a story
- Language vocabulary: describe a feeling and explain the reasons why you feel that way. Use the correct gender by changing the adjective endings to feminine and masculine.

Materials:
- Writing that depicts what happened (external story) and the narrator's response to what happened (internal story).
- poster about feelings
- pictures
- power point with slides about feelings
- writing folders, paper, and pencils

Background to lesson:
This is the XII session in book two. We have been working on different techniques on how to stretch ideas when writing a Small Moment. Writing about the internal story is a new strategy that the children will learn today. Probably this lesson will take two days depending on how the group does during the lesson's active engagement element (please refer below).

Presentation: Lucy Calkin's lessons include specific elements during whole group instruction:
- Connection: I will teach a new strategy for stretching out a Small Moment. The strategy involves writing not only the external, but also the internal events.
- Teaching: Read an exemplar piece of writing that retells not only what happened but also the writer's response to what happened.
- Active Engagement: a) Ask the class to turn and talk to their partners about telling the inside and the outside story. b) Remind everyone of an event in the classroom each is sure to remember. Ask the children to tell the inside story and the outside story of that event to their partner. c) Repeat for the class an outside and inside story that you overheard partners talking about.
- Link: Encourage and invite the students to try this strategy in their own writing.
- After-workshop share: admire the way children write the outside and the inside story and share examples.

Review/assessment:
Informal assessment of children's performance will be done during active engagement and conference time: teacher will read/listen how children include external and internal events.

4. Conclusions
The presentation will end with concluding remarks about the use of strategies and the importance of using sheltered instruction with L2s. Limitations of the strategies may be mentioned.

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6. Biography

Ana Maria Chacon holds a BA, M.Ed. and Ed. D in Education/Curriculum and Instruction. She has worked as college professor, principal, head teacher, TLA mentor teacher, and literacy lead teacher. She has many years of experience in areas such as Teaching English as a Second language, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education and Dual Language Instruction. Dr. Chacon is currently teaching first grade in a Dual Immersion program and conducting action research in her classroom.

Experiencing English: Designing Language Tasks for Real Communication

Mark Foster Cormier
CCCN, Costa Rica
mark.cormier@centrocultural.cr

Resumen: Las tareas del lenguaje son actividades que tienen un enfoque en el significado en vez de las formas gramaticales y representan el uso auténtico del lenguaje en la vida real. Las tareas mejoran el proceso de adquisición de una segunda lengua porque estimulan la negociación del significado y son apoyados por teorías de adquisición como las hipótesis de entrada y salida comprensible y principios constructivistas como el aprendizaje significativo, la construcción conjunta del conocimiento, la autonomía del estudiante, y la resolución de problemas. Existan tres categorías de tareas. La brecha de información y brecha de opinión requieren el intercambio de información y opiniones para completar la tarea. La brecha de razonamiento requiere la construcción de nuevos conocimientos para resolver un problema. Las tareas son provechosas para el aprendizaje del lenguaje y son compatibles con varios métodos de enseñanza.

Palabras clave: tareas, competencia comunicativa, adquisición, constructivismo.

Abstract: Language tasks are activities focused on meaning rather than on grammatical forms, and they represent real-life language use. Tasks enhance the process of second language acquisition because they encourage negotiation of meaning and are supported by various theories of SLA like the comprehensible input and output hypotheses and a variety of constructivist principles like meaningful learning, joint construction of knowledge, student autonomy, and problem solving. There are three categories of tasks. Two of them – information gap tasks and opinion gap tasks – require the exchange of information or opinions to complete an objective. The third type, reasoning gap tasks, requires new knowledge to be constructed based on information provided in order to solve a problem. Tasks are beneficial for language learning and acquisition and are compatible with a variety of established teaching methods.

Keywords: Task, communicative competence, acquisition, constructivism.

1. Introduction

English as a second or foreign language courses should have the goal of raising students' communicative competence. One clear way of achieving this is by providing students with the tools and space to experience real, meaningful, purpose-driven communication in the classroom through the implementation of authentic language tasks. This paper explores the notion of communicative language tasks from their origin in the Task Based Instruction movement to their adaptation and application in other teaching methods and lesson planning frameworks. It also identifies the relationship between language functions and language tasks, as well as analyzes the efficacy of tasks from a variety of theoretical lenses. Finally, the paper proposes an easy to follow framework for writing objectives that teachers can use when planning task centered lessons.

The word task in its general non-academic sense brings to mind synonyms like work, duty, and responsibility. Tasks are chores, errands, and all the activities large and small that are faced in daily life like tying shoestrings, greeting a neighbor, and cleaning the living room. A search of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, 2008) reveals frequent collocations which, if analyzed, can provide some interesting insights into the nature of tasks. Collocations are words which are frequently paired with another particular word in spoken and written usage. Of the list of the twelve statistically most frequent collocations of task in the American Corpus, five are measures of difficulty. Tasks are described as being *difficult, easy, daunting, impossible*, and *simple*. Tying shoestrings is easy, buying a house is daunting, and living forever is impossible. Two words on the list, *perform* and *performance*, imply that a task is something that requires active engagement. The living room is not going to clean itself after all. Finally, two other words from the list suggest that tasks have a beginning and an end. Tasks are *completed* or *accomplished*. The living room has either been cleaned or it has not. From this analysis, a task can be seen in its most general sense as an activity engaged in by people that contains some degree of difficulty and must be accomplished for some purpose.

Language tasks share some of these traits. According to Shehadeh and Coombe, they are goal-oriented activities that lead to an outcome. This means that there is some purpose for engaging in them, they have a beginning and an end, and their completion is a priority. It can be taken for granted that language tasks like non-academic tasks also contain some level of difficulty. Shehadeh and Coombe go on to identify the two most important aspects of language tasks which are ones that distinguish them from all other classroom language activities. Language tasks are meaning focused rather than form focused, and they reflect real-life language use and need (Shehadeh and Coombe, 2010: 1). In a language task, students communicate with one another and their attention is on the expression and interpretation of meaning rather than on structural aspects of language. Their communication is contextualized so that it represents the way that people actually use the language for actual needs outside of the classroom rather than the awkward, contrived use of language so common in many classroom activities.

Examples of language tasks include actions like negotiating the price and terms of a service, planning the best route to take when crossing the city on foot, and giving advice to a friend. Just like the authentic use of language outside of class, students performing language tasks will necessarily use a variety of grammar structures but their use will arise out of a communicative need for them in order to complete the task at hand, and not because their use was imposed by the teacher or the instructions of the activity. Cloze passages, discreet point grammar exercises, role-plays that involve the memorization and repetition of certain phrases and structures or any other activity where students are required to focus on form rather than meaning cannot be considered tasks. "Tasks do not give students other people's meaning to regurgitate, are not conformity oriented, and are not practice oriented." (Skehan, 1998: 95)

This is not to say that practice or focus on form have no place in language teaching. Obviously, teachers want students to speak fluently and accurately. However, an over reliance on form-focused instruction or mindless repetition can lead to structurally accurate utterances and written text but it is unlikely sufficient to increase students' communicative competence in any real manner. The accuracy versus fluency argument in language teaching is valid but far too limited in its scope because it fails to include other aspects of communicative competence such as sociolinguistic competence (rules about appropriateness of language in different social contexts) and strategic

competence (strategies to avoid and repair breakdowns in communication) (Brown, 2007: 220). Language tasks address these finer shades of communication precisely because they are in fact examples of real communication.

The 1970s brought about huge changes in the ELT world as the field moved away from structuralist views of language and behavioristic teaching methods towards a variety of new methods under the umbrella of the Communicative Approach that were more in keeping with constructivist principles (Brown, 2001: 16-35). One of the changes was the rise in popularity of functional-notional syllabuses and course books. This shift in syllabus design away from grammar-based syllabuses began to look at language in terms of functions, the communicative purpose for which language is used. This would include actions such as agreeing, greeting, advising, apologizing, and suggesting among others (Nunan, 1988: 35). While functions are at the heart of all language tasks, a function is too broad of a concept to be considered a task in its own right. A task therefore, is a function or group of functions plus a specific context. It is the communicative context which activates the particular functions and grammar of the language to be used by students (Nunan, 2004: 29).

There is a wealth of theoretical evidence to support the assertion that tasks are helpful in the process of second language acquisition. For one, they provide a natural context in which to use the target language and opportunities for meaningful student interaction (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 144). This interaction encourages the negotiation of meaning, a process that in itself is recognized as beneficial for language acquisition. Negotiation of meaning refers to the interactive process of interlocutors to ensure mutual understanding. Beglar and Hunt suggest that this process assists interlanguage development because it insures that input will be comprehensible, and because it encourages, "…the exploration of new hypotheses about the structure of the target language." (Beglar and Hunt, 2002: 101) Nunan suggests three conditions that will optimize negotiation of meaning during tasks. Students should have access to distinct pieces of information, the exchange of information is required for task completion, and students have convergent goals, meaning that they are working toward the same objective (Nunan, 2004: 84).

Besides the negotiation of meaning and comprehensible input perspectives, other theoretical lenses support the use of language tasks. The output perspective suggests that interlanguage is stretched though interaction when students notice a gap between what they intend to communicate and what they are actually able to say. Various constructivist principles are also embodied during task implementation because students are encouraged to work together to construct meaning and solve linguistic problems. This results in greater student autonomy and engagement in their own learning process, moving away from teacher lead classes in favor of student-centered instruction where the teacher's role is that of a guide rather than lecturer (Shehadeh and Coombe, 2010: 1).

All tasks involve some form of knowledge gap that can only be filled through communication. Prabhu identified three types of knowledge gaps that can help in the design of tasks. Information gap tasks involve students having access to distinct pieces of information and being required to exchange that information to complete the task. An example of this could be a student asking another student for his personal information and other pertinent details in order to process a hotel reservation. Opinion gap tasks also require information exchange but in this case, the information is the personal opinions of the students. An example of this kind of task could be writing a letter of advice to someone or proposing possible solutions to a problem or social issue. Finally, reasoning gap tasks require students to create new knowledge by making inferences

about the information that they are provided. Examples of this include using a subway map to chart the best route across an unfamiliar city or solving a crime based on a set of clues. Prabhu argued that reasoning gap tasks potentially most beneficial for language acquisition because, "…they encourage a more sustained engagement with meaning." (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 148-149).

Although the Communicative Approach has become the dominant paradigm in the field of English language teaching, it is rare for an institution to have a task based syllabus or even a functional-notional syllabus. Instead, many teachers struggle to design real communicative activities from the grammar-based syllabus they are required to follow. One way to work with grammar syllabuses to design language tasks is to revisit the idea of language functions. A teacher can use this three-step framework for writing lesson plan objectives that will address not only the linguistic target for the day but also its communicative function and real-world context.

Students will be able to:
- **USE** ____(*target language*)____
- **TO** ____(*perform specific communicative function or functions*)____
- **IN** ____(*specific real-world context*)____

Examples:
- Students will be able to **USE** *present perfect simple* in order **TO** *describe past experiences achievements* **IN** *a job interview*.
- Students will be able to **USE** *ed and ing adjectives* in order **TO** *describe situations and feelings* **IN** *a movie or book review*.

2. Context

Task centered instruction is appropriate for most teaching contexts with older children, adolescents, and adults. Due to the degree of student autonomy and interaction required as well as the cognitive complexity of some types of tasks, it is not recommended for very young learners.

3. Activities

In the information gap activity participants will become familiar with the characteristics of information gap tasks, mainly that they involve the exchange of distinct information between partners in order to accomplish the task. Participants will be divided in pairs and provided with one half of a "spot the differences" activity worksheet (see Appendix 1) which shows two similar photos of objects on a desk but with minor differences. Participants will be given one of two roles, A and B. Participant A will imagine that he or she has a very annoying little sister that constantly goes into the participant's room and touches things on his or her desk even though she has been repeatedly warned not to. Participant A will imagine that he or she is away from the house and is calling his or her mother or father (role played by participant B) on the telephone. The image on the worksheet that participant A has represents his or her memory of how he or she left the desk, and participant B's worksheet represents the way the desk looks now. Participant A will ask questions to participant B to find out if his or her little sister has touched anything on the desk. Participants will have five minutes to identify as many differences as possible without looking at each other's picture. Afterwards, participants will reflect on the task they completed, identify how it meets the criteria of tasks in general and

information gap tasks in particular, and analyze the form and functions of the language they used to complete the task.

In the opinion gap activity, participants will become familiar with the characteristics of opinion gap tasks, mainly that they involve the exchange of personal opinions in order to accomplish the task. Participants will be divided into groups of three and will be provided with the "car models" worksheet (see Appendix 2). Participants will be told to imagine that they are all designers at a car company and the head of the company has decided that there is budget for only one new design model to be produced this season. Each participant will have to choose a different model (family sedan, sports car, or SUV) and convince the other designers that their model will be best for the company. Participants have ten minutes to complete the task. Afterwards, participants will reflect on the task they completed, identify how it meets the criteria of tasks in general and opinion gap tasks in particular, and analyze the form and functions of the language they used to complete the task.

In the reasoning gap activity, participants will become familiar with the characteristics of reasoning gap tasks, mainly that they involve the creation of new ideas and knowledge based on information provided in order to solve a problem and complete the task. Participants will be divided into pairs and provided with the "chefs activity" worksheet (see Appendix 3). Participants will be told to imagine they are chefs in a fancy new restaurant in the city and that they have a party of four coming in for lunch. The party requests that each member receive a different menu item but each member has a particular dietary restriction. Participants will be given ten minutes to decide what to serve each member of the party so that they all have different menu items and none of the choices conflict with their particular dietary restrictions. Afterwards, participants will reflect on the task they completed, identify how it meets the criteria of tasks in general and reasoning gap tasks in particular, and analyze the form and functions of the language they used to complete the task.

In the Form, Function, Context Framework activity, participants will become familiar with a lesson plan objectives framework, which can help with the design of task based lessons. Participants will be divided into pairs and provided with a copy of the "FFC objectives framework handout" (see Appendix 4). Participants will be instructed to use the framework to write lesson objectives that address linguistic form, communicative function, and real-world context for one of the information gap, opinion gap, or reasoning gap tasks that they experienced earlier in the workshop. Then they will be asked to write objectives using the same framework that can address a specific grammar point from a list provided by the presenter. The remaining workshop time will be allotted for questions and general discussion among the participants about how some of the ideas presented in the workshop could be adapted for use in their particular teaching context.

4. Materials

Appendix 1: Spot the differences worksheet – Information Gap Task
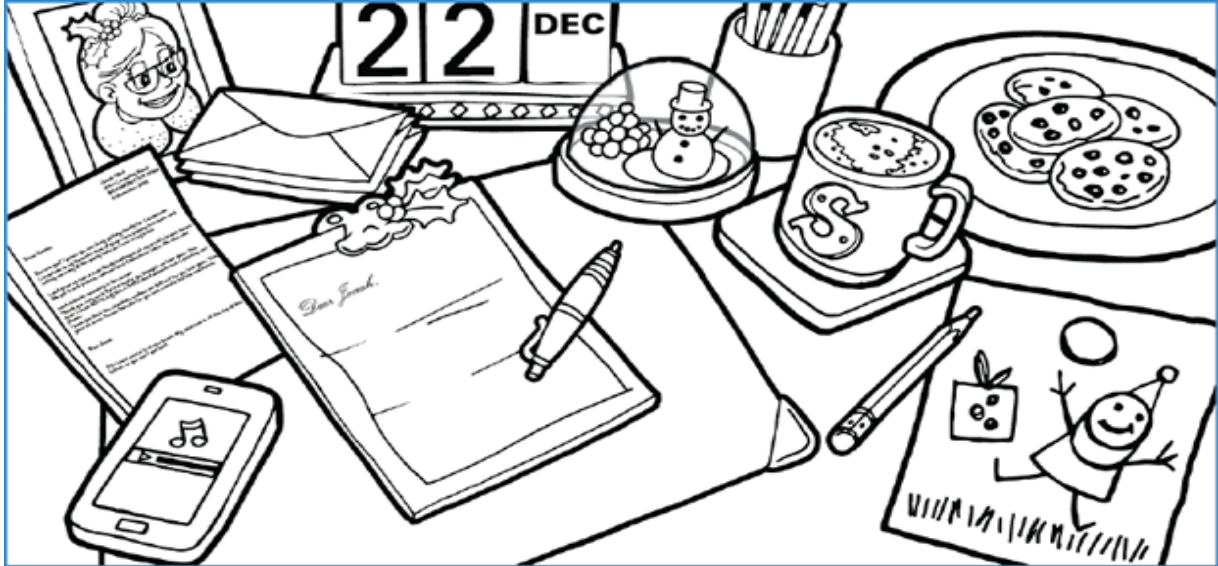
Appendix 2: Car Models worksheet – Opinion Gap Task

Autostar Motor Company

Attention design teams, only one new prototype will be chosen for production this year. Convince the other members of your team that your design is the best choice for the company.

Name:
Style: Family Car
Max Speed: 120 kph
Number of seats: 5
Saftey Rating: 9/10
Doors: 4
Trunk Space: Standard
Price:

Name:
Style: Sports Car
Max Speed: 275 kph
Number of seats: 2
Saftey Rating: 6/10
Doors: 2
Trunk Space: Small
Price:

Name:
Style: Off Road
Max Speed: 115 kph
Number of seats: 4
Saftey Rating: 8/10
Doors: 2
Trunk Space: Large
Price:

Appendix 3: Chefs Activity worksheet – Reasoning Gap Task

Jeff	Sally	Brian	Amy

Sally is a vegetarian.

Brian has a gluten allergy.

Amy hates fast food.

Jeff is lactose intolerant

Menu
Grilled Angus Beef Hamburger on Gourmet Bread
Chef's Famous Cream of Mushroom Soup
Breaded Corvina Stuffed With Grilled Shrimp
Chef's Famous Fettuccini Alfredo

Appendix 4: FFC objectives framework handout

In this lesson SWBAT...

use -------------- Grammatical **Form**

to perform ---- Communicative **Function**

in ------------------ Real-World **Context**

Example: SWBAT *use* present perfect simple *to* describe past experiences and achievements *in* a job interview.

5. Conclusions

It must be acknowledged that there is no agreement in the ELT field about how tasks should be used in the classroom. Some particularly strong forms of Task Based Instruction interpreted by people such as Prabhu propose that there is no need to focus on linguistic form in preparation for communicative tasks, because engagement with the task is sufficient to increase students' linguistic abilities. Others argue that there is benefit in form focused instruction as long as it is balanced out with communicative opportunities in the form of tasks (Nunan, 1989: 38).

This paper argues that the inclusion of tasks in the language classroom does not represent a paradigm shift in language teaching. It is not even a new method. Instead, it "…puts tasks at the center of one's methodological focus (Brown, 2001: 50). This means that communicative tasks are compatible with a variety of teaching methods and lesson planning frameworks. Most obviously, it fits with the task cycle from Task Based Instruction (Ellis 2003: 33) but other strategies are equally useful. Consider Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, with its stage of direct experience followed by periods of reflection and experimentation. What is a language task if not a direct experience with the target language? Other frameworks are also easily adaptable to include tasks. With Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) the final production stage can be a task. With Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, Fluently Use (ECRIF) the initial encounter and final fluency stages can be tasks. In Test, Teach, Test (TTT) language tasks can form the basis of the two testing stages. The idea of this paper is not to impose a radically new methodology on already heavily burdened language teachers. Instead, it aims to encourage teachers to work with their available resources to take full advantage of class time to provide students with actual communication opportunities and help them become confident and competent users of English.

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7. Biography

Mark Foster Cormier is a resource teacher and coach at the Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano in Cartago, Costa Rica where he teaches EFL classes to adults and teenagers and provides supervision, training, and professional development opportunities to new teachers. His interests include task-based instruction, vocabulary building strategies, and using content to teach advanced learners.

Tool Box: A Project to Share Technological Tools among Teachers

Eric Herrera Molina
Universidad Técnica Nacional, Costa Rica
eherrera@utn.ac.cr

Resumen: La tecnología ha cambiado drásticamente el paradigma educativo durante la última década. El aumento en la variedad y fácil acceso a la tecnología ha ampliado las oportunidades de los profesores para usar la tecnología en su quehacer diario. Además, el uso de tecnología para fomentar el aprendizaje y el trabajo colaborativo entre docentes no es muy común. El propósito de este trabajo es describir la experiencia de un grupo de profesores para crear un repositorio de herramientas digitales de internet. Este es un esfuerzo para contribuir con la alfabetización tecnológica de docentes y estudiantes con un nivel bajo de la comprensión de la importancia del uso de tecnología en la educación. La creación y expansión del repositorio presenta grandes oportunidades para profesores e instituciones educativas para empezar a trabajar en sus propios recursos audiovisuales (videos, audios, imágenes, etc.), así como también la implementación de redes de docentes donde el trabajo colaborativo contribuya a la elaboración de objetivos académicos específicos para mejorar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Al mismo tiempo, este trabajo es visto como un desafío para llegar a ser docentes del siglo XXI que la sociedad costarricense necesita.

Palabras Claves: Repositorio, herramientas digitales, curación de contenidos, marcador social, TIC.

Abstract
Technology has changed dramatically the education paradigm over the last decade. The increasing variety and accessibility of technology has expanded the opportunities teachers have to use it in their daily work. Besides, the use of technology to foster collaborative learning and work among teachers in Costa Rica is not common. The purpose of this paper is to describe the process followed by a group of teachers to create a free Internet digital tool repository. This is an effort to contribute to the digital literacy of teachers and students with little understanding of the role of technology in education. The creation and expansion of a repository presents many opportunities for teachers and educational institutions to start working in their own audiovisual resources (videos, audios, images, etc.), as well as the implementation of teacher networks where collaborative work help construct specific academic objectives to improve the teaching-learning process. At the same time, this work is seen as a challenge to become 21st century teachers that Costa Rican society needs.

Keywords: Repository, digital tools, content curation, social marker, ICTs.

1. Introduction

The amount of data on the Internet is amazing. Just as an example YouTube users upload approximately 300 hours of new video per minute of every day; there are 500 million tweets sent each day; and by 2014 there were more than 759 million web pages. This information affects every aspect of life, and education is not the exception. Teachers know technology is important and must be used as a tool to support learning, but immediately several question arise in the teacher's mind: what do I do with all this

information? How can I classify it? When am I am going to do it? What are the best tools I can use?

Taking into consideration this perspective a culture of collaborative work becomes essential. However, there is something interesting about this: even though a teacher knows that the teaching profession requires a lifelong learning perspective to adapt to continuous changes and evolving limitations or needs, most teachers have not been specifically prepared to work together in many different ways.

It is only until one or several individuals decide to act when innovation and quality improvement can be perceived in a school environment, which is frequently characterized by having few leaders, lack of incentives and professional development, and little time to do everything that is expected from a teacher. One of the main reasons to do this is that the only ones who understand and know the reality of a particular school or subject are the teachers.

This paper presents a UTN project carried out in the English as a Second Language Major (ILE). The paper focuses on the experience of the ILE staff cooperating to integrate ICTs in their daily work and to build a culture of collaboration among its members. The paper describes specific steps teachers with little knowledge about the use of ICTs took in order to put together a digital repository of free Internet tools.

2. Literature Review

In the completion of this paper, a revision of the existing literature was done focused on the information available on the Internet. Several studies have been carried out about collaborative work among teachers; however, none of the literature consulted shows any attempts of this kind of research in Costa Rica.

The best teaching and the best learning happen where professionals work, learn and reflect together, and especially with all the changes that the challenge that integrating ICTs demands. In 2006, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) in the UK conducted a study on the importance of teachers as collaborative professionals. This study consisted on a survey conducted on 1000 teachers. The study clearly concluded that working collaboratively underpins many of the changes that are taking place in today's education system (Weindling, 2006, p. 28).

When several teachers decide to work together, they combine effort to unify and build new knowledge. In 2010, a study undertaken at University of Guelma, Guelma, Algeria concluded that collaboration among teachers has good impact on the cognitive profiles of learners and increases the knowledge level of teachers (Lafifi, Touil, 2010, p. 128).

The results of teacher collaboration are considered one of the best ways to improve teaching quality in different ways. In 2013, the Rennie Center in Massachusetts worked on a research that showed how the impact of teacher collaboration on student learning by improving classroom practice, promoting data use, increasing academic rigor, and supporting students' non-academic needs is associated with stronger student performance (Poulos, Culbertson, Piazza, d'Entremont, 2014 p. 20).

Finally, there is a technological literacy gap among teachers because of age or lack of training. Initiatives of teachers' collaboration can bridge this gap. In 2009, the Center for Teacher Quality undertook a survey of 1210 teacher leaders, and one of the main results was that opportunities for collaboration strengthen the skills of new or struggling teachers and can make the best teachers even better (Berry, Daugherty, Wielder, 2009, p. 7).

3. Main body

3.1. Background

During the last decade, a boom in the use of ICTs began in all schools, in Costa Rica. Overnight, computers, video beams, software, and smart boards became new members of the classroom. Schools invested a lot of money on infrastructure without a deep and serious analysis of everything else they would need to make all these devices work effectively as tools to improve the teaching and learning process.

This new paradigm brought about a change in the role of teachers. This new role includes aspects such as instructing students on computer use, methods of Internet research, and identifying useful information. In addition, it is the teacher's responsibility to create new learning objects by using ICTs. However, many teachers then and now are not prepared for such an abrupt change. They need not only training on how to use technology, but also spaces for reflection on how to adapt themselves to the new demands.

With all these in mind, the English as a Second Major (ILE) staff at UTN found out that a teacher in certain course was using X tool, and another teacher in another course was using a different tool. The problem was that none of them knew about the use the others were giving to certain free Internet tools, so after a meeting it was decided to collect all the different tools, classify them according to the specific skill in which they were used (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking), and then look for an effective format to disseminate them among English teachers. This work took about two years, and it is known as UTN Tool Box. In this process, they had to learn about content curation and social markers in order to integrate and implement the various ICTs to their classes, as well as learn how to keep their ICT resources organized and up-to-date.

3.2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the English Teaching

Even though the use of ICTs to support learning may sound as a recommendation for many teachers, there are several international and national documents that make it mandatory. This documentation is sometimes unknown or disregarded by teachers and schools. Some of the documents that establish the importance and need of using ICTs in education are presented in this section.

3.2.1. UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers

In 2008, UNESCO combined efforts with some others institutions as INTEL to work together on a document called *Competency Framework for Teachers,* with the aim of helping educational policy-makers and curriculum developers identify the skills teachers need to harness technology in the service of education. Some of the most important standards are briefly described in the following chart:

Table 1. UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers

Area of educational focus	'Modules' - Phases of knowledge acquisition		
	Technology literacy	Knowledge deepening	Knowledge creation
Understanding ICT in education	Policy Awareness	Policy understanding	Policy Innovation
Curriculum and assessment	Basic Knowledge	Knowledge Application	Knowledge Society Skills
Pedagogy	Integrate technology	Complex problem solving	Self management
ICT	Basic tools	Complex tools	Pervasive tools
Organization and administration	Standard classroom	Collaborative groups	Learning Organizations
Teacher professional learning	Digital Literacy	Manage and guide	Teacher as model learner

Source: ICT United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (2008). Competency Standards for Teachers

3.2.2. Common European Framework of Reference Language (CEFR)

In the specific case of English teaching, the Common European Framework – the framework used all around the world as a guide for drawing up language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks– establishes as one of its three basic principles the need for ICTs to be used as important tools to support language teaching: to take such steps as are necessary to complete the establishment of an effective European system of information exchange covering all aspects of language learning, teaching and research, and making full use of **information technology**.(p.2)

3.2.3. Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica (MEP)

On a national context, several Ministers of Education have expressed their concern that all teachers should undergo a process of continuous education with the aim of mastering ICTs as much as possible, so they can use them as tools to enrich the learning process. 1984-88 Minister of Education Dr. Francisco Antonio Pacheco – cited by Paniagua – said:

> Nothing is possible unless there is a good teacher. The 21st century teacher should be much better than the traditional one. His/her **command of technology**, knowledge, flexible attitude, and his/her willingness to be part of a continuous education process are just some of his/her main characteristics. (Pacheco, 1996, p.132)

Today educational institutions must have teachers who are equipped with technology resources and skills and who can effectively teach the necessary subject matter content while incorporating technology concepts and skills.

3.3. Organization of Internet Tools
### 3.3.1 Content Curation

In the past it was possible for a teacher to do research, collect, and keep any tool he/she could find. Today, teacher's are required to learn about content curation in order to facilitate work, and be able to effectively use information and communication technologies (ICTs). Content curation is when an individual (or team) consistently finds, organizes, annotates and shares the most relevant and highest quality digital content on a specific topic for their target market. (Sutton, 2014)

Content curation for teachers is a practical way to share experiences, tools, and knowledge that includes the following steps. What a teacher does is to look for

information about a specific topic, content, objective, area, etc.; then, the information is filtered to choose the most relevant material or tool; right after this, the information or tool is classified into categories; later on, the information is posted on a social marker website, blog, or web page; finally, the information or tool is shared with others. This last step is relevant to engage others in terms of receiving feedback, updating, and adding more information or tools to the final product.

3.3.2. Social Bookmarking
A social bookmark is a website where users store, classify, organize, describe, tag, and share links. Social bookmarking websites work similarly to the Add to Favorites option in every computer, but they offer the advantage that it can be accessed from any computer, as long as you have Internet access. Additionally, all bookmarks can be tagged to make searches easily. There are hundreds of different social bookmarking websites such as Reddit, Del.icio.us, Diigo, Blinklist, Google Bookmarks, and Zootool.
After examining the different characteristics of several bookmarking websites, Symbaloo was selected due to its familiar and colorful layout (it looks like the mobile phone screen) and its user-friendly social platform. This layout works perfectly for people who are not effective at memorizing website names but have a good visual memory to recognize icons and logos. Table 2 reproduces the Symbaloo website design.
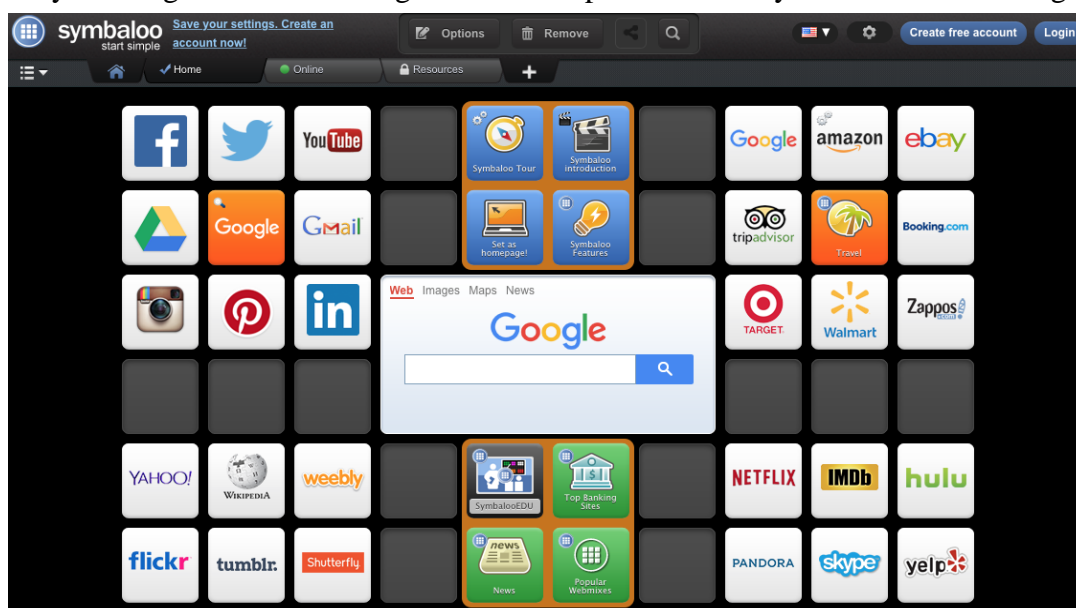
Source: Symbaloo home page https://www.symbaloo.com/home/mix/13eOcK1fiV

4. Conclusions
The field of education has been greatly influenced by information and communication technologies. The information on the web grows by the minute, and it is not only desirable but rather required for teachers to be prepared to integrate technology to the teaching and learning process.

Even though teachers play a crucial role in adopting and implementing ICTs in education, lack of time, training and spaces to reflect about how to face this new paradigm seem to work against them. Looking for solutions, teachers should understand that it is necessary to emphasize on teamwork as a mechanism to close the digital literacy gap among teachers, and as an opportunity to offer students an education the 21st century demands.

Innovation becomes possible when two, three or more individuals decide to take action. The case of the digital tool box presented in this work is just an example of how some teachers with little knowledge of technology decided to combine efforts and in this way improve at an individual and group level.

The use of a social bookmarking website has given teachers a chance to produce their own learning objects, engage students in more interactive classes, push their colleagues to try new thing and be creative, adapt the learning and teaching process to individual needs, and consolidate the English as a Second Language (ILE) program at UTN as one that cares about its students and strives to prepare them for their professional life.

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6. Biography

Eric Herrera Molina holds a Bachelor's Degree in English (UCR) with a Licenciatura Degree in Teaching (UNED), a Master's Degree in Educational Technology (UNED). He also did a Graduate program in Digital Media and e-learning (FATLA). He 15 years of experience in public and private high schools and universities. He also worked for 2 years in the US as a Spanish teacher. He is also the editor of The ILE Post, a monthly magazine at UTN.

Increasing Student Engagement

Michelle Leip
Infinite Horizons, U.S.A and Costa Rica
michellelynnleip@gmail.com

Resumen: En un aula típica el docente se para en frente de la clase y habla más que todos. Ya es hora de cambiar este modelo. Los que hablan más aprenden más; entonces es imperativo que los estudiantes sean los que hagan este trabajo. Los estudios muestran una alta correlación entre la participación de los estudiantes y las tasas de graduación. Necesitamos involucrar a los estudiantes en su aprendizaje para ayudarles a encontrar el éxito tanto dentro como fuera del aula. Este taller presentará numerosas estrategias prácticas y fáciles de implementar para involucrar activamente a todos los alumnos. Vamos a discutir formas de configurar las expectativas de la clase para tener la participación del 100%, así como actividades, juegos, y estructuras de trabajo que le ayudará a aumentar la participación del alumno en el aula. Este taller cambia el papel del profesor de "sabio en el escenario" a "guía al lado".

Palabras clave: Participación, motivación, ambiente del aula, reducir el filtro afectivo, aprendizaje activo, mentalidad de desarrollo.

Abstract: In a typical classroom the teacher stands in front of the group and does most of the talking. It is time to flip that model on its head! Those who do the most talking do the most learning. Therefore, it is imperative that students do most of this work. Studies show a high correlation between student engagement and graduation rates. We need to involve our students in their learning to help them find success both within and outside of school. This workshop will present numerous practical and easy-to-implement strategies to actively engage all learners. We will discuss ways to set up the classroom expectations for a 100% participation as well as activities, games, & work structures to help you increase student participation in your classroom. This workshop changes the teacher role from "Sage on the Stage" to" Guide on the Side".

Keywords: Student engagement, participation, classroom environment, active learning, lowering the affective filter, growth mindsets.

1. Introduction

This workshop will explore the following questions: What is student engagement? What effect does it have on student success? How can teachers increase student engagement in their classes?

The Handbook of Research on Student Engagement breaks the broad terms "student engagement" into four different categories: academic engagement, cognitive engagement, social engagement, and affective engagement (Christenson, 2012). Academic engagement involves behaviors linked to academic achievement such as paying attention, completing assignments, etc. Cognitive engagement involves critical thinking, problem solving, questioning, and persistence in order to achieve academically. Social engagement (also called behavioral) involves following norms and expectations in the classroom. Finally, affective engagement involves students' feelings

of comfort and their sense of belonging in the school. Research suggests that *all* of these types of engagement correlate to student academic and professional success. Thusly for this paper, we will conflate the terms and use the general term "student engagement" to refer to all of the aforementioned components.

Student engagement has been linked to positive academic outcomes and increased enjoyment in the classroom (Christenson, 2012). These studies show that when students feel more comfortable at school and actively participate in their learning, they achieve higher results and graduate at higher rates than those with poorer engagement levels (Christenson, 2012). Studies also show that parallels have been found with engagement longitudinally. In other words, if a student develops effective engagement practices in younger grades, he continues to use and benefit from them into high school and beyond.

In this workshop, I will narrow the seemingly infinite suggestions on how to increase student engagement to two main categories: positive classroom environment and effective planning and reflection. If teachers are able to master these two major facets of teaching, they will be able to dramatically increase engagement from students in their classrooms.

2. Context

The strategies discussed in this workshop can be used with students at all grade levels and in all language abilities. We will specifically talk about teaching from grades K – 12, but similar strategies would also be effective at the university level and beyond.

3. Activities

Activity name: Tossing Topics
Purpose: warm up / active listening / asking and answering questions
Time: 10 minutes
Materials: inflatable ball
Procedure: Students will stand in a circle. A question will be posed. Students have time to think of an answer & put their hands out when they are ready. One person will catch the ball and answer the question. If other students have the same answer, they clap. If not, they hold out their hands to catch the ball. When they catch the ball, they say their different answer and then make up a new question for the class. After giving classmates some think time, the person with the ball tosses the ball to someone with his hands out. Repeat as desired. (Credit: Michelle Leip)

Activity name: CORE groups
Purpose: creating smaller cooperative communities
Time: varies depending on the activity
Materials: varies
Procedure: Students are placed into groups of 4. Each member has a specific role. This role can be assigned, selected at random, or voted on by the team members. One member is the Coach. This person keeps everyone on task and makes sure all members contribute. The next person is the Organizer. This person gathers any necessary materials and keeps track of time. Then there is the Recorder. This person records the group's answers. Finally, there is the Energizer. This person makes sure the team uses growth mindset talk and keeps the energy level high and focused. All members contribute to the discussions. Teachers should first have the groups participate in teambuilding activities before academic work begins. (Credit: Kathleen Kryza)

Activity name: Total Physical Response
Purpose: incorporate kinesthetic learning
Time: varies
Procedure: Students should create movements to help them remember concepts and vocabulary. Kinesthetic learning helps cement memories and will help students with future recall. (Credit: James Asher)

Activity name: Think – pair - share
Purpose: processing information
Time: varies
Procedure: Teachers pose a question and then offer time for the students to think. They then turn to discuss the topic or question with their classmate. Finally, students share their thoughts with the class. This allows all students to process simultaneously rather than only having one student's voice be heard. (Credit: Frank Lyman)

Activity name: Hold ups
Purpose: total participation technique
Time: varies
Materials: varies
Procedure: Students work alone or with partners to answer teacher directed questions or solve problems. The teacher poses a question, gives processing time, and then asks all students to "hold up" their answers at the same time. These hold ups can be whiteboards, colored paper, sign language letters, etc… (Credit: William and Pérsida Himmele).

Activity name: Musical Matches
Purpose: kinesthetic speaking & listening activity
Time: varies
Materials: music and speakers
Procedure: Students think about a question or topic and walk around the room while the music is playing. When the music stops, they stop and discuss with the person closest to them. (Credit: Kathleen Kryza)

Activity name: Jigsaw
Purpose: cooperative learning activity
Time: varies
Materials: articles or information for four different groups
Procedure: Students in their CORE groups each learn about a different topic or have a different reading to do. They then meet with other students who studied the same thing. Together they become experts and return to their home teams to teach the others about that topic. All members of the home team are responsible for mastering all topics.

Activity name: Numbered Heads Together
Purpose: assessment
Time: varies
Materials: questions to ask of students
Procedure: This is a great activity to do after a Jigsaw to ensure that all members understand all topics. The teacher poses a question to the students in their CORE groups. The groups have a set amount of time to discuss the answer. Then the teacher

calls on one role (Coach, Organizer, Recorder, or Energizer) to answer the question. The first person (in that role) to stand up gets a chance to answer the question and earn their team a point. The teacher may choose not to give the team talk time after asking the question, but there should always be process time. (Credit: Spencer Kagan)

4. Materials

See attached PDF for printable worksheets on the top 10 chew (processing) activities to get your students engaged!

Helpful online resources & books:

This website has numerous free resources to print and use in your classroom (including clock buddies, posters, and planners, etc.). Kathleen Kryza is also an educational consultant and published author with several practical books with valuable teaching tips. http://kathleenkryza.com

Kathleen Kryza's YouTube channel is a collection of videos on teaching growth mindsets, anchor activities, and other teaching strategies. https://www.youtube.com/user/KsInfiniteHorizons

Spencer Kagan offers suggestions on how to get all students actively engaged in the classroom. http://www.kaganonline.com/free_articles/dr_spencer_kagan/281/Kagan-Structures-A-Miracle-of-Active-Engagement

This is a link to a printable book entitled "Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner." I highly recommend this publication. It has a plethora of activities that require all students to actively participate in class. http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/Total-Participation-Techniques.aspx

Carol Dweck's TED talk on growth mindsets and the power of YET! https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve

5. Conclusions

As previously stated, engagement affects students' ability to achieve academically, graduate on time, and thrive outside of school in order to become life-long learners. Teachers have the power to increase student engagement by creating a positive classroom environment and effectively planning and reflecting.

To create a positive classroom environment, teachers should first co-create norms with their students. Students should decide what norms need to be in place for them to learn and grow in the classroom environment. They will then sign a contract to uphold those norms throughout the year.

Teachers also need to get to know their students' interests, strengths, and struggles in order to create lessons that are relevant to the students' lives. Stephen Krashen purports that when students receive comprehensible input in low anxiety situations containing messages they want to hear, their affective filter is lowered and they are better able to acquire language (Krashen, 1982). Teachers can get to know their students through formal and informal methods. They can use strategies that range from

asking students to fill out surveys in order to determine their learning styles and preferences, to simply having a conversation with a student during a break.

Students should also be taught about Carol Dweck's theory of growth versus fixed mindsets (Dweck, 2006). Dweck states that people who believe that intelligence and talent can be developed (growth mindsets) rather than be fixed (fixed mindset) are better able to handle challenges, learn, and end up finding more success in life. Her studies showed that explicitly teaching students about growth mindsets, showing them how their brain works, and giving them strategies to use when they encounter a challenge created significant academic improvement when compared with a group of students who only received tutoring and no instruction on growth mindsets. When we create an environment in which the students know what is expected of them, the teachers believe that ALL students will learn, and the students understand that their effort truly influences their learning, we will have set the foundation for increasing student engagement.

Next, teachers must plan their lessons with student engagement in mind. Lessons need to follow the 10 x 2 rule (Kryza, 2015). For every ten minutes of instruction, students need at least two minutes to process the information. Kathleen Kryza calls this method Chunk, Chew, and Check. When teachers deliberately plan their lessons in this way, they create opportunities for a variety of student interactions and engagement. Students can talk, draw, write, or move to help them make sense of the information that they are learning.

Language learning can be a particularly intimidating process, but it does not have to be. Often students complain that they are too nervous to talk in class or ask questions. This anxiety can be lessened by reducing the audience size. We cannot change the size of our classes, but we can change the amount of people to whom a student has to speak at a time. We do this by creating CORE groups of four students. Each student in the group has a particular role and responsibility for the task at hand. All are required to participate and understand how to interact with other classmates in light of the structure provided. One member is the Coach. This person keeps everyone on task and makes sure all members contribute. The next person is the Organizer. This person gathers any necessary materials and keeps track of time. Then there is the Recorder. The Recorder writes the group's answers. Finally, there is the Energizer. This person makes sure the team uses growth mindset talk and keeps the energy level high and focused. All members contribute to the discussions.

When planning lessons teachers can include group work activities that students complete in CORE groups, short-term groups, or partners. Short-term groups can be formed by a variety of means. Teachers can cut up a picture into four pieces, pass out one piece of the puzzle to each classmate, and the students have to put the puzzle together to make their group. Teachers can group students using a deck of cards – wherein the students find their matches. They can also give students printouts of antonyms or synonyms to match up to find their teammates. To form partners, students can fill in appointment calendars with their classmates that they use throughout the year. They can also simply turn and talk to the person beside them. Changing the type of interaction and type of grouping keeps things fresh and fun. The brain loves novelty and will pay more attention when a small element of surprise is introduced.

When planning lessons teachers can find ways to ensure that all students participate simultaneously. Having everyone working at once lowers students' affective filter and allows them to focus on the learning task at hand. Total Participation Techniques can be used to create whole class simultaneous participation. Students can have their own whiteboard marker and can answer a question on the board during their

process time. Teachers should not allow students to show their answer before she calls for them to raise their board so that all students are responsible for thinking and processing the information. There are numerous other strategies that teachers can use to get all students participating at the same time.

Technology can help keep content relevant and exciting for students as well. Language learners can participate in exchanges with people from other countries via Skype. Smartphone applications can be used to practice vocabulary. Students can record themselves speaking to practice and check their pronunciation. Websites can be used for research or games that will encourage use of the language. Technology offers many opportunities to make the learning process very engaging for students.

Finally, reflection plays a defining role in increasing student engagement. Teachers need to reflect on their lessons to see who is participating, how, and when. They can track this data using participation trackers or by watching a video of themselves teaching. It is important to notice which types of activities are engaging the most students and whether all students are participating equally (gender, race, etc.). Students, too, should track and reflect on their own participation and engagement practices. We need to teach students to hold themselves accountable for learning, and tracking and reflecting is an excellent opportunity to do just that.

In sum, it is clear that teachers have many tools they can use to influence and increase student engagement. By creating a nurturing environment, planning effective lessons, and reflecting on teaching practice, teachers can change the tone and the outcomes of their classes – and therefore transform students' lives.
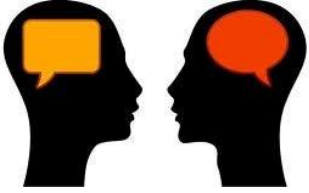
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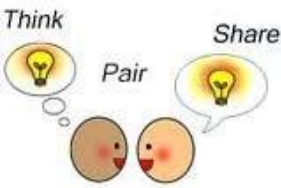
7. Biography

Michelle Leip earned her Master's degree in School Leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a Bachelor's degree in Spanish and Elementary Education from Framingham State College. She is a passionate educator with 14 years of experience in all areas of education including instruction, leadership, advocacy, research, writing, and teacher training. She is committed to ensuring that ALL students receive a first-rate education regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, or socioeconomic status.

8. Appendices

10 Easy <u>CHEW</u> Strategies that Get <u>ALL</u> Kids Actively Engaged

Core Groups with Jobs	At the beginning of the year/quarter, students are assigned to groups.
	
	- All group members are assigned jobs such as leader, recorded, teacher getter, timekeeper, life coach, organizer, etc.
	- Group scan then give themselves a name, a silent signal, or a symbol.
	- The teacher has the groups do fun community building activities, such as building the tallest tower from straws and tape, without talking!
	- The groups stay together for a marking period, a trimester, or a year
	- The core group responsibilities are as follows:
	    o If anyone from the core group is absent, they get the makeup work and assignment from their core group members. (This buys the teacher valuable teaching time and builds responsibility)
	    o The teacher can always call the core group together at the beginning of end of class to plan, reflect, review, etc.

Numbered Heads Together	• Number students off from 1 to 4 within their groups. • Call out a question or problem (Example: Where do plants get their energy?) • Students in teams put their heads together to discuss the answer. They must make sure everyone on the team knows the answer. • Randomly call a number from 1 to 4 (use a spinner, draw popsicle sticks out of a cup, roll a dice, etc.) • On each team, the student whose number was called says or writes the answer. He or she may not receive any help from his team at this point! If they didn't pay attention during the discussion, too bad!
Turn and Talk:	• Give students a prompt on the board, overhead or PowerPoint. • Students turn and talk to a partner. • Students have 2 – 3 minutes to talk and share. While they are talking, the teacher is floating around the room listening for quality talk. • The whole class processes the talk, with the teacher noting quality talk that s/he has heard while going around the room.
Walkand Talk:	• Give students a prompt on the board, overhead or PowerPoint. • Students stand up and walk (five giant steps) and find a talk partner. • Students have 2-3 minutes to talk and share. While they are talking, the teacher is floating around the room listening for quality talk. • The whole class processes the talk, with the teacher noting quality talk that s/he has heard while going around the room.

Stand and Share:
(For discussions that involve several responses or for reviews.)
	Teacher poses a question and asks the whole class to stand, then asks for volunteers to share.
	The steps for Stand and Share are:
	   1. All students stand up.
	   2. Once a student shares, they get to sit down.
	   3. If someone shares what you were going to share and you don't have another idea to contribute, you get to sit down.
	   4. The teacher calls on students until all ideas have been presented and all students are sitting.
	(Note: Call on the shy or more struggling learners first, so they have the opportunity to contribute. Save the gifted students or more vocal students for last, as they will still have ideas to contribute.)

Vote on Your Feet:	• Give students a choice on a response of a question (e.g.: Do you think it's answer A or answer B?) • Have them stand if they think it's A and then support their answer. Then students could stand if they think it's B and support their answer. • Discuss the rationale and determine which one is correct. • Another version would be to have the kids vote by moving to a place in the room to vote YES, NO, or NOT SURE around a question or idea. (Do you think that schools have the right to allow only eating healthy foods?)
Stop and Draw:	• After you have taught students a key concept or key term, give them two minutes to stop and sketch their visual representation of that idea. (Tell them you are looking for very simple drawings like they would do if playing Pictionary.) • After students do their sketches, have them share what they've drawn with their table mates or talk partners. • Float around the room and look for quality and unique visuals to share with the whole class.
Clock Partners	• Give students a blank clock face with blank lines at specific times. (12, 3, 6, 9 o'clock) • Students have 2 minutes to go around the room and "make a date" with 4 people who will be their clock partners, one a teach timeslot. • Throughout the class period, over the day or week, you can have students meet with their partners to share. (Meet with your 2 o'clock partner and do this or talk about that) • NOTE: You could also intentionally assign some of their clock partners by readiness or learning style.
Musical Matches	1. Have students all stand up. 2. As music plays, students walk around the room. 3. When you stop the music, they must FREEZE. Then turn to the person nearest them and share.
Think/Pair/Share and Reflect/Pair/Share	•Give students a discussion prompt. •Have them think for 1 minute about what they know about the prompt. (THINK) •Then have them discuss their ideas for 2 minutes with a partner. (PAIR) •Then pull students names randomly (names on popsicle sticks or index cards) for a while/whole class shares. (SHARE) The rules are as follows: they can't say, "I don't know." or something that somebody else has already said, but they can get help from their partner (Lifeline) if they need help. •Reflect / Pair/ Share is the same as Think/Pair/Share, but the talk prompts are more metacognitive than cognitive. Students are asked to reflect on what they can do when they are stuck, or how they would approach a new learning task, etc.

Using Google docs as an Effective Technological Tool in an English Class

Patricia López Estrada
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Sede San Carlos
plopez@itcr.ac.cr

Resumen: La enseñanza de un segundo idioma busca promover cambios innovadores para alcanzar procesos de aprendizajes significativos. Procesos que busquen motivar a los estudiantes en el uso y desarrollo del idioma y promover la co-construcción de conocimiento, el trabajo cooperativo, las habilidades de resolución y la negociación de problemas. El objetivo de este artículo es compartir con la audiencia del congreso el uso efectivo de tecnología a través de *Google docs* en una clase de inglés en el Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Sede Regional in San Carlos.

Palabras clave: Segundo idioma, aprendizaje, enseñanza, tecnología.

Abstract: Second language teaching calls for innovative ways to achieve meaningful learning. Learning that should engage students in language development and use, and promote the co-construction of knowledge, student cooperation, problem-solving and negotiation skills. The presentation seeks to share with audience the effective use of technology through *Google docs* in an English class at Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica in San Carlos.

Keywords: Second language, learning, teaching, technology.

1. Introduction

Technology is a ubiquitous phenomenon that is part of our present and future, which mandates that teachers incorporate and use technology in classrooms (Gronseth et al., 2010; International Reading Association, 2009; International Society for Technology in Education, 2008; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007). In the context of Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica in San Carlos, the presenter offers valuable and useful information to enhance students' learning process in the English class through the use of *Google docs*. As a technological tool, *Google docs* is used to promote language skills (Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading) and sub skills (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, and spelling) as well as 21st century skills (e.g. critical thinking and problem-solving). Through the use of *Google docs*, the instructor seeks to establish a pedagogical mediation in real time aimed at co-construction of knowledge, genuine communication, and group collaboration.

2. Literature Review

Nowadays, technology integration has become an important mediator in the teaching-learning process. Educators are called to learn on how to use new technologies in order to adapt them to different teaching approaches. The International Society for Technology in Education (2008) addresses the 21st century skills (creativity, innovation, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration) and suggests teachers should

- Create and facilitate technology-enhanced experiences that foster student learning, innovation, and creativity
- Develop, design, and implement age-appropriate learning experiences and assessments
- Model digital work and learning
- Pursue professional growth and leadership.

In terms of language learning, it is mandatory to address the fact that a language is best learned when it is socially constructed in an environment filled with meaningful interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). That is, Sociocultural Theory (SCT) affirms that learning is a social, collaborative phenomenon that takes place in a socially-mediated context. Other language learning theories (constructivist and interactionist perspectives, motivational approaches, and social-situated learning techniques) aim at enhancing meaning learning. International trends in the 21st century emphasize the significance and necessity to use technology, which permits students to make their learning process evident, thus facilitating their language learning in meaningful technological contexts (Eaton, 2010).

3. Context

The pedagogical practice takes place at Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica in San Carlos. The group of students (nine in total) are part of an advanced English course (English VII) belonging to the major of Business Administration during the first university semester of 2016. These students have been with the same English instructor since 2014 for the courses of English IV, English V, and English VI.

The teaching practice used with the students from English VII relates to the use of *Google docs.* The presenter highlights the use of *Google docs* in four main techniques: writing journals, field trip planning, and two empowerment pedagogy practices entitled *PIG* (Personal Improvement Goal), and *We are the teachers!* In the following chart, the teaching activities are presented, the language skills/sub kills, and the 21st skills; all of which will be explained in detail.

Table I. *Google docs* pedagogical uses

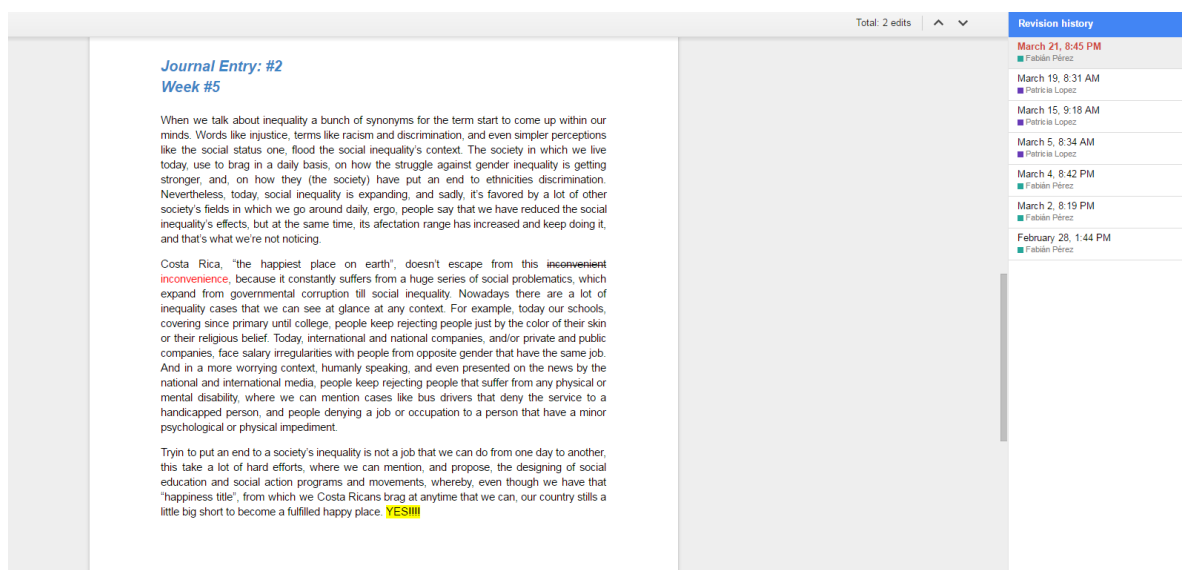| Teaching activity	Language skills/subkills	21st century skills
Writing journals	Writing Reading Grammar Spelling Vocabulary	Critical thinking Creativity Communication
Field trip planning	Writing Reading Grammar Spelling	Critical thinking Communication Problem solving Collaboration
PIG (Personal Improvement Goal)	Writing Speaking	Critical thinking Communication

	Reading Listening Reading Grammar Spelling Vocabulary	Innovation
We are the teachers!	Writing Speaking Reading Listening Reading Grammar Spelling Vocabulary	Critical thinking Communication Problem solving Collaboration Innovation

a. Writing Journals

Since the very beginning of the semester, students of English VII are requested to create a *Google doc*, in the format of a word document, and share it with the English instructor. Students are expected to write a minimum of two entries per week. Topics are proposed by the students, as part of the instructor's ingrained beliefs of empowerment pedagogy. The two most appealing language skills students will use are writing and reading, as well as sub skills such grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.

The *Google doc* provides a tailored writing stage since students can always go back to what they wrote and reflect on different entries. The instructor´s main aim is for students to become critical writers through creativity and genuine communication of ideas and thoughts.

Figure I. Journal writing sample

As may be seen, in this student's entry on the right side, *Google docs* provides the interaction of the entry including changes, times, dates, and others. Revision history is a feature, which complements the communication dynamics.

b. Field Trip Planning

During the course of English VII, students had to plan various field trips in Costa Rica. They also planned an international trip to a state university in the United States. Most planning was done through the tool of *Google docs* and thorough empowerment pedagogy where students were in charge of the academic filed trip planning. Students were divided into groups depending on the logistics of the trip, thus putting into practice not only language skills but also collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking, all immersed within genuine communication. Students internalize that language use occurs within a meaningful context of interaction and communication exchanges. *Google docs* works effectively since students do not meet face to face everyday yet they coordinate in different sites at the same time; they have full, updated access to what other classmates do and have done since *Google docs* keeps track of changes. The use of *Google docs* for this purpose works well for collectively planning and in the decision-making processes.

Figure II. Field trip planning sample
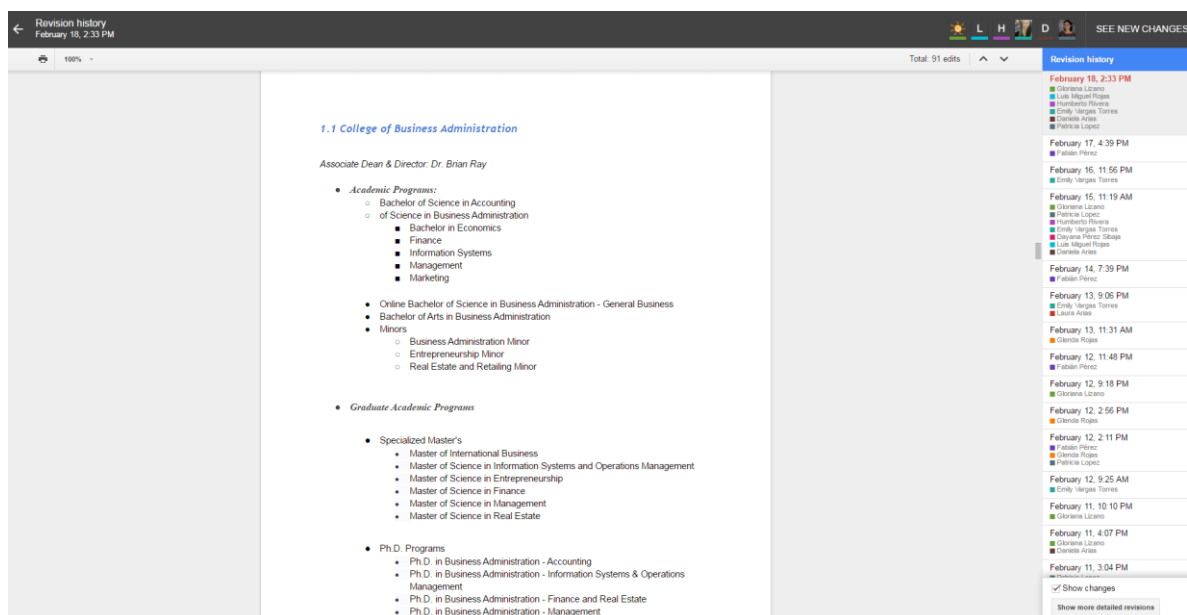
In this sample, under Revision history, all different colors represent distinctive interactions to plan the field trip collectively. As an instructor, you can follow these interactions and grade them by frequency, quantity and/or quality of input to co-create the plan. Both synchronously and asynchronously, students interact and build upon where others worked previously. It is within this dynamics that learning takes place and genuine communication comes alive.

c. *PIG* (Personal Improvement Goal)

The PIG pedagogical practice is an innovative methodological strategy, based on empowerment pedagogy principles. Its main objective is to empower students and provide meaning to their knowledge environment. It also aims at empowering students so that they can be the protagonists of their own learning. The PIG challenges the traditional learning formula and celebrates the individual in his or her own linguistic and academic abilities.

This PIG stems from the students, considering specific aspects that they wish to improve on a personal and academic level. Students have the freedom to choose what they want to improve (topic), why they want to improve (objectives), and how they want to improve (action plan). The Personal Improvement Goal allows students to internalize the responsibility for their learning process. This pedagogical practice is done through *Google docs* as a way to keep digital record of student's unique and personal progress. Students have the freedom to choose any language skills or sub kills they want to focus on and improve upon. In addition, it addresses issues such as critical thinking, creativity, and communication.

Figure III. *PIG* sample
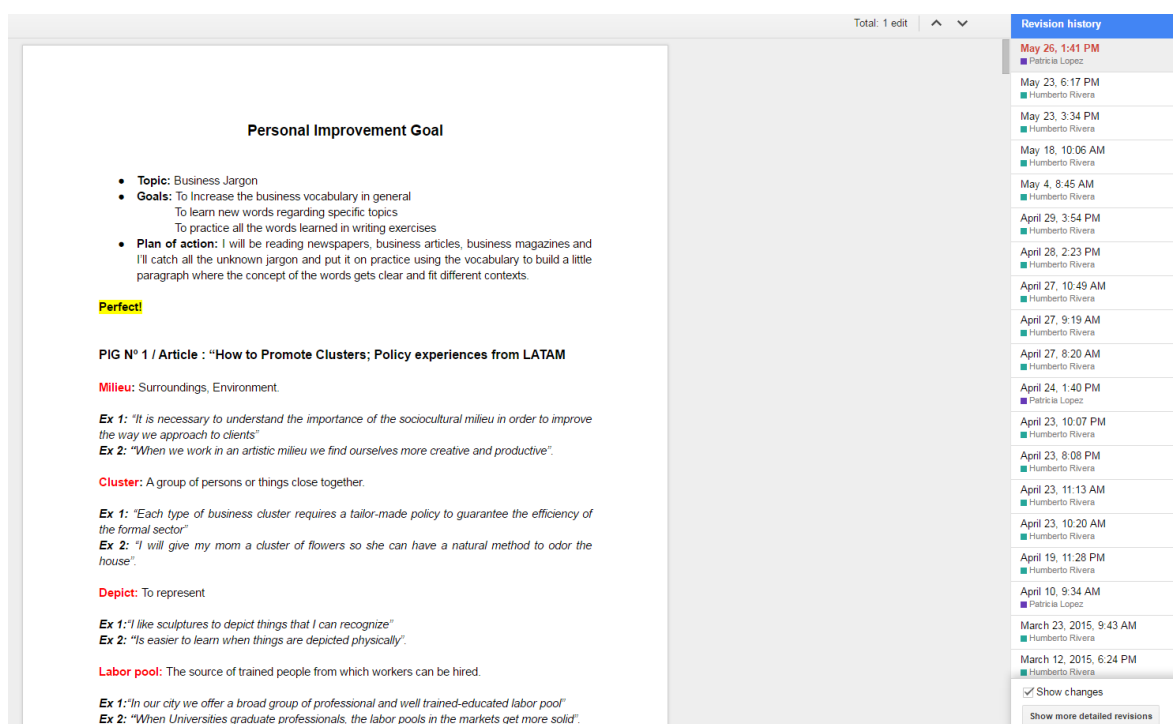
The interaction in this sample goes one-on-one student-instructor since it is the student who proposes, the PIG with some monitoring by the instructor. The PIG is easily outlined through *Google docs*.

d. *We are the Teachers!*

This classroom assignment also relates to empowerment pedagogy in which the students embrace the full role of teachers in the classroom, and for specific sessions the students teach the class. In the *Google doc*, they decide how they will divide the assignment, the

topic, and the allotted times for the assignments, for example. *Google docs* works as a platform for students to problem solve and collaborate. *We are the teachers!* encourages student innovation since a group of students collaborates to design and deliver a class with the group's consensus. As in the case of the other pedagogical practices, students work in real time and they are constantly co-constructing knowledge through the use of language, not to get a specific grade, but to engage in purposeful communication, as seen in the figure below.

Figure IV. *We are the teachers!* Sample
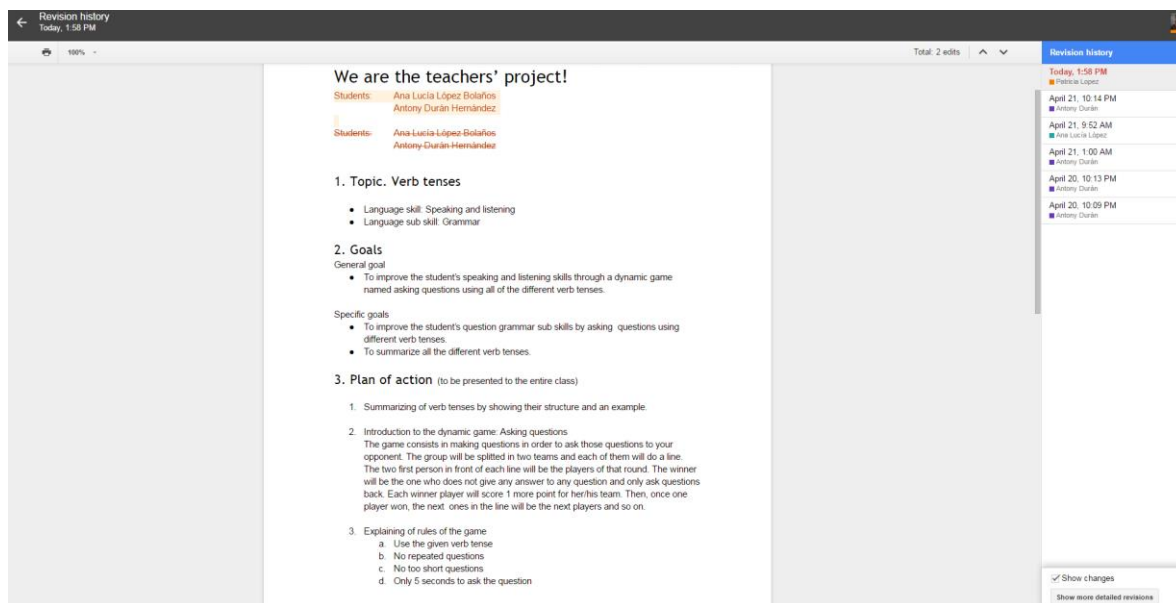
4. Conclusions

Technology and language learning seek to motivate and engage students in socially situated and in meaningful, authentic scenarios. Language and learning promote creativity and imagination; most prominently "exploration, expression, construction, and profound social and cultural collaboration" (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000, p. 318). In order to promote successful second language learning, the activities planned with technology must be significant, have a genuine interactional component, and have a purpose for authentic communication. Garrett (1991) affirms that teachers must be careful with technology since technology is to serve language learning and not vice versa. Instructors must comprehend that the use of technology itself does not translate into effective teaching and learning. Technology is important yet effective planning is required to engage students into genuine learning.

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6. Biography

Patricia López Estrada holds an Education Doctorate from the University of Florida, a Masters's degree in Second Languages and Cultures in English as a Foreign Language and a *Licentiatura* in Applied Linguistics to Second Language Teaching from Universidad Nacional, a Bachelor´s degree in English Teaching and English Translation from Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia y Tecnología. Her most recent publications and conference lectures focus on effective pedagogical practices in bilingual education, the use of technology, and empowerment pedagogy practices in higher education.

Hop On, Hop Off! A City Tour In The English Class

Rosberly López Montero
Universidad de Costa Rica, Sede del Pacífico
ros_ber_ly@yahoo.es

Resumen: Este trabajo tiene como objetivo compartir una estrategia didáctica en la enseñanza del inglés, puesta en práctica en una clase de la Sede del Pacífico de la Universidad de Costa Rica. Dicha estrategia involucra el desarrollo de una gira académica alrededor de la ciudad incorporando la estructura gramatical en estudio: la voz pasiva. Esta gira en particular se llevó a cabo siguiendo el concepto de buses de turismo tipo *hop on-hop off* en el cual se hacen distintas paradas en los lugares emblemáticos de la ciudad. Los resultados de esta experiencia educativa resaltan la relevancia de aplicar |diferentes estrategias didácticas en la clase de idiomas así como los efectivos positivos de experimentar una lección fuera del aula.

Palabras clave: Inglés, giras académicas, estrategia didáctica, innovación, lengua extranjera.

Abstract: This presentation is aimed at sharing a didactic strategy developed as part of an English as a Foreign Language class at the Pacific Regional Center of Universidad de Costa Rica. This strategy involves the use of field trips around the city incorporating the grammar structure under study, namely passive voice. Particularly, this field trip was developed following the concept of hop on-hop off bus city tours, visiting different city landmarks and important sites. The outcomes for this teaching experience highlight the relevance of using different teaching strategies in the language class, and the positive effect of experiencing a lesson outside the classroom.

Keywords: English, field trips, didactic strategy, innovation, foreign language.

1. Introduction

Teaching is a difficult profession, yet tremendously inspiring. As all teachers probably agree, to plan a creative class is one of the main challenges for all teachers, and it is even more challenging for those who teach would-be teachers.

When it comes to teaching future educators, not only do we need to focus on the subject matter, but also on how we facilitate our students to create their own knowledge and awaken their learning spirit. Hence, a careful planning of teaching strategies, although probably time-consuming, will bring about great results.

Similarly, a language class requires specific characteristics that other subjects may not because it is all about developing linguistic skills, which requires constant practice that is better gained through interaction in genuine communicative contexts. However, when it comes to English as a Foreign Language that is quite a demanding task. With this in mind, a language professor needs to be in continuous search for ideas for having students interact and practice the language in and outside the classroom.

A didactic strategy will be reviewed in the following lines. Hopefully, such a strategy will be of good use for those fellow educators who want to implement a different class with the content/grammar target in use, or otherwise change it to be carried out with other contents.

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2. Context

This teaching strategy was developed with a group of freshmen students of the course Inglés Integrado II LM-1002 from the Pacific Regional Center of Universidad de Costa Rica, doing their major in English Teaching. The group was made up of 24 students with ages ranging from 18 to 30 years old, both men and women.

As it is usual in regional campuses, students are not only from the region where the university is located but from different areas of the country as well. In fact, most of the students in this particular group were not from the Pacific Region.

The class was planned under the grammar content of the passive voice and the content target of *"How can we make cities better places to live?"* from Chapter 8 of the book QSkills for Success 3 Reading and Writing. The purpose was to reinforce the grammar structure through speaking.

3. Justification

Many times, when teaching grammar we tend to find ourselves following a similar lesson pattern, which makes many of our students complain about how boring grammar is. However, this does not have to be so. Through cooperative teaching, language instructors can share different ideas based on successful strategies they have used in their classrooms that help innovate grammar lessons, among other aspects.

The strategy detailed here produced great results. The main elements that support it and help comprehend it better are presented below.

What are hop on, hop off tours?
According to Travel Industry Dictionary, a hop-on-hop-off bus tour is a type of tourist bus or tram that follows a circular route with fixed stops through a city, and that allows paying passengers unlimited travel for a day (or some other period of time) with the freedom to disembark at any stop and reboard another bus or tram to continue their journey. Also referred to as "step on step off." Taken from http://www.travel-industry-dictionary.com/hop-on-hop-off.html

Teaching strategy
According to Tobón (2006), a teaching strategy involves all the techniques and activities that make a specific learning goal possible. Moreover, the strategy used may vary depending on the subject matter and even on the content under study. In other words, there are no rules for the number nor the type of activities used, as they will be determined by the educational purpose that guides the class. Thus, they might be held in groups or individually, task-based, teacher oriented, student oriented or a combination of those. A teaching strategy is composed of a series of steps that will guide your students through the path of knowledge, allowing them to reinforce what they have practiced.

Additionally, López (2012) claims that for a strategy to be successful, it is necessary to consider the participants' characteristics as well as those from the target subject. This is due to the fact that no strategy will have the same effect if used with different students but in the same course, or in a different course but with other students. This is because every group of students is unique and portrays particular characteristics depending on likes, interests, major, age, among other aspects. Similarly, even when having the same group in another course, it will require teaching modifications depending on the course's specific characteristics.

Delgado and Solano (2009, p. 4) highlight a number of elements that constitute a teaching strategy. These are:
• The teacher
• The students
• The content or subject matter
• The learning context
• The methodological or teaching strategies

Therefore, all those elements must be considered and converge when developing a teaching strategy in the classroom.

Particularly, the strategy developed in this paper intends to make students aware of the use of passive voice in an active manner, so they can use the knowledge in a language context.

Field trips in the classroom
According to Gutiérrez and Rojas (2014), field trips constitute a methodological strategy in which knowledge built in the classroom converges with that created when facing in-context situations – something challenging for both students and teachers.

Far from being just a way to have fun and get out of the classroom, field trips must be carefully planned and organized in advance, guided by clear specific objectives that support the purposes of the course. For Córdoba (2008), these types of activities must be systematic: objectives must be set, content has to be course-related, and pre and post activities need to be planned.

For all of the above, taking students out of the classroom every now and then will benefit them in their learning process and increase their motivation to learn.

4. Activities
This didactic strategy was developed during a three-hour session following a serious of moments, which are detailed below:

First moment: Presentation
As a first step, it was important to present students with the grammar content, namely the passive voice. First, the passive voice structure was presented in class, and students made various written exercises to strengthen their knowledge and these were reviewed as a team with the instructor's help. After this, oral drills were done in pairs for reinforcement; additionally, students completed a few written exercises also for reinforcement purposes.

Second moment: City tour!
Students were taken to a tour around downtown Puntarenas in the university van. They were asked to pretend they were international tourists visiting the city for the first time so they could only interact with each other in English.

The main language purpose in this class was to use the grammar structure under study. Therefore, their main task was to ask questions about the places using the passive voice. Everyone was asked to make at least three different interventions using the passive voice during the tour either in the form of a question or a sentence.

The instructor's role was that of the tourist guide. She was interactive, talkative, and would make jokes all through the presentation of the tour using the grammar structures as many times as possible to describe the places visited.

As a hop on-hop off bus tour, the participants received the information of some places from the van and in other cases, they had the opportunity to hop off and visit the place, and take pictures after having heard the explanation and having intervened.
These were the places included in the tour/class:

- Victoria Park
- Puntarenas former City Hall
- Puntarenas Cathedral
- Casa de la Cultura
- Jose Marti High School
- Lito Perez Stadium
- Chalia Palacios Building
- Puntarenas Light House
- Paseo de los Turistas
- Los kioskitos
- Puntarenas Cruise Deck

At the end of the tour, in the final stop, students had the opportunity to have an ice cream and have a group photo, which was later e-mailed to them with the date of the event so they would keep it as a souvenir.

Third moment: Evaluation
Back in the van, the "tourists" were asked questions to review what was spoken in the tour, eliciting answers with the passive voice so they would go over both the content and the grammar structure. In addition, they were asked questions to learn what they thought of the activity, still in the mood of a city tour: students as tourists, teacher as tourist guide, which provided insights for the instructor to see what she could do better next time and see what type of structure needed to be reinforced.

To finish the tour, one picture of the city was raffled among participants as an award for an excellent, active participation.

Possible variations:
If not possible to have a vehicle to go around the city, teachers can plan a tour inside the campus with different stations.
Also, instructor can use technological devices. If inside the classroom (maybe it is a rainy day outside), students can look for the most representative images of their hometown and give themselves a short city tour to their classmates.

5. Materials
Resources needed during this session:

- Copies with different drilling exercises
- A van or some other vehicle
- A microphone, megaphone or a loud voice
- A small souvenir to give away at the end (up to the teacher's creativity)

6. Conclusions
Many teachers develop teaching strategies on a daily basis, although some of them would not even recognize them as such. What is important is to understand that for a teaching strategy to be successful, teachers must consider their students' and courses characteristics, and the objective they are aiming for. Clearly, it does not necessarily

need to involve a lot of fancy materials, but patience and love for what they do so as to do a careful planning.

Additionally, for the strategy to be innovative it simply needs to be different from what we as teachers are used to doing in our classrooms. Students will appreciate it and that will be evident through their response to the class.

After this experience, it was worth noting how many students did not know the history of the places presented. In some cases, they would not even know some of the places existed. This was an important outcome since it allows them to connect to their city – for some their home town, and for some others, their provisional home.

More importantly, language is produced spontaneously. When placing themselves in a communicative situation outside the classroom in which they are not being graded, they feel less pressured due to the fact that in a classroom activity everyone is watching them and have a certain amount of time to intervene. In addition, the structures come out more naturally. However, that same spontaneity makes them make some mistakes, allowing the teacher to see what the weakest areas are.

This strategy allowed for participation, for interaction among students in a stress-free environment, outside the classroom. This is a valuable learning experience for both students and teachers. Not only does it provide a different opportunity to practice the language, but also a chance to see the students enjoy the class you planned with so much love and effort. Priceless.

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8. Biography

Rosberly López Montero. *Licenciatura* Degree in English Teaching. Masters' degree in Linguistics. Teacher and researcher at Universidad de Costa Rica, Pacific Regional Campus. Coordinator of the Outreach Program "Languages for International Communication". Areas of interest: English Teaching and Language Acquisition.

Meaningful activities using IPA following the CEFR principles

Veronica Oguilve
Universidad Técnica Nacional
voguilve@utn.ac.cr

Resumen: Después de observar las actividades usadas para enseñar pronunciación en clases para adultos jóvenes en una universidad pública, es claro que el enfoque utilizado principalmente es el audio-lingüístico acompañado de algunas actividades del enfoque comunicativo. De acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo, nuestro contexto requiere que los estudiantes desarrollen una variedad de competencias para desarrollar una tarea. Entonces, los enfoques enfocados en la Acción, como el Task-Based Approach, deben ser utilizados. Los docentes deben diseñar tareas similares a la vida real que requieran desarrollar la competencia lingüística, la cual incluye la subcategoría de competencia fonológica, junto con la competencia sociolingüística y pragmática.

Palabras clave: Alfabeto fonético internacional (IPA), pronunciación, Marco Común Europeo, enfoque de tareas, competencias, planeamiento.

Abstract: After observing the activities used to teach pronunciation in young adult classes in a public university, it is clear that the main approach used is the Audio-lingual method accompanied by a few Communicative Language Teaching activities. According to the European Framework, our context requires students to develop a wide range of competences to perform a task. Therefore, action oriented approaches such the Task-Based Approach must be used. Teachers must design real-life tasks that require developing the linguistic competence, which includes the subcategory of phonological competence, together with the sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

Keywords: International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), pronunciation, Common European Framework, task-based approach, competences, planning.

1. Introduction

Teaching pronunciation is a hot topic not only for English teaching professionals but also for the general public. Whether pronunciation should be taught by native speakers or if having non-native teachers would be as effective in an EFL/ESL classroom is quite a controversial issue. Back in the old days, students were expected to pronounce the target language as native-like as possible. Students needed more that an intelligible pronunciation and foreign accents were not tolerated, particularly by employers (Abercrombie, 1949, Gilbert, 1980, Morley, 1991, as cited in Munro and Derwing, 1999, p. 286). Therefore, the Audio-lingual Method was popular for teaching because its emphasis was in correct native-speaker pronunciation, repetition drills were used as main activities in class, and there was no tolerance to pronunciation mistakes. Native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) were in demand and audio tapes and CDs recorded by them were widely used. More recently, Walkinshaw (2012) stated that for East and Southeast Asia "NESTs were the ideal model for language production. Their speech

was held up as the gold standard of grammatical correctness and perfect pronunciation."
The same perception was identified in other contexts where there were international students (Pacek, Benke & Medgyes's, 2005 as cited in Walkinshaw, 2012, p. 5).

A common worry was that teachers' vices in pronunciation would be passed on to students, causing an inadequate learning of the target language. However, it is necessary to be aware that times change and language use requirements and methodologies change as well. In today's globalized world, "English is now used more as a lingua franca between speakers of English as a second/foreign language – including roughly 800 million users in Asia – than for non-native speakers to communicate with native speakers (Bolton, 2008, as cited in Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012, p. 2). There has also been an increase of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) around the world. Great emphasis is now placed on speaking English for communication, putting aside the notion of a "perfect" pronunciation. If EFL/ESL speakers are intelligible and capable of expressing their ideas clearly, having an accent will not be a major issue. The questions that arise are:

a) How is pronunciation taught nowadays in a public university context with young adults?

b) What is the new standard for (young) adult learners regarding English pronunciation?

c) What are the recommended methodologies and activities for teaching pronunciation according to the Common European Framework?

2. Context

The sample is composed of students whose average age is 20 years old. However, there are students at both ends of the continuum, for example, 17 years old and 38 years old. They take three pronunciation courses in their first year: a) Basic Pronunciation b) Vowels and c) Consonants.

According to the curriculum, students start at an A2 level of the Common European Framework, and finish their first diploma with a B1. Many of them reach the desired level, while others struggle with pronunciation due to a lack of real-life exposure to the use of English. Students prepare for using the new methodology basically through a review of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

3. Justification

In order to establish which approaches and methodologies were being used, a non-structured interview was done to some teachers from a public university. The main topics discussed were: a) the course book and complementary materials; and b) teaching activities used for young adults.

The books used were "English Pronunciation for Spanish Speakers" by Paulette Dale, and "Accurate English" by Rebecca M. Dauer. Both books describe how to produce vowels and consonants correctly by providing the spelling patterns, and offering controlled practice such as minimal pair contrast exercises. Teachers use two main methodologies, which are the Audio-lingual Method (ALM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). For the first method, students basically listen to isolated words, have repetition drills and do exercises that require them to discriminate specific sounds, and read dialogues and passages aloud. For the CLT, students do information gap activities, participate in role-plays and discuss different topics. Many students practice the language in "prefabricated" situations and are able to transfer what they know to the real world. They have mastered most of the sounds and are able to

communicate correctly. However, others are able to pronounce words correctly in class, but are unable to use this knowledge to become independent users of the language.

The Common European Framework (2001) has established the standards and suggested an action-oriented approach to language teaching with the purpose of making competent and proficient language learners in the real world. The characteristics of this approach are: a) users and learners of a language are primarily viewed as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action; b) while acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which in itself is able to give them their full meaning (p. 9). In other words, learners must use the language meaningfully in situations outside the classroom; they have to be active participants in their target language community. For this, learners perform tasks that differ from those performed in the CLT. The definition of task performance says that it "is a complex process, therefore, involving the strategic interplay of a range of learner competences and task-related factors. In responding to the demands of a task the language, user or learner activates those general and communicative strategies, which are most efficient for accomplishing the particular task. The user or learner naturally adapts, adjusts and filters task inputs, goals, conditions and constraints to fit his or her own resources, purposes and (in a language learning context) particular learning style". (CEFR, p. 159) In other words, the CEFR suggests that the tasks students perform must include not only the linguistic competence but also the pragmatic, sociolinguistic and intercultural competences among others whenever they use the language, just as native speakers do. Piccardo et al. (2011, p. 23) illustrate the competences in Table 1:

Table 1: Schematic organization of Competences According to the CEFR

General Competences				Communicative Language Competences		
Declarative knowledge	Skills and know how	Existential knowledge	Ability to learn	Linguistic Competences	Sociolinguistic Competences	Pragmatic competences
-knowledge of the world -sociocultural knowledge -intercultural awareness	Practical skills -intercultural skills		Language and communication awareness General phonetic awareness and skills -study skills Heuristic skills	-lexical -grammatical -semantic -phonological -orthographic -orthoepic	-social relations -politeness -conventions -expressions of folk wisdom -register differences -dialect and accent	-discourse competence -functional competence

Piccardo et al. (2011, p. 23)

For a real-life example, we can think of a supermarket scene.

Declarative knowledge/intercultural awareness: People have to wait in line. There is an express lane and you must respect the item limits.

Skills and know-how: Intercultural skills: People are expected to unload their hand basket. It may be annoying for cashiers to do it for you.

Linguistic competence: People have to greet the cashier correctly, with the correct pronunciation and appropriate phrases.

Sociolinguistic competence: People have to be polite and address the cashier with respect. Words like "Ma'am" or "Sir" may be used depending on the person being addressed.

According to the CEFR, a proficient user would be able to perform the task of buying groceries by skillfully integrating these competences.

Problems arise when students have been taught using Audio-lingual Method activities and CLT activities without taking into account the competences. According to the CEFR our current context requires students to integrate different communicative competences and general competences to be proficient when carrying out a task. Even though the activities that will be described have an emphasis on the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), they should not be done in isolation, as we have highlighted before. Therefore, the task-based approach is suggested to make a coherent lesson plan.

4. Activities

The Task-based Approach is action-oriented because it is based on real-life tasks. Therefore, it can be used as the basis for lesson planning.

This is the general format that should be followed. On the left-hand side, Willis & Willis (2007) explain the task cycle; in the middle column, you can see the possible verbs to write objectives; and on the right-hand side, you can find the competences to be included according to the CEFR.

Table 1. Sample lesson principles

Task-based Approach Cycle	Possible objectives	Suggested competences Piccardo et al. (2011, p. 23)
Pre task stage Awareness-raising Activities: Observation, finding out the topic, brainstorming	Identify Recall Understand	□*Pragmatic* □*Sociolinguistic* □*Linguistic* *Knowledge of the vocabulary, and the ability to use it (lexical competence)* □ *Knowledge of the rules and structures, and the ability to use them correctly (grammatical competence)* □ *Organization of meaning (semantic competence)* □*Hearing and producing sounds (phonological competence)* □*The ability to spell correctly (orthographic competence)* □*The ability to read from a written text, pronouncing correctly (orthoepic competence).*
Task Cycle Manipulating the target language: Pair work Activities, Group Work activities and Information-gap Activities	Use Analyze Evaluate Create	Students use the competences they have developed to create a real-life product. (something tangible that an audience can see/ hear) As explained in the Task-based Approach, students are given a real life task, no at pedagogical task. E.g. Recording a podcast to be accessed just by the teacher is a pedagogical task. Recording a podcast to be shared in a real open online space to be accessed by the community is a real life task.
Post task Real life application Reading activities Listening to lectures		

Coming up with a lesson sequence and a task
First, the teacher has to think about an actual event in which spoken language is required. Then think about the required competences to perform the task (pragmatic, sociolinguistic and linguistic). For each competence, the teacher develops a pre-task exercise in the pre-task stage of the lesson.

Brainstorming a task and pre-tasks

Video footage/report of an
event
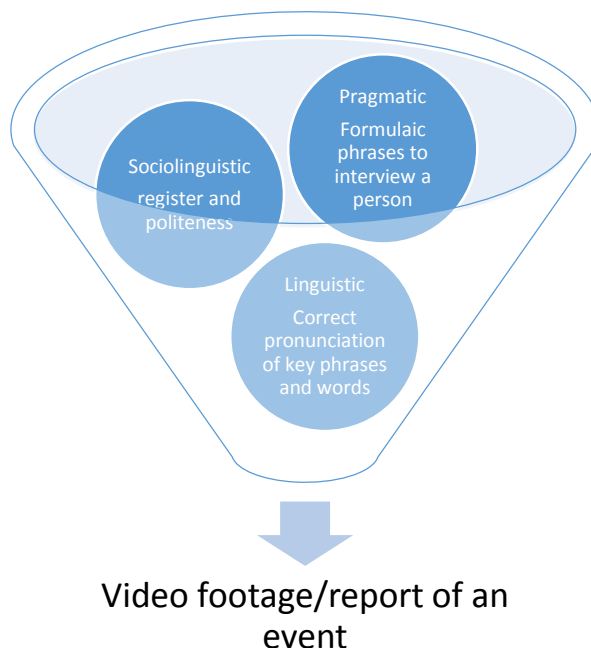
Objective: Students will be able to describe a cultural event by creating a video journalism footage describing general and specific details.

Warm up: students and teacher discuss different types of journalism (print, photo, broadcast, multimedia journalism).

Pre-task 1. Students watch a video about how to create video footage professionally https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlBjqpwGCts

They have to take notes. The teacher asks them to use a specific dictionary online to find words that they find difficult to pronounce. As a whole class, students share the information they wrote and at the end, the IPA transcription of the words they learned.

> Students can learn not only the technical aspects such as using different camera angles in their video, but also how to become autonomous when it comes to overcoming their pronunciation difficulties.

Pre-task 2: Students are given a handout that has important phrases journalists use to interview event attendees. The phrases have been transcribed using IPA. They have to discover the "secret" phrases. They discover the phases and practice their pronunciation with the teacher.

E.g. /ˈwɒt də ju ˈθɪŋk əˈbaʊt…/ What do you think about…?

Task: Students have to create a 5-minute video, upload it to YouTube and share the video with the class/school on Facebook. It should include:
- A brief Description of the school event
- A short Interview to one presenter
- A short Interview to one attendee
- A description of other things that happen in the activity place

Post task: The teacher checks the videos and comes to class prepared with practice to correct the most salient mistakes regarding the pragmatic, sociolinguistic and linguistic competence (with emphasis in pronunciation).

It is important to know that the teacher has to devise tasks that are appropriate for the

students' level, context and resources, and provide opportunities for them to participate in the real world using the target language.

The CEFR (2001, p. 58) suggests the following speaking activities for oral production:

a) public address (information, instructions, etc.)
b) addressing audiences (speeches at public meetings, university lectures, sermons, entertainment, sports commentaries, sales presentations, etc.)
c) reading a written text aloud
d) speaking from notes, or from a written text or visual aids (diagrams, pictures, charts, etc.)
e) acting out a rehearsed role
f) speaking spontaneously
g) singing.

For each of the activities listed above, I will suggest specific tasks that may be further developed in/outside the class. Here is a list of tasks based on the previous activities

a) public address (information, instructions, etc.)

Task	Materials
1. Safety instruction video to inform other students about safety procedures in case of natural phenomenon, or instructions when using devices or playing video games.	Smart phone with video camera https://goo.gl/OGcOEK
2. Radio stations broadcasting interesting information and commercials.	Smart phone/digital voice recorder/tablet https://soundcloud.com/veroguilve/sets/student-radio-stations https://goo.gl/hvXa6I
3. Podcast about topics that interest students.	

b) addressing audiences (speeches at public meetings, university lectures, sermons, entertainment, sports commentaries, sales presentations, etc.)

1. information stands to explain a product students have made (e.g. food samples)	Images, food samples, etc.

c) reading a text out loud

1. original poems to be read to an audience or recorded and uploaded	Smart phone/digital voice recorder/tablet http://www.wnyc.org/summer-poetry-challenge-audio/
2. Student made IPA transcriptions T-shirts for students to use in different contexts and have others read them.	https://goo.gl/6fC7sG https://goo.gl/K5feb2

d) speaking from notes, or from a written text or visual aids (diagrams, pictures, charts, etc.)

1. Ignite talks	Computer and projector

(activity suggested by Cindy Rodriguez, ILE Sede Central)	http://www.ignitetalks.io
2. Readers theater	

e) acting out a rehearsed role

1. Short films to be uploaded to YouTube	Smart phone with video camera
2. TV shows	https://goo.gl/uwWdaH

f) speaking spontaneously

1. Interview podcasts	Smart phone/digital voice recorder/tablet

g) singing

1. choral karaoke singing to be uploaded to you tube.	Smart phone/digital voice recorder/tablet

5. Conclusions

There are countless tasks that can be done in class that can be shared in different online spaces. Students will be given the opportunity to express themselves, use the language meaningfully, and participate in the target language community. The teachers' responsibility is to prepare them to perform well when completing these tasks. This involves careful lesson planning. The lesson sequence requires teachers to investigate and come up with pre-tasks that include different competences.

It is not necessary for teachers to be native speakers, but it is mandatory that they know the basics of the International Phonetic Alphabet. There are many resources they can use online to help them, such as online dictionaries, IPA transcription websites, books etc.

One limitation is that teachers and students usually associate projects like these to graded assignments, but this is not the case here. We have to change our students' mindset regarding this topic. They will complete the projects to be competent in the language, not to be given a number (grade) that will mean nothing in the real world.

Due to the risks associated with uploading videos and audios online, it is necessary to ask students for their written consent or have students create anonymous videos.

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7. Biography

Veronica Oguilve Araya is a TESOL instructor at the Universidad Técnica Nacional (UTN) and Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED). She holds a Bachelor's Degree in English Teaching, a *Licenciatura* in English and a Master's Degree in TESOL from the University of Costa Rica. Her research interests include the use of the Common European Framework and implementation of Web 2.0 tools to support teaching and learning.

WebQuests: An Excellent Teaching Tool

Marlon Pérez Pérez
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Costa Rica
maperez@itcr.ac.cr

Resumen: El internet se ha extendido tanto y es casi omnipresente que se puede acceder en una gran cantidad de lugares a través de una serie de dispositivos tecnológicos, como computadoras portátiles, tabletas y teléfonos inteligentes. Por lo tanto ha permeado todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas y las escuelas no han sido la excepción. Desde principios de 1990, los maestros han visto el gran potencial de la World Wide Web y han tratado de incorporarla en sus clases. Uno de esos usos es el modelo WebQuest propuesto por Bernie Dodge en 1995. Este modelo ha sido implementado, documentado e investigado en todo el mundo y es por ello que este taller busca facilitar los conceptos básicos sobre las WebQuests, revisar cómo se han utilizado en las clases de la enseñanza de una lengua y, finalmente, ofrecer una guía fácil de seguir sobre cómo diseñar WebQuests que realmente impulsen el proceso de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: WebQuests, Internet en la clase, Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación, aprendizaje de un idioma, EFL/ESL.

Abstract: Internet is so widespread and ubiquitous that it can now be accessed almost anywhere through various technological devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Thus, it has permeated all aspects of our lives, and schools have not been the exception. Since the early 1990s, teachers have seen the great potential of the World Wide Web and have tried to incorporate it into their classes. One of those uses is the WebQuest model proposed by Bernie Dodge in 1995. This model has been implemented, documented and researched worldwide. For this reason, this workshop aims at providing the fundamentals of WebQuests, reviewing how they have been used in language classrooms, and finally offering an easy-to-follow guide on how to design WebQuests that actually boost the learning process.

Keywords: WebQuests, internet in the classroom, Information and communication technologies, language learning, EFL/ESL.

1. Introduction

Teachers are resourceful individuals who in their creative process make use of everything that within their reach to inspire their students and – most importantly lead – them to discovering and acquiring new knowledge. Thus, when this great pool of information that is the internet became accessible to more people, and specifically in schools, many teachers saw an immense opportunity and started using it in their classes. A pioneer in the use of the internet for educational purposes is Bernie Dodge of San Diego State University, who proposed the WebQuest model in 1995 with the help of San Diego State University/ Pacific Bell Fellow Tom March. In his groundbreaking paper, Dodge (1995) gave some guidelines for designing these instructional activities, and described the kind of learning attributes they possess. In this paper, Dodge defines a WebQuest as "an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which some or all the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet" (para. 1). The main goal of this type of instructional activity is to give learners an opportunity to research

about something of their interest, while focusing on the completion of a real-life task in which they have to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. Lamb and Teclehaimanot (2005) have emphasized the role of WebQuests in the integration of the internet into the classroom where a well-designed WebQuest can lead to evaluation, analysis, and transformation of information. These authors have also stressed that these instructional activities go beyond a simple assortment of facts and opinions, to a more meaningful and authentic learning experience where high-order thinking skills are fostered. Therefore, not surprisingly, WebQuests have become very popular among educators who are committed to their pupils' learning process. Now the issue at hand is learning how we can use this instructional activity correctly to maximize its potential and positively influence our students' language learning process. In order to do that, we need to know what they are, how they are designed and implemented, what their characteristics for language learning are, and if there is an effective, proven way to design WebQuests that truly inspire learners and promote authentic learning experiences.

This interactive presentation aims at answering these questions by first exploring the fundamentals of WebQuests, reviewing how they have been used in language classrooms and finally, offering an easy-to-follow guideline for WebQuest design.

2. Context

WebQuests have been used in a large variety of classrooms to teach different subjects with different age groups and for different purposes. To verify this, it only takes a quick internet search and thousands of hits for different WebQuests will come up. Furthermore, scholars from all around the globe have explored its effects in the language learning process. For example, in Malaysia, Noordin, Samad, and Razali (2008) designed, implemented, and investigated WebQuests in an TESL undergraduate course with a group of would-be English teachers, to identify its practicality in the English language classroom. In Colombia, Grisales-Orozco and Mora-Marín (2011) explored how WebQuests could help the English learning process of fifth graders in a public school. In Taiwan, Tun-Whei (2007) researched how a WebQuest writing instruction program affected Taiwanese EFL undergraduate learners' writing performance, capturing, and perception of web-resource integrated language learning. In Greece, Popota (2011) conducted an action research to determine whether WebQuests helped acquire new literacies and develop high order thinking skills in fifth and sixth graders in a Greek primary school. In addition, in Turkey, Kocoglu (2010) examined how WebQuests could improve Turkish EFL university students' reading and writing skills.

As can be seen from the previous examples, a well-designed WebQuest can be used to teach learners of different age groups, and with different backgrounds, subjects, skills, and language ability. However, it is important to highlight that for a WebQuest to shed the expected results, a series of criteria must be met concerning both the WebQuest design, and its participants and users.

In regards to the design, several authors (Abbit & Ophus, 2008; Dodge, 1995; March, 2003; Noordin, Samad, & Razali, 2008; Strickland, 2005) agree that a successful WebQuest usually has most of the following parts, although there is no prescribed format: a) an introduction that sets the purpose, links classroom content to real life, provides the background information, and engages learners in the task; b) a task that is interesting, doable, and reflects an authentic, real-life assignment; c) resources which must be relevant, high-quality, and authoritative; d) the steps providing

learners with the process they need to follow to complete the activity; e) the evaluation to give learners the criteria in the form of a rubric or checklist of what is expected of their work; and d) a conclusion which aims at summarizing what students have learned from completing the activity.

In terms of the characteristics of participants, whether as creators or users, they all need to be computer literate and must have a technological device with internet access (Abbit & Ophus, 2008; Alshumaimeri & Almasri, 2012; Leung & Unal, 2013, March, 2003). Since this is a lesson where most of the resources are online, being able to use a computer and search for information online are a must. Moreover, Leung & Unal, (2013) warn that WebQuests are not appropriate especially for learners with no or very little reading abilities. They also state that educators with no or limited computer skills get frustrated and often fail when attempting to create their first WebQuests. Thus, it is clear that designing and implementing WebQuests is not for everyone, although those who have used them in their classroom claim that it is worth the effort and time.

3. Activities

This interactive presentation involves participants in an internet quest in which they will work in groups of three to complete the following WebQuests: http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=308868. The idea behind this is that by experiencing firsthand what a WebQuest is and how it works, participants will gain a better understanding of this teaching tool. As they complete the WebQuest, participants will be exploring, analyzing, comparing, synthesizing, and summarizing information while completing a real-life task. This hands-on methodology will hopefully encourage them to reflect on the possibility of creating and implementing WebQuests in their own classes.

In the introduction of the WebQuest, participants are asked a series of questions, informed about what they will be learning while completing the different tasks, and then instructed on what it is expected from them at the end. The instructor will take the first 10 minutes of the presentation to guide participants on the methodology and dynamics of the workshop, as well as to clarify any doubts.

In the task section, they will be instructed that the ultimate task is to design a WebQuest for one of their classes, so they will need to complete a series of assignments grouped in three phases: 1 exploration, 2 comparison and synthesis, and 3 creation. In phase 1, they will have to explore and look for different information about WebQuests in the website created by Bernie Dodge: www.webquest.org. They will be given 20 minutes to learn what WebQuests are, what characteristics they have, and how to design them. Each group member will be assigned a role to complete the different assignments and worksheets. In phase 2, they will have 20 minutes to compare four different examples of WebQuests developed by language teachers. Group members will analyze each WebQuest from a different perspective using the role assigned. In phase 3, participants will have 30 minutes to choose one common English language function and design a WebQuest that they could use in their classes. Finally, in the last 10 minutes of the workshop, they will have the opportunity to share their thoughts about how they could use this teaching tool in their classes.

4. Materials

This WebQuest activity is to be developed in groups of three. Group members will have to take one of these roles:

The secretary: you are in charge of taking notes from the information your partners search. You will be summarizing and completing the requested information in the worksheet.

The web surfer: you are in charge of looking for the information requested from the different websites provided, and analyze it to pass it on to the group's secretary and timekeeper.

The timekeeper: your job is to keep the task on track so that it is completed on time. You are also responsible of helping the secretary summarize and paraphrase the information found to answer the questions in your own words.

Once the roles have been assigned, participants will start with the task. In phase 1 of the WebQuest, participants will explore Bernie Dodge website: www.webquest.org, read Bernie Dodge (1995) paper *Some thoughts about WebQuests* from this link: http://webquest.org/sdsu/about_webquests.html, and watch these videos: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4rel5qOPvU http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cyht-ehlAWYhttp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrljNfEnSk0http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHZOh-KoEF4

They will need to answer the questions below using their own words.

Instructions: go to the following websites and videos www.webquest.org http://webquest.org/sdsu/about_webquests.html http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4rel5qOPvU http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cyht-ehlAWY http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrljNfEnSk0 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHZOh-KoEF4 and look for the information needed to answer the questions below. You must answer them in your own words.	
1. What is a WebQuest?	
2. What are the different parts of WebQuest? What information goes in each part?	a. b. c. d. e. f.
3. What element or elements must WebQuests have so that they actually propel thinking skills?	
4. What are the steps to designing a WebQuest?	

In phase 2, participants will compare and analyze these WebQuests developed by language teachers:
1. Verb Tenses: http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=513

2. I'm a pronoun.: http://zunal.com/introduction.php?w=283
3. Vamos a Costa Rica!: http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=178966
4. Bioengineering Food - A Harvest of Fear?: http://zunal.com/tasks.php?w=119882

In order to do so, each member of the group will have to take on a different role from the ones below:

The Efficiency Expert: you value time a great deal. You believe that too much time is wasted in today's classrooms on unfocused activity and learners not knowing what they should be doing at a given moment. To you, a good WebQuest is one that delivers the most learning bang for the buck. If it's a short, unambitious activity to teach something minor, well then, you like it. If it's a long-term activity, it had better deliver a deep understanding of the topic covered, in your view.

The thinking skills expert: higher level thinking is everything to you. There's too much emphasis on factual recall in schools today. The only justification for bringing technology into schools is if it opens up the possibility that students will have to analyze information, synthesize multiple perspectives, and take a stance on the merits of something. You also value sites that allow for some creative expression on the part of the learner.

The team work expert: to you, the best learning activities are those where students learn to work together. WebQuests that force collaboration and create a need for discussion and consensus are the best in your view. If a WebQuest may be done by a student working alone, it leaves you cold.

Once roles have been assigned, groups will analyze the WebQuests provided focusing on the perspective of the role given, and using the understanding gained about WebQuests up until that point to complete the worksheet below.

Instructions: From the perspective of the role assigned and your understanding of WebQuests, you need to analyze the following WebQuests. First, you will have 10 minutes to do this individually. Then you will use 10 minutes to share your analysis with the other members of the group, and then as group decide on the best WebQuest.		
My role:		
Webquest	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Verb Tenses http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=513		
2. I'm a pronoun. http://zunal.com/introduction.php?w=283		

3. Vamos a Costa Rica! http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=178966		
4. Bioengineering Food - A Harvest of Fear? http://zunal.com/tasks.php?w=119882		

In phase 3, group participants will use their knowledge and understanding of WebQuests to design one that they can use in their classes. First, they will open a free account at http://zunal.com/xregister.php and take a couple of minutes to get familiar with the website. Then they will choose one of these common language functions, and then use the worksheet below to design a WebQuest that meets all the required criteria.

Language functions:
a. Asking for and giving personal information
b. Asking for and giving opinions
c. Making plans
d. Expressing likes and dislikes

Follow these steps and use the guiding questions to create a WebQuest for the language function chosen.

The designing process
1. Select the objectives and outcomes.
2. Choose the language structure, vocabulary, and functions.
3. Match the objectives, outcomes, language structures, vocabulary, and function to a real-life task. Establish this connection in the introduction of the WebQuest.
4. Design a challenging, authentic, relevant, language focused, product-oriented, doable, and motivating task.
5. Look for the resources that students need to complete the tasks.
6. Prepare a step-by-step description of the process needed to complete the task. Each step should provide guidance in the form of timetables, questions, tables, concept maps, graphic organizers, etc.
7. Prepare an evaluation rubric or checklist that contains that criteria used to evaluate the WebQuest. It should reflect on the objectives, outcomes, and language for which the WebQuest was designed.

8. Design some kind of wrap-up activity in which students reflect on their learning as they completed the task.

Steps	Guiding questions	Drafting of ideas
Step 1 Choose the objectives or outcomes	What are the objectives or outcomes that you want your students to accomplish? In other words, what will students be able to do at the end of the WebQuest?	
Step 2 Choose the language, vocabulary, and function	What are the language structures, vocabulary, and function that students need to complete the task and that you as a teacher want them to learn and practice?	
Step 3 Connect your classroom goals with a real-life situation	How are the language structures, vocabulary, and functions used in the real world? How can your goals be linked to a real-life situation? Can you provide some background information? Where, when, how, and why is it important for students to know this?	
Step 4 Choose an authentic, doable, motivating task	What specific product do you want your students to complete? Is this something that they will encounter in the real world? Will your students be able to do it?	
Step 5 Provide the proper guidance or resources needed to complete the task	Will students have access to a set of carefully selected resources? Are all the links and videos working? Do all the resources come from credible sources? Is the information from the links accessible to your students? What do they need to do with this information?	
Step 6 Describe the procedure for completing the task	Can the task be broken into smaller, more manageable sub-tasks? What scaffolding tools can you provide students at each stage of the process? Can you think of ways for guiding students as they progress in the task?	
Step 7 Prepare a rubric or checklist to evaluate the task	What criteria did you decide to use to evaluate the task? Do the criteria reflect on the objectives and outcomes chosen at the beginning of the WebQuest? Are the criteria clear and easy to read for students' self-assessment?	
Step 8 Design a wrap-up activity	Is there a reflection session after completion of the task? Did you allow time for students to talk about what they learned without having the pressure of being evaluated?	

Now as a group, you will analyze your WebQuest using the following criteria to make sure it meets all required criteria:

Title Page	Unacceptable (0)	Acceptable (1)	Target (2)	Score
Title	No title given for the webquest, or selected title is completely irrelevant to the webquest.	Title is given for the webquest, and somewhat relevant to the topic.	Title is given for the webquest, and very relevant to the topic.	
Description	No description given for the webquest, or description is completely irrelevant is very brief.	Webquest description is provided but does not provide adequate summary of webquest.	Webquest description provides a detailed summary of webquest.	
Grade Level	No grade level range is assigned to this webquest, or selected grade level is not appropriate for the webquest.	Grade level range is selected for the webquest and somewhat appropriate for the webquest.	Grade level range is selected for the webquest and very appropriate for the webquest.	
Keywords	No keywords are provided for this webquest, or selected keywords are irrelevant to the webquest.	Keywords are provided for this webquest, and selected keywords are somewhat relevant to the webquest.	Keywords are provided for this webquest, and selected keywords are very relevant to the webquest.	
Introduction	**Unacceptable (0)**	**Acceptable (1)**	**Target (2)**	**Score**
Motivational Effectiveness of Introduction	Introduction is purely factual, with no appeal to learners' interest or a compelling question or problem.	Introduction relates somewhat to the learners' interests and/or describes a compelling question or problem.	Introduction draws the reader into the lesson by relating to the learners' interests or goals and engagingly describes a compelling essential question or problem.	
Task	**Unacceptable (0)**	**Acceptable (1)**	**Target (2)**	**Score**
Clarity of Task	After reading the task, it is still unclear what the end/culminating project of the webquest will be.	The written description of the task adequately describes the end/culminating project, but does not engage the learner.	The written description of the end/culminating product describes clearly the goal of the webquest.	
Task	**Unacceptable (0)**	**Acceptable (1)**	**Target (2)**	**Score**
Cognitive Level of Task	Task does not require synthesis of multiple sources of information (transformative thinking). It is simply collection of information or answers from web.	Task requires synthesis of multiple sources of information (transformative thinking) but is limited to in its significance and engagement.	Task requires synthesis of multiple sources of information (transformative thinking) and it is highly creative, goes beyond memorization, and engaging.	
Cognitive Level of Learners	Task is not realistic, not doable, and not appropriate to the developmental level and other individual differences (age, social/culture, and individual differences) of students with whom the webquest will be used.	Task is realistic, doable, but limited in its appropriateness to the developmental level and other individual differences (age, social/culture, and individual differences) of students with whom the webquest will be used.	Task is realistic, doable, and appropriate to the developmental level and other individual differences (age, social/culture, and individual differences) of students with whom the webquest will be used.	
Process	**Unacceptable (0)**	**Acceptable (1)**	**Target (2)**	**Score**
Clarity of Process	Process page is not divided into sections or pages where each group/team or student would know exactly where they were in the process and what to do next. Process is not clearly organized.	Process page is divided into sections or pages where each group/team or student would know exactly where they were in the process and what to do next. Process is organized with specific directions that also allow choice/creativity.	Process page is divided into sections or pages where each group/team or student would know exactly where they were in the process and what to do next. Every step is clearly stated.	
Scaffolding of Process	Activities are not related to each other and/or to the accomplishment of the task.	Some of the activities do not relate specifically to the accomplishment of the task.	Activities are clearly related and designed from basic knowledge to higher level thinking.	
Collaboration	The process provides only few steps, no collaboration or separate roles required.	Some separate tasks or roles assigned. More complex activities required.	Different roles are assigned to help students understand different perspectives and/or share responsibility in accomplishing the task.	
Resources	**Unacceptable (0)**	**Acceptable (1)**	**Target (2)**	**Score**
Relevance and Quality of Resources	Resources (web links, files etc.) are too limited, too many and/or too irrelevant for students to accomplish the task.	Resources (web links, files etc.) are sufficient but some resources are not appropriate (do not add anything new or contains irrelevant resources).	There is a clear and meaningful connection between all the resources and the information needed for students to accomplish the task. Every resource carries its weight.	
Quality of Resources	Resources (web links, files, etc.) do not lead to credible/trustable information. They do not encourage reflection such as interactivity, multiple perspectives, multimedia, current information such as use of googlemap, interactive databases, timelines, photo gallery, games/puzzles etc.	Resources (web links, files, etc.) are credible but they only provide facts. They do not encourage reflection such as interactivity, multiple perspectives, multimedia, current information such as use of googlemap, interactive databases, timelines, photo gallery, games/puzzles etc.	Resources (web links, files, etc.) are credible and provide enough meaningful information for students to think deeply with interactivity, multiple perspectives, multimedia, current information such as use of googlemap, interactive databases, timelines, photo gallery, games/puzzles etc.	
Organization of Resources	Resources are not organized or listed in a meaningful way (by topic, section, group or individual task). They are rather thrown all over with no reference. Students would not know exactly what resources are for what purposes (no description, or labels).	Resources are organized/listed in a meaningful way (by topic, section, group or individual task) but still some students might be confused as to know exactly what resources are for what purposes (no description, or labels given for each resource).	Resources are organized/listed in a meaningful way (by topic, section, group or individual task). Students would know exactly what resources are for what purposes (description, or labels given for each resource).	

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Evaluation	Unacceptable (0)	Acceptable (1)	Target (2)	Score
Clarity of Evaluation	Criteria for success are not described. Students have no idea how they or their work will be evaluated/judged.	Criteria for success are stated but webquest does not apply multiple assessment strategies (use of rubric or checklist, reflection of project, pre-post assessments, quiz etc.).	Criteria for success are clearly stated and webquest applies multiple assessment strategies (use of rubric or checklist, reflection of project, pre-post assessments, quiz etc.).	
Relevancy of Evaluation	No connection between the learning goals and standards to be accomplished at the end of webquest and evaluation process. The evaluation instruments does not measure what students must know and be able to do to accomplish the task.	Limited connection between the learning goals and standards to be accomplished at the end of webquest and evaluation process. The evaluation instruments does not clearly measure what students must know and be able to do to accomplish the task.	Strong connection between the learning goals and standards to be accomplished at the end of webquest and evaluation process. The evaluation instrument clearly measures what students must know and be able to do to accomplish the task.	

Conclusion	Unacceptable (0)	Acceptable (1)	Target (2)	Score
Summary	No conclusion is given to present a summary of what was/were learned at the end of the activity or lesson.	Conclusion is given but does not give enough information of what was/were learned at the end of the activity or lesson.	Conclusion is given but with detailed information of what was/were learned at the end of the activity or lesson.	
Further Study and Transformative Learning	No further message, idea, question or resources are given to encourage learners to extend their learning and transfer to other topics.	Provides a message, idea, question or/and additional resources to encourage learners to extend their learning but it is not clear how the students' new knowledge can transfer to other topics.	Provides a message, idea, question or/and additional resources to encourage learners to extend their learning and clearly relates how the students' new knowledge can transfer to other topics.	

Overall Design	Unacceptable (0)	Acceptable (1)	Target (2)	Score
Use of Graphics	Inappropriate selection and use of graphic elements (irrelevant, distracting and/or overuse of images.). The graphics are not supportive of the webquest and do not give students information or perspectives not otherwise available.	Appropriate selection and use of graphic elements (relevant, not distracting and/or not overused) but the graphics are not supportive of the webquest and do not give students information or perspectives not otherwise available.	Appropriate selection and use of graphic elements (relevant, not distracting and/or not overused). The graphics are supportive of the webquest and give students information or perspectives not otherwise available.	
Spelling and Grammar	There are serious spelling and/or grammar errors in this webquest that distract from the meaning and don't model appropriate language.	There are some minor spelling or grammar errors but they are very limited and do not distract from the meaning.	The spelling and grammar has been checked carefully and there are no errors.	
Consistent Look and Feel	The webquest does not have a consistent look and feel (fonts, colors etc.) and does not provide consistent working navigation from page to page.	The webquest has somewhat consistent look and feel (fonts, colors etc.) and provides somewhat consistent working navigation from page to page.	The webquest has a consistent look and feel (fonts, colors etc.) and provides consistent working navigation from page to page.	
Working Links and Use of Tables	There are serious number of broken links, misplaced or missing images, badly sized tables etc. that makes webquest ineffective to navigate.	There are some broken links, misplaced or missing images, badly sized tables but does not make webquest ineffective to navigate.	No mechanical problems noted.	

5. Conclusions

Although it is foolish to think that in a 90-minute workshop participants will master the art of creating a WebQuest, it is the presenter's hope that at the end of this interactive presentation participants will leave with the fundamental knowledge and tools to start creating and implementing their own WebQuests in class. The methodology used here provides an opportunity for gaining a more concrete understanding of and insight into this teaching tool. Thus, it is believed that it will motivate participants to incorporate this teaching tool in their classes, thereby taking advantage of the great pool of free resources that the internet provides for language learning. Furthermore, since the design of a WebQuest is not very different from that of a good lesson plan, hopefully participants will not be afraid of using this teaching tool.

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7. Biography

Marlon Perez obtained a Master's Degree in TESOL from the University of Northern Iowa in 2005. He has been an English teacher since 1996 and has worked both in Costa Rica and in the United States of America as an English instructor. He has also been a trainer for in-service MEP English teachers and has given presentations and workshops at several conferences. He currently works for the ITCR as an English teacher.

Engaging in the Pronunciation House

Roger Ramirez Draughn
Affiliated Faculty at SIT Graduate Institute, USA
rachierd@gmail.com

Resumen: La pronunciación puede ser tanto un reto como una gratificación para los aprendientes de un idioma. La falta de práctica de pronunciación puede inhibir la confianza de los estudiantes y su habilidad para comunicarse más libremente de forma oral. Implementar ejercicios que son efectivos, significativos y atractivos para practicar pronunciación ayudará a los estudiantes a sentirse más capaces y con mayor confianza en su expresión oral. El propósito de esta presentación interactiva es crear un mejor entendimiento de las distintas dimensiones de la pronunciación como una micro-habilidad del idioma inglés. Este taller también busca crear experiencias en las que los participantes puedan vivenciar una variedad de actividades que puedan luego recrear con sus estudiantes para practicar distintos aspectos de la pronunciación. En esta presentación, los participantes experimentarán y reflexionaran acerca de métodos innovadores para aprender y enseñar pronunciación.

Palabras clave: Pronunciación, actividades, expresión oral, reflexión, vivencial.

Abstract: Pronunciation can be both challenging and rewarding for second language learners. A lack of pronunciation practice can inhibit students' confidence and ability to speak more freely as second language learners. Using effective, meaningful and engaging exercises to practice pronunciation will help students become more willing and confident in their speaking. The purpose of this interactive presentation is to create a deeper understanding of the different dimensions of pronunciation as a micro skill of the English language. The intention of the workshop is also to experience a number of different activities that ESOL teachers can use in the classroom with their English language learners to practice different aspects of pronunciation. Participants in this presentation will experience and reflect on innovative approaches to learning and teaching pronunciation.

Keywords: Pronunciation, activities, speaking, reflection, experiential.

1. Introduction

Pronunciation can be both challenging and rewarding for second language learners. A lack of pronunciation practice can inhibit students' confidence and ability to speak more freely as second language learners. The better the practice, the stronger the students' willingness and desire to speak. For many English language learners, the main purpose of learning is to communicate, and often times poor pronunciation serves as a breakdown for communication. The goal is not to feel intimidated to practice pronunciation, but rather see it as a natural part of learning a new language (Lane & Brown, 2010).

This interactive presentation is intended for the learning and teaching context of elementary, secondary and university teachers who are interested in creating more opportunities in the classroom for students to learn pronunciation. This workshop is being presented at Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica's Regional Campus in San Carlos. According to Lane & Brown, "ESL teachers may feel uneasy about teaching pronunciation because they lack training in phonetics or linguistics, or experience in teaching pronunciation" (2010, p. 1). One of the main purposes of this presentation is to

encourage English teachers to feel more confident in their own knowledge and abilities to teach pronunciation in their classrooms.

This workshop is based on the following research questions:

- ❖ What background do teachers from the San Carlos region have in learning and teaching pronunciation?
- ❖ What motivations are there in the San Carlos region for students to learn pronunciation?
- ❖ What beliefs do teachers from San Carlos hold in relation to learning and teaching pronunciation?
- ❖ How can different aspects of phonetics and phonology become more approachable for teachers to feel comfortable learning and teaching?
- ❖ What experiences might help teachers better understand different ways for practicing pronunciation ?
- ❖ What application task might help teachers internalize different aspects of pronunciation and how to teach pronunciation?

Objectives of "Engaging in the Pronunciation House":

Participants will be able to:

- ❖ Discuss about prior experiences related to learning and teaching pronunciation
- ❖ Share personal beliefs in regards to teaching pronunciation
- ❖ Brainstorm elements of pronunciation they believe are important to teach English language learners
- ❖ Identify relevant aspects of pronunciation for teaching English language learners
- ❖ Experience five to seven different activities, and decide what aspects of pronunciation are being addressed in each activity
- ❖ Design a contextualized activity using at least one or two aspects of pronunciation

2. Context

The activities presented in this interactive workshop are addressed to both young learners and adults of all ages. Part of the workshop is focused on thinking about how to adapt the different activities in order to use them in a number of different contexts and for students of varied levels and ages.

Throughout this workshop participants work with different aspects of phonetics and phonology including sounds, word stress, sentence stress, intonation and rhythm. This interactive presentation also includes the "how" aspect by creating experiences for participants to actually participate in activities that address different aspects of pronunciation.

During this presentation, the facilitator uses experiential learning (Kolb, 2014) in order to provide students with hands-on experiences of what pronunciation is and how to work with it in the classroom. This approach also serves to help participants reflect on what was most meaningful for them and to create action plans for their future teaching. In addition, the four cultural knowings (Moran, 2001) is implemented in order to walk participants through different ways of seeing and understanding pronunciation,

and their own relationship with pronunciation as a language micro skill. Finally, the presenter incorporates different adult learning theories (Knowles, 1980) to engage and guide participants through exploring different aspects of English pronunciation, experiencing a variety of activities and reflecting on its purpose and effectiveness for their students and their own language classrooms.

This presentation is useful and meaningful for teacher trainers and teachers who teach four skills integrated lessons, pronunciation courses, speaking classes, works training teachers, or anyone who is interested in learning more about pronunciation and teaching pronunciation.

3. Activities and Procedures

Stages and purposes based on theories of adult learning (Knowles, 1980)	Procedures	Timing	Interaction P: participant F: facilitator
Activating schema Participants explore and voice their own opinions Catering to auditory learners Problem-solving task Participants make meaning and sense out of the listening segment	Participants discuss about pronunciation aspects that are challenging for their students and for themselves as learners. Participants listen to a clip of a German coastguard trying to communicate with a ship that is sinking in the sea. This clip highlights the importance of pronunciation in speaking and communication. As participants listen, they try to identify what was hindering communication between the two people talking (sinking and thinking). Participants share their thoughts in pairs and then with the whole class.	10 min.	P-P P P-P P-F
Sharing personal beliefs Opportunity to make sense of concepts in their own way Sharing thoughts and ideas in community	Participants discuss their thoughts and opinions on the following statements. 1.Pronunciation should be taught by native speakers only 2.Pronunciation is an easy skill to teach 3.Pronunciation isn't relevant for elementary/high school/university students Participants share their thoughts and ideas in pairs and then with the whole class.	10 min.	 P-P P-P P-F

Problem solving task	Pronunciation House	25 min.	
			P-P
Participants explore and voice their own opinions	Participants work in groups of three and brainstorm what aspects of pronunciation they teach or feel are important to teach in their contexts.		
Participants share their experience and wealth of information	Participants share one idea from each group with the class. The facilitator writes these ideas on the board in one of the boxes of a chart divided into five sections. Each section will end up being one of the five aspects of pronunciation being covered in this workshop.		P-F
Participants encounter, clarify and/or remember pronunciation concepts	The facilitator elicits from the participants the different aspects of pronunciation based on the ideas in each of the boxes. 5 different levels of study of pronunciation: Rhythm Intonation Sentence Stress Word Stress Sounds		F-P
Problem-solving task	The facilitator asks the participants what they think the chart on the board might actually be. The facilitator elicits a metaphor, a simile and/or a thought. The facilitator tells participants that the chart is actually a house, the pronunciation house, and draws a roof on it. Simile example: Pronunciation is like this house where you can bring your students to practice their pronunciation. They can go to any floor and practice whatever they need to practice of the different aspects.		F-P
Activity experience based on the ELC (Kolb, 2014)	Participants experience 5-7 pronunciation activities, describe them, decide what aspects of pronunciation are addressed, and discuss changes and/or adaptations they would make to make the activities better fit their contexts.	25 min.	P-P
Description and	The facilitator gives students a worksheet to		

analysis	complete this task. Each activity is at a different station. Participants move around in groups of three to different stations.		
Participants have a concrete experience with a number of activities Participants describe, analyze and adapt the activities to their teaching contexts	Pronunciation activities: 1. Space Battle: Students are given a handout with a number of boxes and words in the top row and left column. Each student draws three space ships in three different boxes. Student A chooses and says two words aloud, one from the left column and one from the top row trying to bomb one of the student B's ships. Students take turns until one of them bombs all three ships of the other student.	P-P	
	2. Love dialogue: students take turns role-playing the dialogue in pairs highlighting the role of intonation and sentence stress.		
Problem-solving task	3. Tongue twisters: students take turns trying to read saying tongue twisters to practice challenging sounds.		
Catering to kinesthetic and visual learners	4. Tic-Tac-Toe: students play tic-tac toe and say the words they choose aloud before writing an X or a circle around the word.		
Participants get up and move around to change the pace and fight gravity	5. Humming sentences: student A hums a sentence from a list and student B guesses the sentence. Students take turns humming and guessing. 6. Clapping word stress: students read a list of words and show stress by clapping or drumming on a table. 7. Mirror Mirror: students practice challenging sounds holding a mirror, and describe how and where in the mouth the sounds are being produced. The sounds go from being in isolation to having a context. 1. Church / Going to church is fun. 2. Van / My brother's van is old. 3. Teeth / I brush my teeth in the mornings.		
	8. Friends episode: participants read a dialogue from a clip of a "Friends" episode and try to guess what the intonation and rhythm for each character might be. Then,	P-F	

	they watch the clip and compare their guesses to the actual intonation and rhythm being used. Participants share their thoughts in pairs and then with the whole class.		
Extension activity Participants use their own ability to put new concepts and skills into practice and make sense of the theory in a self-directing way	In groups of four, participants choose 1 or 2 aspects of pronunciation and design an activity relevant to their teaching context. Participants share the activity they designed with a new group of classmates and then with the whole class.	15 min.	P-P P-P F-P
Closure Participants explore and voice their own feelings and opinions connected to new concepts and skills adapted from the *knowing how* aspect of the *4 Cultural Knowings* (Moran, 2001)	Participants make a circle, toss a ball around and share one idea they are taking away with them from this workshop. Give each participant a handout of the pronunciation house.	5 min.	P-P

Facilitator's notes

Activating schema stage

1. Some comments you might expect from the participants that work with Latin American students are vowel (/ɪ/, /æ/, /ə/, /aɪ/) and consonant sounds (/θ/, /ð/, /ŋ/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/), intonation, sense of confidence with pronunciation, stress.

2. Asking participants about sounds that may be challenging for their students in their contexts will help prepare them to identify the pronunciation challenge addressed in the listening clip. If this piece is not done before listening to the recording, some students might not follow successfully.

Sharing personal beliefs stage

1. This section is essential in helping participants feel more confident about teaching pronunciation. A good number of teachers will feel discouraged to teach pronunciation because they feel like they do not master the language well enough. Many teachers will also feel that only English native speakers can teach pronunciation. This is a myth that is important to break away from. You might want to tell your participants that what is needed to teach pronunciation is that the teacher studies the content to be taught and is well prepared before teaching the students. Even native speakers feel scared sometimes about teaching pronunciation!

2. Getting students to share their personal beliefs on teaching pronunciation will allow them to personalize the topic and see other potential perspectives. This might be a good chance to note that not everything is black and white in teaching. There are many shades of gray.

Problem solving stage

1. In this stage, it is important that the trainer tries to elicit different ideas for each of the five aspects of pronunciation (sounds, word stress, sentence stress, intonation and rhythm). Guiding the participants will be essential here. Giving them clues like saying that the third, fourth and fifth aspects are at the sentence level might help.

2. If you have enough time, you might also want to have the participants think about a metaphor or simile for pronunciation based on the chart with the five aspects of pronunciation before sharing the simile on the pronunciation house.

3. Here are some theory pieces for each of the aspects of pronunciation:

- Sounds: 20 vowels and 24 consonants according to the International Phonetic Alphabet
- Word stress: relative emphasis placed on syllables within a word
- Sentence stress: relative emphasis placed on words within a sentence. Content words (adjectives, nouns, adverbs and verbs) are usually stressed.
- Intonation: the rise and fall of pitch over a sentence.
- Rhythm: English is a stress-timed language. This means that the rhythm of a sentence depends on how many stressed syllables there are, not on the number of syllables. The stressed syllables occur on the content words, those that carry the message.

Activity experience stage

1. During this stage, it is important that the students really do complete all the activities fully and participate as if they were the students. This will allow them to see all the aspects of pronunciation that are addressed one each activity. Monitoring students closely here is essential so that they do not rush through the tasks.

2. The handouts could be color coded here, so that each of the seven activities is a different color. This would help each group of participants know which tasks they have completed and which ones they have not done yet.

3. The main focus for each activity is:

    - Space battle: sounds
    - Love dialogue: words stress, intonation and rhythm
    - Tongue twisters: sounds
    - Tic-tac-toe: sounds
    - Humming sentences: intonation
    - Clapping: word stress
    - Mirror mirror: sounds
    - "Friends" clip: intonation and rhythm

Extension stage

1. For this stage, in order to create an equal balance of the different pronunciation categories (sounds, word stress, sentence stress, intonation and rhythm) it would be helpful if you already have the names of the different pronunciation categories written on slips of paper. Hand these slips of paper out to the participants, making sure you are balancing the categories.

2. You might want to have students actually teach each other something on pronunciation using the technique they have designed. This would make the task even more meaningful and hands-on.

Closing stage

1. If you have a large group, you may consider having two or more circles for people to share what they are taking away with them from the workshop. This would help use time more efficiently.

2. As an alternative prompt you could also ask, participants to share what activity they would like to try out in their next English lesson back in their contexts.

4. Conclusions

This interactive presentation on the different levels of study of pronunciation and corresponding activities for practice is intended to be an awareness session. Based on the nature of the congress and the amount of time allotted, it is only possible to design a session of awareness rather than a more in-depth course or program on pronunciation or pronunciation teaching.

It is the hope of this workshop that teachers will become more interested and excited about deepening their knowledge and skills in terms of pronunciation, and how to create opportunities of learning for their students in the classroom.

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6. Biography

Roger Ramírez Draughn, originally from NYC, received his MA in TESOL at the SIT Graduate Institute in Vermont and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Education at Universidad La Salle. He has worked on teacher training projects in USA, South Korea, Burundi, Nigeria, Dominican Republic, and a number of countries in Latin America. His current interests and research include bio-pedagogy and 21st Century learning.

7. Appendices

The following documents are handouts and worksheets used in this workshop. They are helpful in order to recreate this workshop. They are also useful handouts for teachers in case they would like to implement some of the activities presented in this interactive presentation with their own students in the classroom.

Appendix A. Pronunciation Activities

Activity description What did you do in this activity?	Aspects of pronunciation addressed What levels of pronunciation are being practiced? Sounds, stress, sentence stress, intonation, rhythm?	Changes/adaptations What changes would you make to these activities to better fit your teaching context?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Appendix B. Love Dialogue

Instructions: Read and role-play the following dialogue with your partner. Focus on the context of the dialogue and use appropriate rhythm and intonation.

Charles Please marry me, Fiona. I want you, I need you, I love you.

Fiona I'm sorry Charles, but I can't.

Charles Oh, Fiona. Why not?

Fiona Well, Charles. I like you . . . I like you a lot . . . but I don't love you.

Charles But Fiona, love isn't everything.

Fiona Oh, Charles, you don't understand . . . for me love is everything.

Charles Do you love another man Fiona?

Fiona Yes Charles, I do . . . James. .

Charles Not James Milton!

Fiona Yes, James Milton.

Charles But he doesn't want you. He's engaged.

Fiona I know.

Charles But Fiona, James isn't a rich man. I can give you everything. What do you want? Clothes? Money? Travel? A big house?

Fiona No, Charles. I don't want those things. I only want James.

Appendix C. Space Battle

Instructions: Draw 3 little boats in any of the boxes below. Do not let your partner see where the boats are. In pairs take turns choosing and reading aloud one word from the left column and one word from the top row. Your objective is to bomb your partner's hidden boats.

	farther	father	goat	got	boat	bought
sheep						
ship						
coast						
cost						
leave						
live						
pen						
pan						

Appendix D. Tongue Twisters

Instructions: Take turns reading the following tongue twisters.

☺ Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

☺☺ There was a fisherman named Fisher
who fished for some fish in a fissure.
Till a fish with a grin,
pulled the fisherman in.
Now they're fishing the fissure for Fisher.

☺☺☺ I saw Susie sitting in a shoe shine shop.
Where she sits she shines, and where she shines she sits.

〰👄👂🎵👄〰👄👂🎵👄〰👄👂🎵👄〰

Appendix E. Humming Sentences

Instructions: The teacher or a student hums one of the sentences. Others guess which sentence it is.

1. I'm from New York.

2. Yes, I did.

3. How old are you?

4. Is she leaving?

5. Let's go to a movie.

6. Do you have the time?

〰👄👂🎵👄〰👄👂🎵👄〰👄👂🎵👄〰

Appendix F. TIC TAC TOE

Instructions: Play tic-tac-toe and read the words on the board as you circle or mark them with an X.

cheap	chip	shop
shoe	FREE	ship
sheep	chop	chew

Appendix G. Clapping Word Stress

Instructions:

1. Read the list of words below. Show the stress by clapping or drumming on a table.

Mexico / Mexican   Canada / Canadian

Korea / Korean   Egypt/ Egyptian
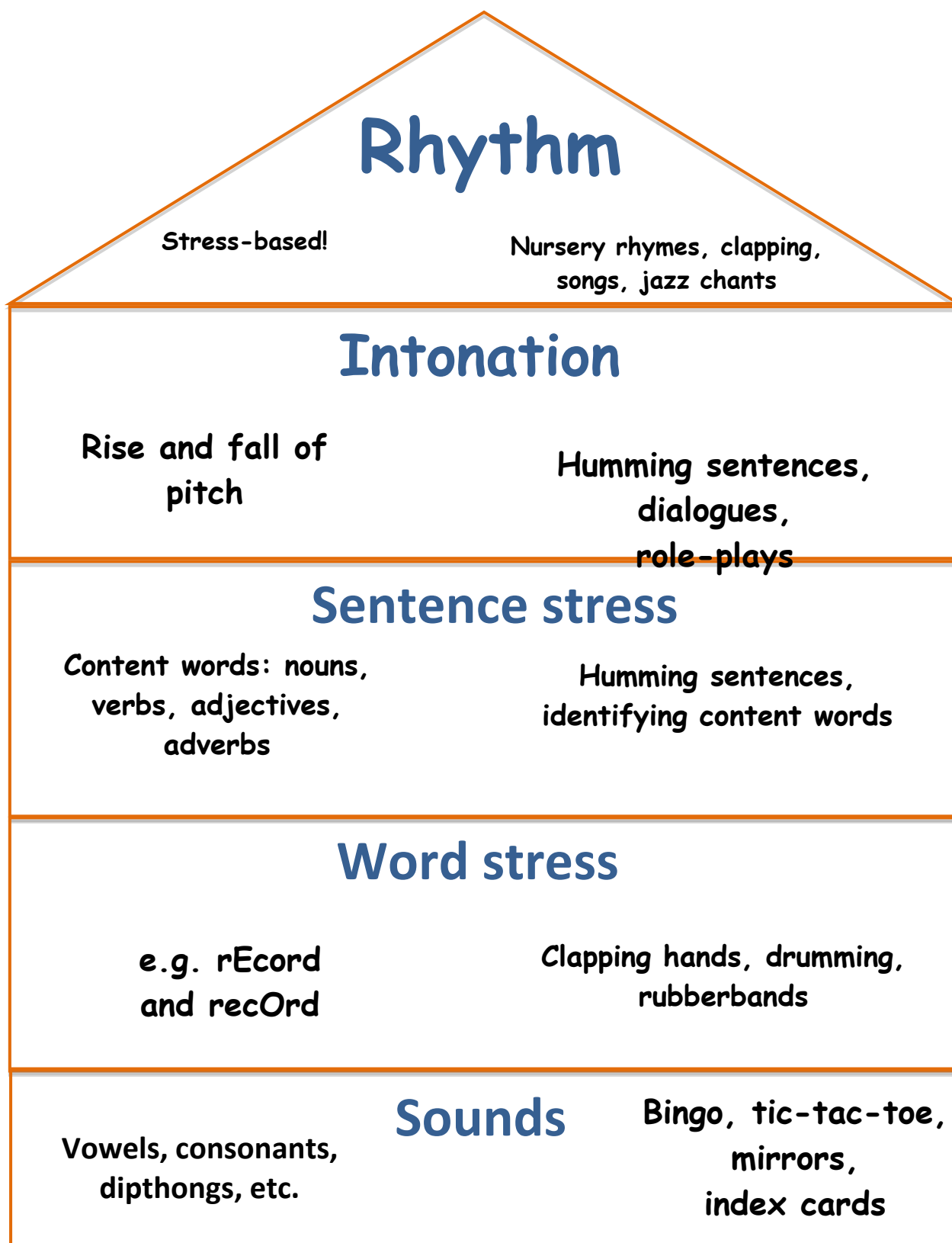
China/ Chinese   Peru/ Peruvian

Argentina/ Argentinean   France/ French

2. Student A makes a list of fruits and marks the stress on each word. Student B makes a list of vegetables and marks the stress on each word. Then take turns dictating their list to their partner, who marks the stress for each word. Compare lists.

3. Read some of the words from different lists and show the stress by clapping or drumming (or any other technique you can come up with).

Appendix H. THE PRONUNCIATION HOUSE

Rhythm

Stress-based!

Nursery rhymes, clapping, songs, jazz chants

Intonation

Rise and fall of pitch

Humming sentences, dialogues, role-plays

Sentence stress

Content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs

Humming sentences, identifying content words

Word stress

e.g. rEcord and recOrd

Clapping hands, drumming, rubberbands

Sounds

Vowels, consonants, dipthongs, etc.

Bingo, tic-tac-toe, mirrors, index cards

Figuring Out Rubrics

Cindy Rodríguez Soto
Universidad Técnica Nacional, Costa Rica
crodriguezso@utn.ac.cr

Resumen: El diseño e implementación de instrumentos de valoración (rúbricas) es cada vez más popular en los espacios de aprendizaje del inglés. El cambio en los métodos de evaluación debe de responder a la manera en que se percibe el aprendizaje. Los instrumentos de evaluación son herramientas necesarias que coinciden con una perspectiva más práctica y experiencial del aprendizaje de un idioma. Ahora bien, el diseño de rúbricas es un proceso basado en la reflexión, y en el *qué* y *cómo* se trabajó en clase. Esta sesión está dirigida a ser un espacio de aprendizaje abierto para reflexionar sobre las prácticas actuales al respecto de las rúbricas, y además se trabajarán aproximaciones teóricas y didácticas sobre el diseño y la implementación de este tipo de instrumentos.

Palabras clave: rúbrica, instrumento de evaluación, evaluación, diseño, aprendizaje.

Abstract: The design and implementation of assessment instruments is gaining popularity in English learning scenarios. This change in assessment methods should respond to the way learning is perceived. Rubrics are essential tools with a more practical and experiential perspective of language learning. Now, rubric design is a reflection-based process that should respond not only to the student needs but also to what and how was studied in class. This session is meant to be a space to reflect on current practices and theories on rubric design.

Keywords: Rubric, assessment, design, language learning, instrument.

1. Introduction

Designing rubrics is a much complex process that, if carefully done, will result into a healthy reflective practice that will help align objectives, class practices, as well as teachers and students' needs. It is essential to understand that designing rubrics goes beyond an instrumental practice of creating a grid with some criteria in it. The creation of an assessment instrument should take the designer through a process full of reflection and analysis, so that it results on a way to communicate with the student, while also maintaining coherence between the curriculum and the class activities. The following objectives are intended to take participants from theory to practice that is from understanding the principles and pedagogic background of rubrics, to their actual design.

General Objective
To develop a productive skill rubric by analyzing key considerations and theories of rubric construction.

Specific objectives

- To analyze the pros and cons of rubrics in order to reflect on the importance of developing assessment instruments.
- To identify the main considerations of rubric design based on existing principles.
- To design a productive skills rubric based on a given task and an objective, in order to use the main principles studied during the session.

2. Context

This session is addressed to English teachers working with ESL and EFL students. The approach used and the exercises done are meant to address productive skills, so that English teachers of different levels can make use of the subject studied here. Rubrics are great tools that need to be customized and designed, so it is the teacher designing them who should take into account the age, the program or courses, the linguistic abilities of the group, and the course objective in.

3. Activities

The activities mentioned here are designed to take the participant from reflection to a more hands on section.

Activity 1: Analyzing current practices.

Class arranging: Groups of 4-5 people, then plenary

Time: 15min

Description: Participants discuss the following questions in groups of 4-5 people. Here they are meant to share their background experience on the topic.

- What are rubrics?
- Do you use them? When?
- Why do we use rubrics?
- Do you like designing them?
- On a scale from 1-5, how confident do you feel designing them? (1. Means "not confident at all" and 5 meaning "I love it")

Then a plenary is done to go over the questions, and get a general perspective of the background knowledge.

Activity 2: Types of evaluation instruments.

Class arranging: Groups of 4-5 people

Time: 10min

Description: Participants are provided with a series of instruments (Figures 1, 2, 3) and they are asked to classify them into Checklists, Grading Scales, and Rubrics.

Facilitator encourages participants to deliberate and agree on the correct classification. Then Facilitator confirms the correct answer.

Facilitator shows some questions for participants to answer in plenary:

- What is the difference between a checklist, a grading scale and a rubric?
- Which ones are you more familiar with?

Activity 3: Types of rubrics
Class arranging: Groups of 4-5 people
Time: 15min

Description: Participants are provided with a series of instruments (Annexes 1, 4, 5) and they are asked to classify them into Holistic, Analytic, and Mixed/Hybrid Rubrics.

Facilitator encourages participants to deliberate and agree on the correct classification. Then Facilitator confirms the correct classification.

Facilitator shows some questions for participants to answer in plenary:

- Look at the instruments provided, and discuss based on what you see: What are the characteristics of a holistic rubric? What about the analytic one? And the hybrid ones?
- Which one do you prefer? Why?
- What do you think would be good scenarios for each of them?

Then facilitator will enrich the answers by explaining that:

Analytic rubrics:

- are more detailed, as they describe each criterion associated to the task in the different levels of accomplishment., This means that the student would know her/his level of performance on each aspect considered within the task.
- the presence of different dimensions allows for more fairness for the student, since different learning preferences and styles are being considered.

Holistic rubrics:

- are based on the overall performance of the task.
- provide a quick insight of what is expected without providing much details on each aspect.
  are fast to grade, therefore less time consuming.
- can be difficult to use if the students' performance does not meet everything described on the different levels of accomplishment.

Mixed/hybrid rubrics:
- allow the designer and user to combine traits from analytic and holistic rubrics.
- are more general than an analytic rubric, and more specific than a holistic one.
- are easy to score. Not time consuming.

Activity 4: Elements of the rubrics
Class arrangement: Groups of 4-5 people
Time: 15min

Description: Participants are provided with color markers. They are asked to identify and label the different parts of the rubric on Figure 2:
Task
Criterion
Description of Criterion
Levels of Accomplishment (or scales).
 (Not all of them may be found)

Facilitator encourages groups to deliberate and agree on the labeling of the different parts. Then Facilitator confirms the correct answer.

Facilitator displays some mind maps around the room for participants to complete. These mind maps contain guiding words that can be used as reference to complete the rest of the information. The mind maps read:

- Criterions that can be used to assess speaking. Example provided: fluency, language use

- Positive, process-based adjectives to show level of accomplishment: needs further improvement, fully developed, good

- Tasks: oral presentation, dialogues

Facilitator and participants go over every mind maps to share their thoughts and add perspectives to what was written.

Activity 5: Designing a Rubric
Class arranging: Groups of 4-5 people
Time: 25 min

Participants are provided with an objective to design an analytic rubric.

Suggestions of common steps to develop rubrics are also provided:

- Define the criterions.
- Define the descriptors (start by defining the highest and the lowest). Be specific.
- Define the levels of accomplishment (describe them if necessary).
- Make the grid.
- Consider if it is necessary to provide some space for comments. If you do, define where.
- Do not forget to write the instructions on how to use it.

Then participants share the rubric with the rest of the groups.

Facilitator supports the groups clarifying questions.

Activity 6: Final Reflections
Group arrangement: plenary
Time: 10min

The entire group reflects on the practice of designing rubrics after the overall experience.

4. Materials

The following figures will be used during the session.

Integrated English 1   Name: _____
Prof. Cindy R.
Peer assessment

Check on your classmate performance with by checking the boxes. You can write comments bellow. Be kind and respectful.

	Yes	No
Student speaks using **complete sentences**		
Student uses **third person in simple present** (s) correctly		
Student is able to **use negatives** correctly most of the time		
A **variety of vocabulary** content is used: adjectives, verbs		
Most adjectives (curly, straight), and pronouns (you, she) use in the description were very **well pronounced**		

Yes- Student did it just as described doing almost everything correctly. Self-correction can be present.

No: Student might want to go back and double check the aspect and ask the teacher and classmates for extra support.

Comments:

Figure 1. Peer assessment Checklist, own work (2014)

TOEFL IBT® Test

Independent SPEAKING Rubrics

SCORE	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	DELIVERY	LANGUAGE USE	TOPIC DEVELOPMENT
4	The response fulfills the demands of the task, with at most minor lapses in completeness. It is highly intelligible and exhibits sustained, coherent discourse. A response at this level is characterized by all of the following:	Generally well-paced flow (fluid expression). Speech is clear. It may include minor lapses, or minor difficulties with pronunciation or intonation patterns, which do not affect overall intelligibility.	The response demonstrates effective use of grammar and vocabulary. It exhibits a fairly high degree of automaticity with good control of basic and complex structures (as appropriate). Some minor (or systematic) errors are noticeable but do not obscure meaning.	Response is sustained and sufficient to the task. It is generally well developed and coherent; relationships between ideas are clear (or clear progression of ideas).
3	The response addresses the task appropriately but may fall short of being fully developed. It is generally intelligible and coherent, with some fluidity of expression, though it exhibits some noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is generally clear, with some fluidity of expression, though minor difficulties with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing are noticeable and may require listener effort at times (though overall intelligibility is not significantly affected).	The response demonstrates fairly automatic and effective use of grammar and vocabulary, and fairly coherent expression of relevant ideas. Response may exhibit some imprecise or inaccurate use of vocabulary or grammatical structures or be somewhat limited in the range of structures used. This may affect overall fluency, but it does not seriously interfere with the communication of the message.	Response is mostly coherent and sustained and conveys relevant ideas/information. Overall development is somewhat limited, usually lacks elaboration or specificity. Relationships between ideas may at times not be immediately clear.
2	The response addresses the task, but development of the topic is limited. It contains intelligible speech, although problems with delivery and/or overall coherence occur; meaning may be obscured in places. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Speech is basically intelligible, though listener effort is needed because of unclear articulation, awkward intonation, or choppy rhythm/pace; meaning may be obscured in places.	The response demonstrates limited range and control of grammar and vocabulary. These limitations often prevent full expression of ideas. For the most part, only basic sentence structures are used successfully and spoken with fluidity. Structures and vocabulary may express mainly simple (short) and/or general propositions, with simple or unclear connections made among them (serial listing, conjunction, juxtaposition).	The response is connected to the task, though the number of ideas presented or the development of ideas is limited. Mostly basic ideas are expressed with limited elaboration (details and support). At times relevant substance may be vaguely expressed or repetitious. Connections of ideas may be unclear.
1	The response is very limited in content and/or coherence or is only minimally connected to the task, or speech is largely unintelligible. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following:	Consistent pronunciation, stress and intonation difficulties cause considerable listener effort; delivery is choppy, fragmented, or telegraphic; frequent pauses and hesitations.	Range and control of grammar and vocabulary severely limit or prevent expression of ideas and connections among ideas. Some low-level responses may rely heavily on practiced or formulaic expressions.	Limited relevant content is expressed. The response generally lacks substance beyond expression of very basic ideas. Speaker may be unable to sustain speech to complete the task and may rely heavily on repetition of the prompt.
0	Speaker makes no attempt to respond OR response is unrelated to the topic.			

ETS. TOEFL.

Quality Beyond Measure.

Figure 2. Independent Speaking Rubric, by Educational Testing Service (2014)

Grading Chart for Individual Class Presentation

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____

		Well done										Done poorly
1.	Content (Relevant, Shows Research)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
2.	Task Fulfilment	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
3.	Delivery	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
4.	Pronunciation	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
5.	Communicative Performance	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
6.	Use of Visual Aids	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
7.	Organization	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
8.	Fielding Questions	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
9.	Language (Grammar and Vocabulary)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
10.	Time Management	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Total score = _____ /100

Comments for feedback:

Teacher's Signature: _____

Figure 3. A Practical Guide to Assessing English Language Learner, by Coombe et al. (2010)

iBT/Next Generation TOEFL Test
Integrated Writing Rubrics (Scoring Standards)

Score	Task Description
5	A response at this level successfully selects the important information from the lecture and coherently and accurately presents this information in relation to the relevant information presented in the reading. The response is well organized, and occasional language errors that are present do not result in inaccurate or imprecise presentation of content or connections.
4	A response at this level is generally good in selecting the important information from the lecture and in coherently and accurately presenting this information in relation to the relevant information in the reading, but it may have minor omission, inaccuracy, vagueness, or imprecision of some content from the lecture or in connection to points made in the reading. A response is also scored at this level if it has more frequent or noticeable minor language errors, as long as such usage and grammatical structures do not result in anything more than an occasional lapse of clarity or in the connection of ideas.
3	A response at this level contains some important information from the lecture and conveys some relevant connection to the reading, but it is marked by one or more of the following: • Although the overall response is definitely oriented to the task, it conveys only vague, global, unclear, or somewhat imprecise connection of the points made in the lecture to points made in the reading. • The response may omit one major key point made in the lecture. • Some key points made in the lecture or the reading, or connections between the two, may be incomplete, inaccurate, or imprecise. • Errors of usage and/or grammar may be more frequent or may result in noticeably vague expressions or obscured meanings in conveying ideas and connections.
2	A response at this level contains some relevant information from the lecture, but is marked by significant language difficulties or by significant omission or inaccuracy of important ideas from the lecture or in the connections between the lecture and the reading; a response at this level is marked by one or more of the following: • The response significantly misrepresents or completely omits the overall connection between the lecture and the reading. • The response significantly omits or significantly misrepresents important points made in the lecture. • The response contains language errors or expressions that largely obscure connections or meaning at key junctures, or that would likely obscure understanding of key ideas for a reader not already familiar with the reading and the lecture.
1	A response at this level is marked by one or more of the following: • The response provides little or no meaningful or relevant coherent content from the lecture. • The language level of the response is so low that it is difficult to derive meaning.
0	A response at this level merely copies sentences from the reading, rejects the topic or is otherwise not connected to the topic, is written in a foreign language, consists of keystroke characters, or is blank.

Figure 4. Independent Speaking Rubric, by Educational Testing Service (2014)

UTN-ILE
Integrated English I
Professors: Cindy Rodríguez
Oral Midterm

Due date: _____   Examiner: _____ .

Name: _____ . Obt. Pts: 36/_____ Obt. %: 20/_____ Grade: _____

This rubric is meant to assess your Oral Midterm. It is based on the CEF (A2) and the course objectives. Look at the following criterion to identify positives and areas for improvement.

With her/his performance the student:	Fully	Mostly	Needs improvement	Not used
is able to perform every task requested without further undue, participating actively throughout.				
can **interact with reasonable ease** in structured situations and short conversations showing actively listening.				
is able to express her/his ideas with **reasonable ease,** providing enough information.				
speaks using full **complete sentences.**				
is **fluent enough for the level**, demonstrating little hesitation, and without undue effort.				
understands what is said clearly, slowly and directly to her/him.				
asks simple and varied questions with reasonable ease.				
spontaneously uses **simple present** (s) and **present continue** correctly.				
is able to spontaneously use negatives correctly.				
uses a **variety of vocabulary** content such as adjectives for physical appearance, verbs, family members, etc. and question words.(What kind of- How often, etc)				
has **good pronunciation** of vocabulary and function words (the, and, a, prepositions, pronouns, etc) all throughout				
correctly uses other grammar structures studied (such as verbs, prepositions in-on-at, possessive "s" and adjective pronouns, etc) in both questions and answers.				

Fully– Student did it just as described, doing almost everything correctly. Self-correction can be present. 3pts

Mostly!– Student showed control of the situation with occasional slips. Self-correction can be present. 2pts

Needs Improvement: Student might want to go back and double check the aspect, and ask the teacher and classmates for extra support. 1pts

Not used: This aspect must be revised and used by student. Office hours and more practice recommended. 0pts

Comments:

Positives	Pronunciation
Areas for improvement	**Other**

Figure 5. Mixed Rubric, own work (2016).

5. Conclusions

Designing rubrics is definitely a constant reflective practice were the teacher in charge of mediating the class would conciliate what and how something is studied in class, with the students' needs and other related elements (time constraints and amount of students, etc.). Developing an assessment instrument can be a long-term process that does not end with a rubric design, but rather continues when implementing it, when handing it back to students, and when using it to analyze the general outcomes and areas for improvement of students' learning process.

It is definitely important to view rubrics as means to communicate with students, and to support their learning process. Seeing these instruments as mere grading tools will diminish their potential impact on the students' learning process. Therefore, a careful design, implementation and follow-up are elements that need to be present to make the most out of rubrics.

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7. Biography

Cindy Rodríguez Soto is a passionate educator who truly enjoys everything related to learning and education. She graduated as an English Teacher at UCR, and then obtained Master´s Degree in Translation from UNA. She is working on her thesis to obtain her M.Ed. on Educational Management. Cindy is close to completing her Doctorate in Education. She works at UTN and UCR, as a pedagogical advisor in the latter. She is constantly looking for new learning experiences.

Teach Successfully with the TBL (Task-Based Learning)

Marisol Rojas Salas
UTN, Costa Rica
mrojass@utn.ac.cr

Yorleni Romero Chaves
UTN, Costa Rica
yromero@utn.ac.cr

Resumen: El aprendizaje a través del TBL (por sus siglas en inglés – Task-Based Learning) implica el uso de la lengua en la ejecución de tareas significativas y relevantes para los aprendientes. Este método fomenta la comunicación auténtica y está centrado en el estudiante. El rol del docente es de facilitador, diseñador y mediador de las experiencias de aprendizaje que lleven al estudiante a adquirir las competencias deseadas.
El Programa Institucional de Idiomas para el Trabajo (PIT) promueve la metodología del aprendizaje a través de tareas, el cual se basa en la adquisición de competencias. Estas se fundamentan en los cuatro pilares de la educación: aprender a conocer, a hacer, a convivir, y aprender a ser. Su implementación en las aulas tiene implicaciones en la dinámica de la clase, el rol del educador y los aprendientes, los materiales que se utilizan, así como, la evaluación.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje por tareas, competencias, comunicación auténtica, evaluación significativa.

Abstract: Learning through TBL (Task-Based Learning) implies the learners to use the language to carry out meaningful and relevant tasks. This approach fosters authentic communication and the student is the center of the learning process. The educator becomes a facilitator; designer and mediator of the learning experiences that will help the students acquire the expected competences.
The Institutional Program of Languages for Work (PIT –for its initials in Spanish) promotes Task-Based Learning, which is founded on the acquisition of competences. These are grounded on the four pillars of education: knowing to know, to do, to live and knowing to be. The implementation of TBL has some implications, for example in the class dynamics, the educators and learners´ roles, as well as materials and evaluation.

Keywords: Task-Based Learning, competences, authentic communication, meaningful evaluation.

1. Introduction

The Universidad Técnica Nacional (UTN) is the youngest public higher-education institution in Costa Rica. It was founded in 2008. It offers more than 35 different majors in the areas of Engineering, Technology, Administrative Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Agricultural Sciences and Education. These are imparted in 5 campuses and Specialized Centers located in Alajuela, San Carlos, Atenas, the Pacific region, Guanacaste-Cañas, and Liberia.

As the UTN was founded in the twenty-first century, it is committed to responding to the needs of postmodernism, where uncertainty and ongoing transformation are the only permanent elements in the educational framework. Based on this current picture and on the legal framework of our Alma Matter, the Universidad Técnica Nacional is compelled to offer its students the best of education, providing high-quality technical and vocational training, as well as moral, cultural, and integral personal development to ensure employability and quality of life.

The technical nature of the UTN is imprinted on its genetic code. The institution envisions the challenge of preparing young people and future workers to cope with rapid changes in technology, science, trade, and properly adjust to the requirements of the labor force in our globalized world. The only way to accomplish this aim is by constructing strong strategic alliances with the productive sectors.

On the basis of the above facts and considerations, the UTN created El Programa de Idiomas para el Trabajo (PIT) in the year 2010; and later on, this department made the proposal to implement the plan English for Work.

Institutional Program of Languages for Work. The **Programa Institucional de Idiomas para el Trabajo,** (Institutional Program of Languages for Work, PIT) was created by the University Council on November 8, 2010 by means of University Decree, Act No.33-2010, and noted in Agreement No.2.

This program began operations in January 2011 under the supervision of the Academic Affairs Department. PIT is a technical department responsible for establishing academic policies and institutional guidelines to optimize the process of foreign language learning. Since its inception, it has sought mechanisms to transform traditional language instruction by developing innovative strategies that will encourage students' actual language acquisition. PIT's commitment to learning focuses on meaningful and authentic experiences that promote actual learning. As an underpinning principle of these premises, PIT advocates the TBL approach as a means to optimize English learning

PIT courses are divided into two modules of three courses each. These modules are imparted over a two-year period of time, at the Associate Degree level; the first one consists of three general English courses which aim to improve students' communicative competence from a basic level to an A2 level based on the descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The second year involves three other courses designed to comply with an output profile of a student English proficiency at a level B1 (CEFR). It is also a graduation requirement, and presents no extra cost to the learner. These courses do not account for university credits, and therefore, do not change the curriculum.

The pedagogical model used at PIT is based on integration of learning strategies founded on social constructivism, with a strong emphasis on Vygotskyan theories. Adhering to this concept, PIT mediation practices are based on competence learning where the learner is actively involved in learning experiences through assimilation, accumulation, conceptualization, and internalization of knowledge (Calero, 2009). PIT also shares the vision of Calero (2009, p. 8) that" learning is humanization", and knowledge and skills are the tools that allow a person to transcend and improve their living conditions. From this perspective, TBL methodological approach is consistent and pertinent for the program.

2. Literature Review

The teaching of languages

According to Martin (2009), the spread of the phenomenon of modern foreign language teaching coincides with the birth of Humanism and the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. At that historical time Latin, Greek, and Hebrew were the languages in boom.

In the 17th century, a current called the pedagogical realism makes its appearance. The most representative exponent of that stage was Ratke, a staunch defender of the naturalist method as part of then-existing knowledge on mother tongue acquisition (Martin, 2009). Another important character was Juan Amós Comenio, a pedagogue who proposed that learning a foreign language could not be separated from an individual's experiential knowledge. By the middle of the 18th century, Sears offers the first professional teaching approach for foreign languages, The Grammar Translation Method (Martin, 2009). From this point on up to this date, the teaching of languages has been one of the most dynamic areas of education that has managed to evolve very quickly. Then there is a leap into the 21st century, and a present reality that this new timeframe calls for.

In recent decades, an urgent need to master at least one foreign language is evident in all areas. Internationally, many efforts have been made to ensure that the inhabitants of all nations learn and speak other languages. Worldwide organizations that relate to issues such as education and culture have been greatly involved in promoting the development of communicative competences as a way to improve the living conditions of humankind, and safeguard the linguistic diversity of the planet (Council of Europe, 2000; UNESCO, 2003; UNESCO, 2011). According to UNESCO (2003), languages cannot be seen in a reductionist manner, as tools to communicate and acquire knowledge; a tongue is a fundamental feature of the cultural identity of peoples and countries. Numerous documents, treaties, and international proclamations reflect the consensus of the nations, active members of this international organization, to encourage the learning of foreign languages as a key element of multicultural education, and to foster mutual respect and understanding among peoples and countries.

Education is undoubtedly the platform to ensure the protection of the world's linguistic diversity through the different learning processes that promote language acquisition (UNESCO, 2011). Likewise, the educational system has taken over, as a priority, the responsibility to promote the learning of those languages that due to widespread use in the international community have become a mechanism for approaching and understanding the new global citizenship. Nations and their governments have transferred this task to the education systems in each country. From those particular scenarios, they have designed and built differentiated teaching processes that respond to their specific needs.

Recognized linguists and experts in the field (Brown, 2001; Ellis, Abio, Sanchez, & Yagüe, 2005; Richards & Rogers, 2001) agree on differentiated teaching processes using two scenarios. The teaching of English as a second language and as a foreign language. In order to make this classification two relevant elements are taken as reference: the characteristics of the environment where learning happens or acquired language and form or process that generated the command of that language (Navarro, 2009).

From this viewpoint, the following perspectives are recognized: the learning of English as a native or non-native language, as a second language, and as a foreign language. Lin (2008) claims that speaking the mother tongue is a competence that is usually acquired during childhood and in immersion conditions. That means that the learned language is prevalent in all areas of its surroundings, and becomes a

requirement to communicate with others at home, school, work, and in wider social circles. In these contexts, the native language is learned in a spontaneous and unconscious way.

Learning a language as a foreign language, on the other hand, involves the development of language skills in settings where the language under study is not used for daily life by learners (Brown, 2001). Knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to communicate arise as a result of formal training activities, and happen at any stage of the individual's life. It is important to clarify that these concepts are not rigid and the boundaries between one and the other are blurred with ease in the framework of a globalized society where multilingualism and multiculturalism are glimpsed as skills of great importance (Coleman, 2011).

This document explores in detail an educational experience related to the teaching of English as a foreign language in a Costa Rican University. The Program Languages for Work is a unit the Universidad Técnica Nacional that is intended to strengthen its graduates' profile of the graduates of this higher education institution to increase their chances of employability and occupational mobility. This program seeks to develop communicative competence in English language from a pragmatic or functionalist perspective. This pedagogical proposal is based on the standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2002), and in the adoption of the task-based learning approach.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The Council of Europe was the entity responsible for the creation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. This document serves as a manual gathering the international standards to develop language programs, curricular recommendations, and others. Likewise, it establishes the levels of domain and descriptors or indicators to demonstrate student progress during the process of learning a language. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was developed with the participation of renowned linguists of the caliber of Dr. J.L.M. Trim, as project manager; D. Cost, Professor at École Normale Supérieure de Fontenay, Saint Cloud (Superior Normal School of Fontenay, Saint Cloud), France and Dr. B. North, Eurocentres Foundation, Switzerland (Eurocentres Foundation) (Council of Europe, 2002).

The document presents the levels language proficiency, and describes the standards indicating progress in learning. It also establishes categories classified by scales. In addition, this framework proposes strategies and activities in which the learner is an active participant that uses language to interact with others, in contexts of different nature (Council of Europe, 2002). On the other hand, it includes didactic aspects that are applicable in educational processes related to language teaching. This document is used as a guide to the standards that the governments of many countries seek to attain, including Costa Rica, The Ministry of Education and the public educational system in general at the primary, secondary and university level (Ministry of Education, 2004). MEP designs its programs taking into consideration these guidelines designed by the European Council.

Task-Based Learning

Task-Based Learning or TBL is based on the realization or fulfillment of a specific task. It focuses on the use of authentic language. Students are required to carry out

meaningful activities using the target language, in most cases with real-life situations. The underpinning principle of this approach is to use English for actual purposes, i.e., as a communication tool. From that comprehensive perspective, peer interaction becomes vital. Students must be active; their knowledge is built through actual use of the language while executing actions or carrying out tasks with an outcome. This method originated in the findings of the linguistic and cognitive research (Ellis, 2003; Ellis, Abio, Sánchez, & Yagüe, 2005).

The tasks can be defined as the focal point of the mediation process. The facilitator plans and determines the task cycle, allowing learners to accomplish an outcome in linguistic terms: to greet someone, to introduce themselves, for instance. Task-based learning is composed of a series of activities that bring students closer fulfilling the main task (Livingstone, 2010, Livingstone & Ferreira, 2009). This cycle is described in the Table 1:

Table 1

Instructional cycle of learning. Adaptation of Willis, 1996; quoted by Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2010.

Phase I: Preparation for the task

Activities: Presentation of the subject to students emphasizing the vocabulary to be frequently used to complete the cycle. Examples and situations are modeled. Other learning situations in this stage are brainstorming, observation, and discovery of the subject matter.

Phase II: The task cycle

(Tangible product expected as a result of the activity)

Task	Planning	Share
Students perform the task in pairs or small groups. The teacher monitors (errors are part of learning)	Students make the necessary preparations to communicate to the class the - – oral or written – results of their work. The teacher Advisor for correction.	Students report or present information. The teacher listens and then provides feedback.

Phase III: Focus on language

(Detailed study of specific aspects that require reinforcement)

Analysis	Practice
Students evaluate their products (dialogues, role-plays, posters, games, other) and how they perform or communicate in front of others.	The focus is on issues that generally should contribute to refine grammatical form, pronunciation and syntax, among other linguistic aspects.

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3. Context

TBL is used as the suggested approach to teach the PIT courses at UTN. The linguistic level of the students who take these classes ranges from A1 to B1, according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Most of them have just finished high school and have some basic knowledge of English, but they lack communicative competence. This represents a major challenge when they enter the program since they are not used to speaking or using the language much, which is a requirement in the TBL. It is learning by doing, performing, and acting. In terms of age, learners are 18 years and older.

   PIT consists of six courses, each lasting one quarter. Students attend a face-to-face session once a week for four hours. They also do some work on an online platform, requiring approximately two hours per week. As a result, the amount of instruction hours per week is six, for a total of 84 hours in a quarter.

At the end of the program, students are expected to reach a B1 level according to CEFR, which is an intermediate level of language command.

4. Activities

As mentioned before, in TBL activities need to be organized in a cycle, allowing students to be able to use the language to carry out a main task, which shows the competence has been acquired. It starts with a schema activation, then some pre-tasks that provide the necessary input and guided practice; then comes the main task for learners to carry out on their own, and finally comes the post-task to wrap up the class and focus on a language aspect.

Schema activation: this is meant to activate previous knowledge, and includes, for example, watching a video, playing a game, brainstorming, and the like.
Pre-tasks: short guided tasks to provide input and guide learners to practice in a more controlled way, so that they can use the structures and vocabulary they are learning in that class. Support and feedback given by the facilitator is very important in this part of the cycle.
Main task: it is a task learners have to carry out using the studied subject matter. Through it, students demonstrate they have acquired the competence aimed for in the class.
Post-task: this provides a wrap-up for the class and helps the teacher make sure students have acquired the competence proposed for the class. It can also provide an opportunity to reinforce a language aspect.

A complete TBL cycle is presented below in terms of activities.
Level: I
Topic: Daily Routines
Competence: Students will be able to describe their daily routine as well as ask and answer questions about it, showing interest and respect for others' routines.
Schema activation: Students get in groups of three/four in order to play BINGO. A bingo card is handed out to each group. The teacher draws the bingo items from a bag one at a time, reading the word or phrase out loud. Each group needs to find the picture on their card and mark it. All bingo items are drawn out until a team fills in a row (vertically, horizontally or diagonally) and yells "BINGO!"
With this game vocabulary is presented.
Pre-task 1: Students listen to a woman describing her daily routine. http://www.talkingpeople.net/tp/usefullanguage/elementary/dailyroutine.htm

Students imagine they have a conversation with her after she finishes describing it. They get a handout with eight questions, so they listen to her carefully in order to choose the correct answer. It is a multiple-choice exercise.

Pre-task 2: Students play a board game, which is about daily activities. The question is: What time do you ……….? This is written on the board, and students are asked questions considering that they know how to deal with time and daily activities. They throw a big dice brought by the teacher and move on the game. They should describe and answer the question using a complete sentence, depending on the picture they get in the game.

Pre-task 3: Students work in pairs and get a new handout where they complete the reading passage with the correct form of the verbs. The reading is about someone's daily routine description, so they imagine they are describing their own daily routine.

Then they have to answer some given questions about the information in the reading. They practice these orally with a classmate.

Main task: Students work in groups of four. One of them is the host and the other three students are celebrities invited to a TV show. Celebrities are asked to describe their lives when are not on stage, so they talk about their personal life and share about their daily routine. Celebrities can also ask the host about his/her daily routine.

Post task: Students work in pairs. They write five questions to ask each other about their daily routine. First, they write the questions, which are checked by the teacher. Once they are ready, they can interview one of their classmates while taking notes.

Feedback: It is given during and after the different activities, individually and as a group.

5. Materials

The daily routine !

Pre-task 1

Listen carefully and answer the following questions.
    1. What time do you wake up?
( ) 7:00 am
( ) 7:20 am
( ) 6:20 am

    2. What do you do before having breakfast?

( ) brush your teeth
( ) have a shower
( ) get dressed

    3. What time do you start work?
( ) 10:00 o' clock
( ) 9:00 o' clock
( ) 9.30 am

    4. Where do you have lunch?

( ) Cafeteria
( ) Home
( ) Office

    5. How often do you have a chocolate bar?

( ) Sometimes
( ) Usually
( ) Always

    6. What time do you get home?

( ) 7:15 pm
( ) 7:30 pm
( ) 7:00 pm

    7. Who do you go out to have a drink with?

( ) Friends or family
( ) Some coke
( ) Bar

    8. What do you like to do on weekends?

( ) Dancing and watching TV
( ) Painting and drawing
( ) Drawing and Dancing

Pre-task 2
A day in the life of...
1 - Read the text and write the verbs in the correct form.

Hi! This is my daily routine on weekdays.

I ☐ (get up) at half past seven and I usually ☐ (have) breakfast with my parents and my younger sister Paula. I ☐ (like) cereals for breakfast, but my sister likes bacon and eggs. My parents always ☐ (eat) coffee and toast.

We ☐ (go) to school by bus, but my father goes by train. My mother works at home, she is a journalist.

We ☐ (have) lunch at school, because in the afternoons we ☐ (do) activities: I ☐ (sing) in the choir at three o' clock and ☐ (play) basketball, my sister goes to art class and plays badmington.

After school, we ☐ (go) home and my mother helps us with the homework. We also ☐ (help) at home, I ☐ (clean) the rooms and my sister washes the dishes.

In the evenings we ☐ (watch) TV, ☐ (play) games and ☐ (talk) about our day. My sister and I ☐ (go) to bed at nine o'clock.

On weekends, we ☐ (get up) later around nine o'clock. We ☐ (play) outdoors games, in the park or our garden. Then we ☐ (visit) our grandmother, I ☐ (like) her very much! She makes us cakes and we ☐ (play) all afternoon with our cousins. It's great fun!

Answer and write questions based on the reading.
1. Do you get up at seven thirty?

_____
2. How often do you have breakfast with your parents?

_____
3. _____ ?
I like cereals for breakfast.
4. _____ ?
My parents always eat coffee and toasts.
5. Where do you have lunch?

_____
6. What time do you sing in the choir?

_____
7. What do you do after school?

8. _____ ?
Yes, I do. I watch TV in the evenings.
9. _____ ?
I go to bed at nine o' clock.
10. Do you have fun on weekends? What do you do?

6. Conclusions

The TBL approach is highly recommended when you are working by competences. It is learning by doing and demonstrating knowledge by carrying out tasks. The learner is at the center of the process and the educator is a mediator of the learning experience, acting as a designer, coach, mentor, mediator and facilitator. S/he provides guidance and support, gives input and feedback, and motivates students to overcome any roadblocks. His/her role is certainly different from the traditional one, but still very impacting and necessary for the learner's success.

The role of doers the students need to take requires a change of attitude on their part and that is a challenge. This new model requires to be busier, more active, making an effort to produce, and so on.

Another aspect that certainly changes is evaluation. The whole process is assessed, not only the final product. This requires the use of rubrics to avoid subjectivity and to inform participants, ahead of time, how they will be evaluated. There is an opportunity to check and re-do and to edit and re-write if necessary. There is constant feedback and support from the mediator to assure students' success. As the learner is at the center of the process, s/he is also an active participant of the evaluation, which means there is co-evaluation and self-evaluation as well as the evaluation given by the facilitator.

Educators need constant training and updating on methodology, strategies, materials, use of technology, evaluation activities and procedures, and the like. They need to understand their role as well as that of the students, so that they can be effective in the implementation of their class and in guiding learners in their process.

There are certainly many challenges to face; however, once you see all the benefits of using TBL and you can witness the learners' advance and success, you are more than willing to go the extra mile to make it work.

Among the limitations worth mentioning are the number of students per group, which makes guidance and follow-up difficult sometimes; teachers being unwilling to abandon traditional methodologies and paradigms; learners having a hard time accepting their new dynamic role; and finally, difficulties to constantly train educators or coach them efficiently. However, if there is willingness to promote a positive change, and advance to innovation, people will be better disposed to take on the challenges it all implies.

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8. Biography

Marisol Rojas Salas holds a Master's degree in Education Sciences, Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM), a Master's degree in TEFL, Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR), a *Licenciatura* in Educational Administration, Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED). She has taught English at Universidad Técnica Nacional (UTN) and Universidad de Costa Rica. She is currently the Director of the Programa Institucional de Idiomas para el Trabajo at the UTN.

Yorleni Romero Chaves holds a Master's degree in Second Languages and Cultures, a *Licenciatura* in Applied Linguistics, and a Bachelor's in English Teaching – all from Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica. She has worked as Academic Principal in private high schools, as the Dean of Education at a private university, an English professor at different public universities, and is currently an academic for the PIT program at Universidad Técnica Nacional (UTN) in Alajuela, Costa Rica.

Instructions: How to Keep your Students on Task

Amanda Lynn Rossi
Centro Espiral Maná, USA-Costa Rica
arossi@espiralmana.org

Resumen:
Dar instrucciones claras y accesibles es el pilar fundamental del éxito de una actividad, no obstante, suele ser la parte más difícil. Hay muchos factores que se deben que considerar aun para la actividad más simple. Esta presentación se enfoca en los pasos y detalles claves escondidos que se necesitan para poder dar instrucciones efectivas, las cuales asegurarán el éxito de una actividad al revisar los pasos en el momento de dar instrucciones, practicar el montaje de la actividad y mantener a sus estudiantes atentos por comprobar su comprensión. Este taller es interactivo y práctico para todo tipo de docente sin importar su dominio del inglés o los niveles que dan. Al final del taller, los participantes habrán tenido la oportunidad de crear e implementar su nuevo conocimiento en dar instrucciones efectivas con sus compañeros y reflexionar en lo que fue exitoso y lo que haría diferente en el futuro.

Palabras clave: Instrucciones: concisas, simples y efectivas.

Abstract:
Giving clear and accessible instructions is the backbone to any successful activity; however, it is usually the most challenging part of a task. There are many factors that need to be taken into consideration, even for the simplest activity. This presentation focuses on the steps and hidden key details needed in order to give effective instructions, which will ensure the success for an activity by reviewing the steps when giving instructions, practicing how to set up an activity, and keep your students on task by checking their comprehension. This workshop is interactive and practical for all teachers, no matter their English proficiency or which levels they teach. By the end of the workshop, participants will have had the opportunity to create and test out their new knowledge in giving effective instructions to fellow participants, and reflect on what went well or what they would do differently.

Keywords: Instructions: concise, simple and effective.

1. Introduction

Giving instructions is something teachers do on a daily basis or better yet, on minute by minute basis, making them crucial for student involvement and activity completion and success, and ultimately affecting a student's overall learning experience. Giving effective instructions consists of turning the complex into simple and accessible. This is even more challenging in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom due to the fact that we are adding an extra layer of difficulty, since these instructions are in a foreign language. This means that a teacher has to think about the linguistic and cognitive abilities of each individual in the class, and try his/her hardest to meet these needs. According to George Miller (1956), our cognitive limit on new information is roughly seven bits of new data, which is a significantly low number considering the amount of important information we want to convey with our instructions for the upcoming task.

This workshop sets out to answer the following questions: What are the stages for giving effective instructions? When and why do students get confused? How can this be avoided? How can the teacher incorporate different learning styles and information processing techniques into his/her instructions? How can the teacher reduce teacher-talk-time in order to make more space for student learning? How can the teacher check the students' comprehension of the instructions in order to increase the chances for a successful activity?

The objective for this workshop is to identify and use criteria for giving effective instructions, so that participants will:
- Discuss the importance of effective instructions
- Identify strategies for giving effective instructions
- Experience ineffective instructions
- Reflect on their own experience
- Analyze and rewrite verbal instructions
- Practice their new techniques
- Make 2 to 3 concrete action plans

2. Context

This workshop is intended for English language teachers despite their level of English proficiency or the level of their students. It is a practical subject for teacher training, and a tool that affects all teachers. Giving effective instructions is a skill that all teachers need, including veteran teachers.

3. Activities

Time Focus	Procedure	Trainer Notes
5 min S-S S-S S-T	Participants discuss three quotes (listed above) in relation to giving instructions in pairs or small groups Participants share their thoughts in pairs and then with the whole class.	Ask students which quote they identify with the most and why. It will help facilitate the meaning making process. By providing a mixture of humorous and serious quotes, a relaxed atmosphere will be fostered, and participation will be encouraged. If your workshop follows a very static one, perhaps post these different quotes around the room in order to increase energy levels.
5 min. T-S	Participants rate themselves from 1 to 5 in their instruction giving abilities. Participants reflect on a personal experience with instructions. "Do	Ask the students to close their eyes when giving their ratings. It helps to create a safer learning environment.

S	you always get students to do what you want them to do? What makes it hard? What makes it easier?"	Guide the students through their descriptions. Who said or did what? Where were you? What student reactions do you remember?
S-S	Share with a partner.	
T-S S-T	Elicit 2 or 3 questions from participants about giving instructions.	Write the questions on the board. Acknowledge them and refer to them when their answers arise during the workshop.
5 min T-S S-S	Participants discuss what effective instructions involve. "Giving instructions might seem like a simple task. So… Why spend time thinking about how instructions are given? Who do you know that is effective and efficient at giving instructions? What is involved when giving effective instructions?"	Draw a four-row chart and elicit the participants' ideas. Place ideas in the correct row. Ask them to guess what each row represents. <table><tr><td>Before going into classroom</td></tr><tr><td>Just before giving instructions</td></tr><tr><td>While giving instructions</td></tr><tr><td>After giving instructions</td></tr></table>
5 min T-S S S-S	Participants are given a handout to continue adding to the steps of effective instructions. "Add at least one more idea that is new or relevant for you for each step. Compare with a partner."	The handout is extremely important for visual learners. Remind participants that we are to add to the chart so that they do not get discouraged if they don't have a lot of information.
5 min T-S S	Participants are given a handout to assess their instruction giving abilities. "What did you learn about yourself?"	Keep the self-assessment answers to themselves. It might be embarrassing for some to admit that they didn't know something. Let participants voluntarily offer their ideas. Make sure that the main ideas have been elicited: Prepare/Practice instructions Get attention NO fluff Chunking CCQ
10 min T-S	Participants are given ineffective instructions on how to make a concentric circle.	Give the instruction quickly with a lot of information. Do not give the students a warning for the

		instructions, make them as abrupt as possible. Ignore any confused faces and encourage them to do the activity with a smile.
5 min T-S S-T	Participants describe what they experienced and how it made them feel.	Guide the participants through the ELC. Ask them to describe by using WH questions. Make sure to include feelings and observations of others. AVOID interpretations, generalizations, and action plans.
5 min T-S S-T	Participants discuss what helped or hindered their learning.	Guide the participants to interpret their experience. AVOID more description, feelings and judgments.
5 min T-S S-T	Participants create their own theories about learning. Participants are given the opportunity to create their own instructions for a concentric circle with a partner and try them out in small groups.	Give prompts like, "It's important to" in order to guide their thought process. Give a time limit for creating the instructions. Encourage them to write the instructions down. Create small groups where two or three people are able to give their instructions. Give participants a visual of what a concentric circle looks like. Give content for the activity. For example family or personal information.
5 min T-S S-T	"How was that experience for you? What did you notice? What helped/hindered learning? What does that make you think about giving instructions?"	Give the participants space to think about their own experience.
5 min. T-S S-T 5 min T-S S-S S-T	Participants create one action plan that they want to put into practice they next time they teach. What has been important to you? How would you rate yourself at giving instructions now?	Give participants space to think. Ask for two or three examples of action plans.

4. Materials

Giving Instructions

Giving instructions might seem like a simple task. So…
Why spend time thinking about how instructions are given?

Who do you know that is effective and efficient at giving instructions?

What is involved in giving effective instructions?

BRAINSTORM:

Believe it or not, there are actually four points in the planning and teaching process that it is helpful to think about when giving instructions. Jot down your answers to the following questions:

What do you/can you do to prepare yourself before going into the classroom?

What do you/can you do in the class just before you give instructions?

What do you/can you do while giving instructions?

What do you/can you do after giving instructions?

Giving and Checking Instructions
Getting them to do what we want them to do

Self-Assessment:

	Always	Usually	Some-times	Rarely/never
• I feel confident in my abilities to give instructions. • I prepare my participants to listen to me. • I make sure my participants are listening to me before I give instructions.				
• I sequence instructions so that each chunk builds logically on the next chunk.				
• I intentionally use a maximum of three action verbs per chunk of instructions.				
• I check to make sure participants have been successful with one chunk of instructions before moving on to the next chunk. • I cut out all unnecessary information when giving instructions. • I use visual support for the instructions. • I use tactile or kinesthetic support when giving instructions. • I model the instructions from the participants' perspective. • I intentionally use inviting language and tone when giving instructions. • I use concept-checking questions to verify that my participants know what I expect them to do.				
• I use other techniques to verify that participants know what is expected of them.				
• Participants ask me questions when they are not sure what I want them to do.				
• I ask my students "Do you understand?" and "Is that clear?" • • •				

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Tips on giving instructions

In order for activities to run smoothly, it is crucial that your learners understand as much of what you want them to do as possible *before* you start – when at all possible. It is helpful when your instructions are **clear, concise and unambiguous and offered in manageable chunks**.

Which ones did you include in your list? Which ones are new to you? Which ones seem very important to you? Which ones seem crazy to you?

- ## Before going into the classroom
  - Check in with own confidence
  - Plan sequence, chunks and verbs for each chunk
  - Write out instructions if that is useful
  - Prepare visual support
  - Practice modeling the instructions
  - Visualize or plan your board
  - Rehearse delivery
  - If possible, check out the arrangements in the classroom and think about where you would stand to give instructions.

- ## Before giving instructions
  - Get their attention and make sure they are listening
  - Give skeletal overview if necessary.

- ## While giving instructions
  - Be as brief as possible. Use simple, direct language (such as commands!). Remember that using idioms, jokes, overly polite language or "fluff" can sometimes interfere with students' understanding.
  - Use visuals, tactile and/or kinesthetic support
  - Write key words on the board as you speak (or before or after you speak)
  - Use chunks and pace that are appropriate for your learners. Speak slowly and clearly and pause between phrases or sentences.
  - Use language and tone that are appropriate for your learners.
  - Maintain appropriate eye contact and watch for signs of incomprehension.
  - Model the task or the piece of the task *from the learners' perspective* as you give the instructions.
  - Only give the instructions necessary for the particular stage of the activity.
  - Have two participants model the task.

- ## Checking what the participants heard and understood
  - Ask concept-checking questions that are appropriate for your learners.
    - Positive/Negative check: (Yes/No questions)
    - Short answer
  - Ask a learner to repeat the instructions back to everyone.
  - If there are visual "bases" (like fingers, places or objects), point to the base and ask what is connected to that base)

- Remember that asking "Is that clear?" or "Do you understand?" may not give concrete feedback about what the learners know or understand. (Students can say "yes" and you might not know what that means)
- Consider asking, "What questions do you have?" (Instead of "Are there any questions?")
- Have two participants model the task.
- Let participants start and observe if they are doing the task correctly. If some aren't, decide if it is better to redo the instructions for everyone or just a select group of learners.

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5. Conclusions

Giving effective instructions in the target language is possible and accessible, no matter the English proficiency of the teacher and that of her students. There are multiple ways to give instructions that are learning centered and that keep the student involved in the task at hand.

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7. Biography

Amanda Rossi is originally from New York, but currently lives and works in Costa Rica. She has over 10 years experience as a language teacher and teacher trainer and has worked in both the United States and Latin America. Amanda holds a BA in Spanish and International Business, two MAs: one in Spanish and one in TESOL, and is finishing her PhD in Education at Universidad de La Salle in San José, Costa Rica.

Bringing Literature to Life:
Reading for Learning, Feeling and Thinking

Erick Francisco Salas Acuña
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (ITCR), Costa Rica
esalas@itcr.ac.cr

Resumen: El propósito de este trabajo es contribuir a la utilización de la literatura como un recurso de enseñanza para mejorar el aprendizaje de los/las estudiantes de inglés en la clase de lengua extranjera. En primer lugar, el artículo presenta una serie de beneficios asociados con el uso de la literatura en la clase, haciendo hincapié en las ventajas tanto lingüísticas como culturales. En segundo lugar, el documento describe una serie de actividades que han demostrado cierto éxito en los últimos años, y que se pueden adaptar a diferentes contextos y propósitos, con el objetivo de promover el aprendizaje y el interés de los/las estudiantes por la literatura. Se espera que la utilización sistemática de la literatura en la clase influya positivamente en el desarrollo del lenguaje y en la actitud general de los/las estudiantes hacia la lectura.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza, segundas lenguas, inglés, literatura, lectura.

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the use of literature as a teaching resource to enhance students' learning of English in the foreign language class. First, the paper presents a series of benefits associated with the use of literature in class, emphasizing both linguistic and cultural advantages. Second, the paper describes a series of activities that have proven to be somewhat successful over the years, and that can be adapted to different contexts and purposes with the objective of promoting students learning and interest in literature. It is expected that a systematic use of literature in class will positively influence the students' language development and overall attitude towards reading.

Keywords: Teaching, second language, English, literature, reading.

1. Introduction

Literature – and reading in general – is fundamental to develop one's imagination, creativity and critical thinking. Unfortunately, it is no secret that the value of reading is only appreciated by a small segment of the population, while the rest show a generalized lack of interest and motivation. This problem is aggravated when second language learners face the challenge of having to read in the new language as an essential part of the process of becoming fully fluent. At this point, the challenge for teachers is twofold: on one hand, they have to deal with students' lack of interest in reading and, on the other; students are forced to read in another language, which means having to struggle for understanding.

However, teachers interested in helping their students become conscious speakers of a language, cannot disregard the benefits of reading. For second language learners, reading not only contributes to developing the aforementioned skills, but it also helps them acquire new vocabulary, strengthen syntax and punctuation, and – most importantly – contribute to cultural awareness of the target language. As a result, when used appropriately in the language class, literature can become a source of authentic

communicative experiences that can lead to students´ development of a series of competences fundamental to becoming more proficient speakers.

Interestingly, even though literature can work as a scaffold for intense interaction with the target language, little attention has been paid by teachers and researchers to make it a popular activity amongst learners. This situation, however, has started to change in the last decade due to a growing interest in literature and in how it can be put to the best use for the benefit of students (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Some of these studies (Hişmanoğlu, 2005; Khatib, 2012; Castillo, 2004; Koutsompou, 2015; Vural, 2013) emphasize the use of literature as a source of linguistic information, while others promote it as an experience that can have a positive impact on students´ motivation and attitudes. In general, a review of literature on this topic reveals a growing enthusiasm for literature but little systematic research offering practical and meaningful options for teachers.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to this discussion by sharing different teaching experiences with the use of reading – and literature in particular – to enhance students' learning of a second language, in this case English. In essence, the idea is to discuss both linguistic and cultural benefits associated with the use of literature in the second language class. Then, the paper offers a series of activities, which have proven to be somewhat successful over the years, and have contributed to increase students' interest, motivation and disposition to assume literature as an important activity in their learning process.

The originality of the activities suggested lies in an understanding of literature as a communicative experience. All activities, therefore, are designed with the purpose of having students practice writing, speaking, fluency, pronunciation, among others, while also exploring cultural issues that will contribute to a better understanding of native-like competences that can help them express their ideas in good English. It is expected that this approach to literature can have both a positive impact on students' attitude towards reading, and of reading as a means for developing important language skills, as well as in students´ comprehension of the culture at hand.

2. Context

The discussion presented in these pages considers literature to be an important part of every second language curriculum. This means that no matter the demographic characteristics of students, literature can always be a positive activity as long as the teacher considers the needs of the students, their interests, cultural background and level of learning at the time of deciding whether or not to include literature in the class.

The activities presented in this paper are thought to fit different purposes and may be adapted by teachers to different scenarios and populations ranging from primary to secondary education. The idea is to offer a set of options that teachers can use in the classroom with the purpose of promoting an appreciation of literature by students, as a fundamental learning activity that can help them improve their communicative skills on a variety of different levels.

3. Justification

In his dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury presents a futuristic American society where the prohibition of reading (all books found are burnt to ashes) results in the suppression of dissenting ideas. Similarly, in *1984*, George Orwell describes a modification operated in the language by an authoritarian government with the intention of cutting vocabulary down to a minimum to diminish people's range of thought, and

turn language into a medium of ideological manipulation. These two texts provide a common scenario where a limited access to reading brings about serious consequences that eventually leave people at the mercy of the interests of a corrupt and repressive government.

The question as to why it is important to read, whose answer may be inferred from the works of these authors, has been addressed by many researchers. The answers are varied and range from a simple need to be entertained, to an elaborate desire to satisfy people's intellectual curiosity. Both Bradbury and Orwell seem to be aware that reading is necessary to resist any form of ideological control and manipulation. However, no matter what the answer to this question is, the truth is that reading is a fundamental activity to make one's life more meaningful. People read, in sum, to know themselves, the "others" and the world.

However, reality suggests that, oblivious to these reasons, most people not only do not like reading, but also when they do, they hardly enjoy it and most of the time feel forced to do it. What is the reason for this reluctance towards reading? The answers are wide-ranging and complex, and this paper is not intended to provide any tentative guesses as to why this happens. Nonetheless, bearing in mind that immediate solutions are called for, this paper focuses instead on building up efforts to promote literature in schools not only as a source of valuable language input, but also a source of knowledge than can help students to become more proficient, analytical and critical speakers.

In the case of foreign language teachers, the challenges associated with the use of literature in the class should be of special concern, because literature plays a central role in providing students with authentic communicative experiences where they can be exposed to real-life language that otherwise would be difficult to experience in a non-native context. When used effectively, literature can serve as a technique to enhance reading, writing, speaking and even listening skills, not to mention other intellectual skills such as cultural awareness and critical and analytical thinking. In essence, Colie and Slater (as cited in Hişmanoğlu, 2005) mention four reasons as to why literature should be used in the class:

- Valuable authentic material: Literature offers real-life settings where language is used to meet different functions and meanings.
- Cultural enrichment: In literature, readers can find traditions, customs, beliefs, codes and preoccupations that shape the culture of the target language
- Language enrichment: Reading, writing, speaking and listening can be all enhanced with the use of literature.
- Personal involvement: Readers can find in literature some personal insight into human nature. Through the characters they can experience emotional and intellectual responses that contribute to make them more sensitive towards their own life, the life of others and life in general.

As a consequence, a literature enhanced learning process does not restrict merely to the study of literature *per se*, but to the development of other competences that will help students to be more skillful and knowledgeable.

Nevertheless, what teachers can do to effectively use literature as a fundamental source of linguistic and cultural input requires yet plenty of study. According to Hişmanoğlu (2005, p. 65):

Literature plays an important role in the English programs of many non-English speaking countries. However, there are some problems encountered by language teachers within the area of teaching English through literature. First, there are very few pedagogically-designed appropriate materials that can be used by

language teachers in a language classroom. Second, there is a lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching in TESL / TEFL programs. Third, there is the absence of clear-cut objectives defining the role of literature in ESL /EFL. Many instructors try to include literature in their classroom, but lack the background and training in that field.

In the face of these challenges, significant efforts are required both by researches and teachers to promote an effective use of literature in the foreign language class. A quick search reveals what seems to be a growing enthusiasm concerning this topic, but very few systematic studies that may set the basis for new approaches and methodologies. This situation, along with the aforementioned by Hişmanoğlu (2005), are an indication of a need for valuable research to be done in this area to strengthen the use of reading in the foreign language curriculum. The consequence of considering literature as a disengaged activity in the language class is that students are deprived from an enriching source of authentic practice, apart from denying the fact that literature is a cultural manifestation necessary to understand the ideas that are at the very essence of a language.

This paper constitutes a small contribution to this discussion by providing a few ideas that have proved to be successful for the author. Most of them can be adapted to fit different purposes and fulfill specific needs, but they all share the preoccupation of making the experience of reading literature a more meaningful one by approaching it as a communicative event that brings both linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge. It is expected that a systematic use of literature in class will positively influence students' language development and overall attitude towards reading.

4. Activities

There are essentially two kinds of readings: extensive and intensive. The first refers to practices taking place in the class and oriented towards a deep analysis of texts (Hernández, 2007). The second takes place out of class and involves students having to choose texts that suit their abilities and interests. Choosing between one and the other depends mostly on age and level. However, it is advisable that students are first introduced to intensive reading before they take on extensive reading. The reason for this is that intensive reading could provide them with reading tools they can then use when reading on their own. Besides, part of the role of the teacher in intensive reading is to procure students interest and motivation to undertake reading experiences. Disregarding this first stage could make it difficult for students to commit to extensive reading.

This being said, when dealing with intensive reading, three kinds of activities may be done according to Lazar (cited in Koutsompou, 2015):

- Pre-reading activities focused on describing background and stimulating students' interest in the reading.
- While-reading activities where students are put to understand plot, characters and language.
- Post-reading activities designed to help students make interpretations and express their personal viewpoints.

All intensive reading processes should follow these stages if students are expected to make the best out of every reading experience. Having this intention in mind, the

following section provides some activities that teachers can adapt to fit different teaching scenarios with the purpose of cultivating literature and improving students' language proficiency. However, bearing in mind that no study can comprise all activities, and that emphasis is generally placed on literature as a means to enhance reading and writing, this paper focuses instead on activities that consider literature as a fundamental source of language input that can equally play a meaningful role in contributing to the teaching of both speaking and listening.

Group activities	Oral reading	Dramatization	Other activities
• General class discussion • Group work • Panel • Round tables • Interview • Debate	• Individual reading • Group reading • Reader´s theatre	• Improvisation • Role playing	• Describing a character or setting • Adding or changing the ending • Telling a personal story based on text

1. Group Activities

a. *General class discussion*

This activity works when students are not used to working with literature. For this reason, it is very important that the teacher prepares beforehand a set of questions to guide the discussion. As a consequence, most of the responsibility rests with the teacher, whose job is to interest the audience and ask the appropriate questions to obtain positive responses. This activity is important because it can work as an example for students to learn the type of questions they should ask when working with literature.

b. *Group work*

In this case, the teacher shares the responsibility for the class with students, by giving them more space to discuss issues or topics related to the reading. It is advisable for teachers to assign specific tasks to each group, establish the allotted time to complete them, and have students report their conclusions. Needless to say that one of the most important advantages of this activity is that students can interact freely without constant teacher supervision.

c. *Panel*

In the panel, students work to determine a number of topics or issues related to the reading. Each student is assigned one topic, and one student is in charge of leading the discussion. This student will then address questions to his/her classmates, trying to cover all topics while establishing connections. This activity requires students to improvise and give immediate responses, resulting in a multi-level, challenging experience.

d. *Round tables*

Similar to the panel, in this case, students work in groups and each is assigned a topic. The difference is that in this case there are no questions. Instead, students are required to take some time to plan a short speech about their topic. Once each presentation is completed, a Q&A session takes places, allowing other students to ask questions and interact with the panelist.

e. *Interview*

In interviews, students will be taking roles (i.e. characters, writers) who are then going to be interviewed. If they choose characters, students will have to

improvise, while if they choose writers some time will be needed for them to research about the writer's life and provide accurate information. This activity allows students to go beyond the text and explore other topics.

f. *Debate*

This activity is especially useful for readings that deal with controversial topics. In this case, students first decide on a topic and then take sides (in favor and against), with each team trying to provide convincing arguments to defend their position. This activity involves improvisation and a lot of interaction, which makes it very valuable when working with the appropriate level.

2. Oral reading

a. *Individual or group reading*

When students are given the opportunity to read aloud in class they can practice pronunciation, word stress, intonation and fluency. In an individual reading, the teacher simply asks one student to read while monitoring any mistakes, to be discussed later in a feedback session. In a group reading, students divide a reading into as many sections as the number of students in the group, and then read to practice their oral skills. A feedback session at the end of this activity is mandatory for the teacher to address problems and make corrections.

b. *Reader's theatre*

In this case, students take a play and take roles to do a live reading in class. It can also be a children's story or any other reading, as long as students manage to turn it into a play. Once distributed and rehearsed, students do a live reading in front of the class (no props required) trying to communicate their character the best way possible and using only their voice. This activity raises awareness about the importance vocalization and other traits involved oral communication.

3. Dramatization

a. *Improvisation*

Improvising involves doing a dramatization about characters, plots or themes, without using a script. Students are given a lot of freedom, and are required to interact as in real-life situations.

b. *Role playing*

Students can also take characters and join in a speaking activity that can go from role-playing a scene to getting involved in a conversation or discussion. Besides its language-related advantages, role-playing also offers an opportunity to be creative and original.

4. Other activities

a. *Describing a character or setting*

Drawing a picture or simply describing a character or a setting can make students practice vocabulary. This activity is appropriate for any level, but especially for those whose level is basic. Besides, it offers the advantage of promoting creativity and imagination.

b. *Adding or changing the ending*

Readings whose ending is open to interpretation give teachers the possibility of asking students to create an alternate version. This could also work with a character or event, whereby students would recreate a particular scene but from a different perspective (for example another character) to explore new derivations to the story.

c. *Telling a personal story based on text*
Sometimes students can also be asked to relate a story with a personal event or experience. In this case, they are given an opportunity to share their story with the class by comparing or contrasting it to the one read. This activity allows students to sympathize with the reading, which usually leads them to feel more motivated and interested in it.

5. Conclusions

It is expected that by implementing these activities teachers will feel more motivated to incorporate literature in their lesson plans with more frequency and confidence, as a way to enrich their classes and contribute to students' learning process. At the same time, these activities are intended to raise awareness among language students about the advantages associated with reading. Most importantly, this paper suggests that including literature in the second language curriculum is fundamental to have more proficient speakers.

Many challenges are yet to be faced, one of the most important being the lack of interest and preparation of teachers to effectively use literature in their lessons plans. This should be a fundamental concern because its main consequence is that students not only lack a vision to value literature as an input for their learning, but also lack the ability to think independently and critically about the world. The activities suggested in this paper will hopefully serve teachers to have a set of ideas to start from.

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7. Biography

Erick Francisco Salas Acuña graduated from the University of Costa Rica (UCR) where he obtained a B.A. in Spanish Philology and a B.A. in English. He is currently writing his thesis to obtain his M.A. degree in Social Communication with an emphasis in Latin American Literature (UCR). He has worked as a professor for the School of Modern Languages and the School of Social Communications at the University of Costa Rica (207-2013). Since 2014, he works for the Costa Rica Institute of Technology in Santa Clara, San Carlos. His interests involve the teaching of literature and writing.

The Use of Theater and Drama Techniques to Foster Speaking Skills in the English Class

Jonnathan Salas Alvarado
Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica
josa325@hotmail.com

Resumen: El uso de las técnicas teatrales puede ir más allá del escenario y el presente taller tiene el objetivo de demostrar esto. El artículo presenta ocho actividades basadas en juegos teatrales que fueron adaptadas tomando en cuenta contenidos y objetivos del programa nacional de inglés establecido por el Ministerio de Educación Pública de Costa Rica. Cada actividad está descrita detalladamente para dar al lector una guía fácil para la aplicación de las mismas. Al mismo tiempo, el autor brinda información que asegura la efectividad del uso las técnicas teatrales en los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: teatro, enseñanza, drama, técnicas, inglés.

Abstract: The use of theater techniques may go beyond the stage, and the following interactive presentation aims to demonstrate that. The article presents eight activities based on theater games that were adapted taking into consideration the contents and objectives of the national English syllabus established by Costa Rica's Minister of Public Education. Each activity is described in detail to provide readers with an easy guide for their use. At the same time, the author provides information ensuring the effectiveness of theater techniques in teaching-learning processes.

Keywords: Theater, teaching, drama, techniques, English.

1. Introduction

When it comes to the teaching and learning processes, it may be said that many ideas have been proposed to look for the most effective way to transmit knowledge. Teachers are constantly trying new methods and techniques to deliver more effective lessons, so that students have a better understanding of whatever subject they may be studying. However, the "perfect method" has not been found yet, and it will probably never be found. The reason? We are all different. Whatever works with a specific individual may not work with someone else. There are several aspects affecting this such as generational changes, and cultural differences, among others.

Lagos & Palacios (2010) consider that education is a formative process per se that every individual may take ownership of so that they can internalize, thereby internalizing knowledge, traditions, and values. That is every teacher's mission: providing students the best opportunities for them to improve themselves. Nevertheless, this is not as easy as it sounds.

When it comes to foreign language teaching the situation is even more complex since we are talking about a group of skills that students have to master in order to be able to communicate and express their ideas and feelings. Teaching and learning a foreign language require an extra effort from both instructors and learners. A series of approaches and methodologies on language teaching and learning have been developed over the years aimed at building bridges between knowledge and comprehension.

However, there has always been a lot of disagreement on what the best method or approach is and that is why there are plenty of them. Muñoz (2010) claims that methodologies on language teaching have evolved in time, and this is reflected on the teachers' actions.

Today we need to move forward more than ever before. Approaches such as the audio-lingual approach, the silent way, the grammar-translation approach, the Total Physical Response, and even the communicative approach, among others, were relevant and provided the basis for what we have in the present. Right now it might be beneficial to take what we consider is best from those approaches, mix it and develop it so as to make the best use of it. However, it is time to innovate and include different activities and techniques in our class. Where can we find the resources to have different, more appealing classes? Perhaps those resources are not too far from us; perhaps they can be on stage.

This interactive presentation aims to present and develop a set of theater activities and exercises that can be easily adapted to teach English as a second language. They are not about teaching drama or literature. These activities focus on fostering the teaching-learning process of speaking skills. Even though they may be used and adapted to almost any context, subject and level, the population to be considered is high school students. Every theater activity and exercise is adapted based on the contents and objectives proposed by the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica (MEP).

This interactive presentation deals with the importance of using drama techniques and exercises in an education context. The idea is to detect the most important benefits they can offer teachers and students when leaning English as a second language.

2. Context
A. Relevant aspects regarding the subject to be developed in the presentation.

1-Definition of terms

The famous Spaniard playwright Federico García Lorca once said that theater is poetry coming out the book to humanize itself. The magic of theater can take readers and theatergoers to different places, to other realities, other lives and other times. Without a doubt, this creating force has the ability of provoking different emotions in the audience.

There seems to be a distinction between drama and theater. In fact, Wessels (1987) quoted by Ulldemolins (2014) claims that "Drama means doing. Drama means being. Drama is such a normal thing. It is something that we engage in every day when faced with difficult situations" (p.6). Courtney (1980) as quoted by Ulldemolins (2014) defines drama as "the human process whereby imaginative thought turns into action, drama is based on internal empathy and identification, as it leads to external impersonation" (p.6). It is what leads to physical representation of feelings and thoughts. Theater, on the other hand, according to Elam (1980) cited by Ulldemolins (2014) is a "phenomenon associated with the performer-audience transaction" (p.6). Therefore, theater deals more with the actual performance of a dramatic action.

Before an actor has a play ready to be presented on stage, there is a long and hard creation process. It is not easy to embody a fictional character whose life is probably too different from that of the actor's. In order to be able to present something convincing and relevant for the audience, it is necessary for artists to practice and commit to the process of looking for the best techniques to understand and create their character.

When actors are new and inexperienced, they need to start with basic exercises that will help them understand their bodies, emotions, and intentions so that they can be convincing performers. Those exercises can also be adapted to and used in different fields such as the English class.

2-The use of drama in education and language teaching

According to Wessels (1987) as quoted by Křivková (2011), "Drama in education uses the same tools employed by actors in the theatre. But while in the theatre everything is contrived for the benefit of the audience, in classroom everything is contrived for the benefit of the learners" (p.9). Therefore, the main goal of using drama activities and techniques in an English class is to benefit the teaching-learning process, especially the development of students' linguistic skills.

Křivková (2011) states that drama education "can be exploited in the instruction in several different ways. However, the most appropriate form of using Drama Education in the context of foreign language teaching is to use it as a method of work" (p. 10). Is has to be a practical process that gets students involved into a creative activity in which they can become more imaginative, more sensitive, more social and more dynamic. It is a hands-on process, which leads to exploration and practice. It is important to understand that nothing is wrong or right, it is just what the student is able to produce at a given time and place, eventually improving through constant practice and interaction. Support and collaboration from instructor to students should be constant. Peer feedback and group support should be encouraged as well.

In the case of language teaching, the use of drama education seems to be more beneficial since it can eventually reduce anxiety and stress. At the same time, it may place students in fictional scenarios where they can use the target language in a realistic and spontaneous way.

For Davies (1990), teachers need to create an atmosphere in which they as well as the students feel comfortable with everything they are going to learn and enjoy. Drama activities, continues the author, could be used at any stage or level. In fact, that is one of the most important advantages of this type of activities: they can be adapted to different levels, contexts and topics.

Nilsson (2009) believes that there are different activities that can be developed based on theatrical methods. For instance, implementing a situational conversation between students in which language can be used in a real context could foster students' speaking skills. Nevertheless, there are other methods that may enhance not just speaking skills but body language, self-confidence among others.

3-Specific aspects to be considered for implementing the activities to be presented in this document

All of the activities to be presented in this workshop are based on the syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica (MEP). They respond to the contents and objectives of the national syllabus for third cycle. In other words, students' ages range from 12 to 15 years old.

The students' linguistic level does not have to be too high. Actually, all activities presented can be adapted to almost any level, and they are all focused on developing students' speaking skills.

Regarding space, all of the activities can be carried out in a regular classroom. The teacher has to make sure to arrange the classroom in a way that there is enough

space for students to be standing and moving. Not all of the students have to be moving all the time, but eventually they will all move, so it is better to consider that.

Students might be working in groups or in pairs. No individual work will be necessary since the activities are aimed at encouraging teamwork, cooperation, and group support. In addition, it is worth mentioning the fact that no materials will be necessary, as students will be using is their bodies and voices.

In general, the teacher will work as a facilitator, someone who is in charge of giving students clear instructions and all the necessary guidance. This has to be a creative process in which students are the main protagonists of their learning. Considering the fact that not all of the students are actors, and that perhaps the interpersonal, intrapersonal or kinesthetic intelligences are not their dominant ones, it is important not to expect perfection at first. Teachers have to motivate students to do their best in each activity.

3. Activities

Activity number one: Talking with numbers
Time: Depends on the number of participant students.
Materials: None.
Grouping: Pairs or groups of three.
Objective: Practicing pronunciation of numbers and using natural intonation in a simple dialogue.
Directions: Students are grouped in pairs or groups of three; each group is given 5 minutes to prepare a short conversation about any simple daily life situation. In their dialogue, students can only use numbers – regular words are not permitted. Once the dialogue is done, each group has to present it in front of the class and the rest of the students have to guess what the dialogue is all about.

Activity number two: Statues
Time: Depends on the number of participant students.
Materials: None.
Grouping: Pairs.
Objective: Presenting and talking about different occupations.
Directions: Students work in pairs, one of them will be a sculptor and the other one will be a statue to be sculpted. This statue represents an occupation. Each pair is given 3 minutes to represent an occupation by "sculpting" the body of one of the team members. When the statue is done, the rest of the class has to guess the occupation represented. Once the guessing is done, the class has to talk about the occupation being represented. They must use simple sentences with the simple present tense.

Activity number three: Charades
Time: Depends on the number of participant students.
Materials: Construction paper.
Grouping: Groups of 4 to 5 students.
Objective: Describing people's physical appearance.
Directions: Students are divided in small groups, and each group is given a set of different names of famous people. These subgroups have to send a member to provide the physical characteristics of the famous person they got on the paper. They can only use gestures – no spoken language is permitted. Students are allowed to provide at least 6 characteristics, if the group does not guess the name after naming these 6 characteristics, they can move on to the next famous person.

Activity number four: Broken TV.
Time: Depends on the number of participant students.
Materials: None.
Grouping: Class participates as a whole together.
Objective: Representing different daily life situations in which natural speech is used.
Directions: Students are going to act out a scene of a daily life situation. At the beginning, two students will start the situation. After a minute or two, the instructor will use a "remote control" to pause the scene; after that, any student from the group may replace one of the students that are acting. This student will say "play" and he or she will have to change the story being presented for a new one. The persons participating in the previous situation must adapt to the new context and improvise. The process can be repeated as long as necessary.

Activity number five: Objects and occupations
Time: Depends on the number of participant students.
Materials: Different objects.
Grouping: Class participates together as a whole in the first part, and then is separated into groups of three.
Objective: Representing different occupations.
Directions: Students sit on the floor, forming a circle. Inside the circle there is a group of different objects. Students are told to observe the objects carefully, and when they feel ready they have to pick one object and start acting like the person that would normally use it. The instructor can ask different questions related to that character. After the students are done, they are divided in groups of three. Each group has to create a short conversation in which they act like the characters they created based on the objects they chose.

Activity number six: Daily routines
Time: Depends on the number of participant students.
Materials: None.
Grouping: Pairs.
Objective: Describing people's daily routines.
Directions: Students work in pairs, and go in front of the class. One of the students will mime his or her daily routine while the other one has to describe it using complete sentences. They can then switch roles.

Activity number seven: Pictures and corners
Time: Depends on the instructor.
Materials: None.
Grouping: The whole class can participate at the same time.
Objective: Describing and representing different situations.
Directions: Students are told that each corner will represent a specific place (the beach, the park, the class, among others). Anytime they are asked to be in those corners they have to portray an action that could be happening at that moment. They have to stay still since they are all in a "picture". However, the instructor can ask different questions related to the actions they are representing, so students have the chance to talk and explain what they are doing.

Activity number eight: greetings and emotions
Time: Depends on the instructor.
Materials: None.
Grouping: The whole class can participate at the same time.
Objective: Greeting each other while portraying different emotions.
Directions: The group is divided in two, they have to form two straight lines, one in front of and separate from each other. The idea is that students are going to run into each other and they have to say "Hi", but the way they say it changes every time. The instructor might ask them to be angry when saying it, or to be sad, or to act like different types of people when saying it. This action can be repeated as many times as necessary.

4. Conclusions

The use of theater and drama techniques in the English class is an effective tool since it provides students with interesting and different ways to assimilate their language learning process.

In this presentation it was easy to see how a set of activities that are normally used in theater can be adapted to make them work in a classroom context. Those are just a few examples of all the things that may be done using drama. These are all interactive and inexpensive ideas since, as may be seen, no materials are necessary for carrying them out, making them even more appealing since they do not require a lot of time of preparation, and are useful to enhance students' oral skills.

These activities have been proved in a real classroom, with actual students and they have showed to be beneficial. They can also be adapted to be used with a different population and different topics as well.

Evidently, it is necessary to consider the fact that not everyone is always willing to be acting in front of others, which would be the most important limitation to consider. In that case, it is the instructor's responsibility to try to motivate and encourage the students to take part of the activities, so that they can discover the benefits that they can provide them with.

Also, it is important to consider the space available for developing the activities. Teachers normally have a chance to work in a classroom. Nevertheless, sometimes and due to space issues, some teachers find themselves developing their classes anywhere. That could be another limitation. It is necessary to be sure of having a place to develop the exercises.

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6. Biography

Jonnathan Salas Alvarado is an English teacher who has worked at the Universidad de Costa Rica and the Colegio Laboratorio del CUP for more than 9 years. He also worked at Universidad Técnica Nacional for 5 years and at Universidad Latina de Costa Rica for one year. He has a Bachelor's degree, a *Licenciatura* degree, and a Master's degree in English teaching. Besides his interest in teaching, he has a major interest in theater and the acting process in general. He has been acting for more than 11 years in Puntarenas. He has had the chance to participate in both national and international theater congresses, and has attended various workshops in this area as well. He has acted with two different groups, and has directed different plays at the high school where he works.

10 Gre@t Websites for Teachers

Ana Cecilia Sawyers
LEB La Trinidad, Costa Rica
sawyersana@gmail.com

Resumen: Los estudiantes de hoy en día no son los mismos individuos que solíamos tener al frente de un pizarrón, a los que podíamos entretener con solo el hecho de dibujar figuras de palito con tiza. Los estudiantes de hoy en día han cambiado radicalmente, así pues el currículo que fue diseñado para el siglo pasado ya está obsoleto y desactualizado. Actualmente hay un nuevo set de requerimientos y necesidades hacia el siglo XXI. Así como lo propone Prensky (2001), el aprendizaje está cambiando y la educación debe también cambiar. Pero, ¿cómo lograr este cambio hacia una nueva realidad llena de retos? La tarea es como motivar a los estudiantes hacia un aprendizaje más interactivo y más entretenido. Bill Gates menciona la tecnología como una herramienta, no el todo. Para motivar al estudiante en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje el profesor es el más importante a tomar en cuenta. La tecnología es solo una herramienta para alcanzar el objetivo, pero hay más, las herramientas de la Web 2.0 combinadas con la tecnología ofrecen una gran variedad de oportunidades para hacer el proceso más participativo y poder así interactuar en la red en un tiempo real. La Web 2.0 es un término colectivo que abarca determinadas aplicaciones de Internet y de la World Wide Web e incluye blogs, wikis, servicios para compartir videos, así como sitios web de redes sociales como Facebook y MySpace, los cuales se centran en el intercambio interactivo y la colaboración y no solo en la presentación de contenidos. Estas herramientas son muy accesibles y motivan la creatividad de los estudiantes. Con el uso de la tecnología los estudiantes reciben y procesan información rápidamente además del hecho de que ellos prefieren gráficos e imágenes en vez de textos. Igualmente, los estudiantes se sienten cómodos usando la tecnología lo que los impulsa a tener libertad de descubrir soluciones a problemas de una forma independiente. Usando estas herramientas los estudiantes van mucho más lejos de un pizarrón, al usar presentaciones interactivas con fotografías digitales, videos y música entre otros. Al estar los estudiantes en contacto con la tecnología, el usarla en el aula es una manera de fomentar el interés y generar un excelente espacio para crear y compartir ideas. Hay cientos de herramientas en la Web que pueden ser utilizadas en el aula.

Palabras clave: Web.2.0, tecnología, siglo XXI, herramientas, redes sociales.

Abstract: Today's students are not the same individuals we used to have sitting still in front of a blackboard, who were entertained by a hand drawing stick figures with a white stick of chalk. Our students have changed radically, so that curricula designed for the old educational system are obsolete and out-of-date. There is a whole new series of requirements and needs in the face of the 21st century. As Prensky put it (2001), learning is changing and education will need to change as well. How should we go about this change towards a new reality with so many challenges? Our job is to motivate students towards an interactive and more entertaining way of learning. Technology, as Bill Gates has said, is just a tool, and not the whole. In terms of motivating students in the teaching-learning process, the teacher is most important, and technology is just one tool for reaching this objective. Combined with technology, the Web 2.0 offers a whole range of opportunities to make the process a

more participatory one, and be able to interact in real time. Web 2.0 is a collective term for certain Internet and World Wide Web applications, including blogs, wikis, video sharing services, and social media websites such as Facebook and MySpace, which focus on interactive sharing and participatory collaboration rather than simple content delivery. These are very accessible tools and foster creativity in students. Through the use of technology students can quickly receive and process information. Added to this is the fact that they prefer charts and images rather than texts. Furthermore, they feel more comfortable using technology, and feel free to find solutions to problems on their own. By using tools such as interactive presentations with digital pictures, videos music, and so forth, students are able to go far beyond "chalk and talk". Because they are in touch with technology, using it in the classroom is a way to encourage their interest and provide for an excellent space for creating and sharing ideas. There are hundreds of tools in the Web that may be used in the classroom

Keywords: Web 2.0, technology, 21st century, tools, social media.

1. Introduction

How to make classes more appealing when technology plays an important role and the social media are part of the students' lives?

The availability and diversity of resources we can find in the Web 2.0 may be a plus in the process of learning. According to Cruz (2007), "Web 2.0 enables us to use resources such as video, chat, forums, files in real time."

Students need to be challenged inside the classroom, and – why not –encouraged to look for more when they just go out of the school.

Fostering creativity and critical thinking, and motivation for self-learning and independence are keys for a different kind of individual who is ready for the new era.

2. Literature Review

The social media provide a variety of tools commonly referred to as Web 2.0, that educators may use to engage students and enhance basic skills (communication, collaboration, creativity, media literacy, technological proficiency, global awareness.) Other tools may be leveraged so teachers may become more efficient and effective at what we do. As students become more entrenched in technology, we need tools to help us keep up with an ever-changing online environment. Simple, new tools make this easier than ever before. From blogs and wikis to amazing presentations and videos, students are able to share their works instead of having a lifeless notebook.

3. Context

Activities may be done in primary school as well as in high school, and are definitely easy and adaptable for both. Levels can vary from elementary to advanced. All subjects in school can benefit from the Web 2.0.

4. Activities

Teachers just need a click to reach these web tools to start using them. Some of them require signing in, but they are free and ready to use.

5. Materials
Web 2.0
www.blogger.com

www.voki.com
storybird.com
gloster.com
www.wordle.net
www.prezi.com
goanimate.com
www.www.eslgold.com
listenaminute.com
diamantepoem.com

6. Conclusions

It is a fact that new times call for new approaches, and new tools are necessary to face students' current needs. Teachers must not be afraid of changes. On the contrary, they must come along the way and see them as handy, appealing tools for students' learning process. Limitations should be considered if there is no good access to the Internet.

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8. Biography

Ana Cecilia Sawyers has been teaching for 20 years now. She graduated from Universidad Nacional. She works full time teaching teenagers in a high school, and some evenings a week teaching adult students who take English courses as a requirement for Business Administration. She believes that professional development is an important way to be up-to date, so she tries to attend seminars and workshops whenever possible. She would love to teach teachers abroad in a near future.

Engaging ESL College Learners with Interactive Open Source Materials

Marieta Angelova Simeonova-Pissarro
Morehead State University, USA
m.pissarro@moreheadstate.edu

Resumen: Es seguro decir que la enseñanza de idiomas de hoy se ha apartado de la pluma y el papel de enfoque y ha entrado en la era electrónica. Esta presentación demostrará maneras en que los maestros de ESL en el nivel universitario pueden involucrar a sus estudiantes con materiales interactivos de código abierto como la televisión independiente de buena reputación, la radio, los periódicos y sitios web; sitios web de apoyo para el uso de libros de texto, así como los materiales disponibles en los sitios web de editoriales especializadas en ESL. La presentadora compartirá su experiencia de trabajo con las fuentes antes mencionadas, así como las preferencias de sus alumnos.

Palabras clave: ESL enseñanza universitaria, materiales de código abierto, el compromiso del estudiante, recursos electrónicos, la participación activa.

Abstract: It is safe to say that today's language education has departed from a pen and paper focus, and has entered the electronic age. This presentation will demonstrate ways in which ESL teachers at the College level can engage their students with open source interactive materials such as reputable independent TV, radio, and newspaper websites; textbook support websites, and materials available on ESL-specialized publishers' websites. The presenter will share her experience working with the above sources and share the preferences of her students.

Keywords: teaching college ESL, open source materials, student engagement, electronic resources, active participation.

1. Introduction

Engagement and participation are at the heart of language teaching at college level. To this end, it is beneficial to have supplemental activities to support ESL/EFL students' learning, spark engaging discussions, and instill an element of interactivity and student choice into an otherwise teacher-focused language classroom. This element of interactivity and engagement is often times made accessible by technology. In the 21st century, advances in technology are appealing to language educators, publishers of ESL textbooks, and ESL/EFL students alike.

This presentation demonstrates how to incorporate several types of authentic sources to language classes at college level. Specifically, how to engage learners with English language public radio and television websites such as www.historychannel.com, www.pbs.org and www.npr.org; newspaper websites such as http://www.nytimes.com/ and http://www.huffingtonpost.com/; and materials made available by ESL-specialized textbook publishers like Cambridge University Press with www.interchangearcade.com; Pearson Longman with http://www.myenglishlab.com/; and Bedford/St. Martin's with Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommer's The Bedford Handbook, found at http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com. Oftentimes, language educators at a college level must develop students' skills in all four modalities: listening, speaking,

reading and writing. Interactive activities are more suitable for teaching in the English classroom, since receptive and productive skills are the two sides of the same process – building proficiency in the second language.

The open source resources listed in this presentation are flexible, interactive, and engaging, and are a suitable supplement to any ESL/EFL classroom. The only downfall of open source materials is their sheer availability and scope. Because there is such a vast selection of them, the expertise and experience of the particular language educator is essential in choosing and combining the best available sources, types of media, and activities in a 50-minute period. The presenter will share her experience working with the above sources and the preferences of her students.

2. Context

The activities in this presentation are meant for higher intermediate to advanced ESL/EFL college level learners at ages 17 to adults. The targeted linguistic abilities include all four modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These activities can be adapted to any level and any ESL/EFL course.

3. Justification

The reason why this tip is valuable for teaching is because technology is an intrinsic part of our students' lives, and should be utilized in language education at every level. Technology and open resources can supplement, enhance, and provide extra time-on-task for language learners, and thus should be incorporated in EFL and ESL classes. This presentation demonstrates several ways to successfully achieve this to promote engagement and enhance motivation.

4. Activities

I. Demonstrate how to access reputable open source materials (10 minutes)
- Past issues of peer-reviewed journals
- Electronic books
- Radio, newspaper, and TV websites
- ESL publisher materials
- Lesson plans
- Games

II. Demonstrate which features from the above open source materials may be used to develop a particular language skill (10 minutes)
- Videos
- Podcasts
- Interactives
- Tests and quizzes
- Games

III. Demonstrate how to group materials from the above open sources to develop integrated skills (10 minutes)
- Developing listening and speaking skills
- Developing reading and writing skills

IV. Q & A.

5. Materials

Webpages:

- Bedford/St. Martin's - Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommer's The Bedford Handbook: http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com
- Cambridge University Press: www.interchangearcade.com
- Center for Media Literacy: http://www.medialit.org/educator-resources; http://www.medialit.org/sites/default/files/FiveKeyQuestionsSample2Pages.pdf
- History Channel: www.historychannel.com
- Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology Open CourseWare http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm
- National Public Radio: www.npr.org
- New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com
- Pearson Longman: http://www.myenglishlab.com
- Public Broadcasting System: www.pbs.org
- TESOL Journal: www.tesoljournal.com

6. Conclusions

Open source materials and media literacy are hot topics of interest to both language educators and ESL/EFL students. We cannot expect students to develop media literacy by themselves, hence the importance of keeping up with the availability of legitimate open source materials and incorporate those in support of English language learners.

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8. Biography

Marieta Simeonova-Pissarro is the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Director at Morehead State University, Kentucky, U.S.A. Marieta holds a Doctorate in Literacy and English as a Second Language from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, and an MA in English Philology from the University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria. Marieta has a 15-year EFL/ESL teaching and advising experience in the United States and Europe, primarily at highschool and college levels. Her areas of research interest are sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and educational technologies.

Integrating Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Modules to Regular College ESL Writing Classes

Marieta Angelova Simeonova-Pissarro
Morehead State University, USA
m.pissarro@moreheadstate.edu

Resumen: Esta presentación se centra en demostrar cómo elegir, evaluar e insertar cursos abiertos masivos (MOOCs) como un módulo en una clase de escritura de ESL avanzada de la universidad. En concreto, la forma de integrar un módulo MOOC de 5 semanas disponible en www.edx.com en un curso presencial de escritura avanzada de ESL de un semestre de duración (16 semanas). Se mostrarán y analizarán las implicaciones pedagógicas, incluyendo la alineación de programas de estudio, la personalización de contenidos, integración de recursos y peligros potenciales de la utilización regular de MOOCs en los planes de estudio de las clases de escritura. Se justificarán las buenas prácticas de este enfoque vanguardista presentando la integración real de módulos MOOC en muestras de estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Cursos masivos abiertos en línea, módulos MOOC, escritura ESL, integración de módulos MOOC.

Abstract:
This presentation focuses on demonstrating how to choose, evaluate and insert a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) as a module in an advanced college ESL writing class. Specifically, how to insert a 5-week MOOC module available on www.edx.com into a semester-long (16 weeks), face-to-face advanced ESL writing class. Pedagogical implications, including syllabi alignment, content customization, resources integration, and potential pitfalls of using MOOCs in regular writing class ESL curricula will be demonstrated and discussed. Best practices of this cutting-edge approach will be substantiated with student samples from actual MOOC module integration.

Keywords: Massive Online Open Courses, MOOC modules, ESL writing, integration of MOOC modules.

1. Introduction

Integrating writing MOOCs into ESL Writing courses can be a daunting task for seasoned and novice ESL professionals alike. This session will discuss how a MOOC was successfully inserted into a 16-week long ESL Writing course to achieve the ultimate teacher-empowerment, and tailor the ESL writing curriculum to maximize international students' motivation and ensure achievement of learning outcomes.

ESL professionals will learn about leading MOOC providers and the steps of how, when, and why to integrate a MOOC module into their ESL writing classes. The need to prep and debrief ESL students to switch from ESL in-class instruction to a blended model of learning and back to textbook and teacher-centered one will be discussed.

Another important issue that the presenter will discuss is keeping ESL students on-track in the course of the MOOC module integration, as well as supplementing student learning with instructor-led summaries and in-class instructor- and student-led

explanations and Q&A sessions. This will be done during two levels of a 5-week MOOC module integrated into two consecutive semester-long intermediate and advanced ESL writing classes.

The above points will be demonstrated with practical examples and demonstrations in the form of screenshots of ESL student participation in the MOOC modules. The examples are from integrating two levels of a Writing MOOC, offered by the University of Berkeley, in two ESL intermediate and advanced writing classes. Session attendees will learn about the step-by-step process of choosing a leading MOOC provider, selecting an appropriate MOOC, reviewing the selected MOOC's components, and deciding when and how to integrate the MOOC into an ESL writing class. Feedback will be discussed on the potential benefits and pitfalls of this approach, in terms of lessons learned from two consecutive semesters – Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 - in which the presenter piloted this model of learning academic writing. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and express their own ideas about integrating MOOCs into ESL writing classes.

2. Literature Review/Bibliography

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Sokolik, M. & Zemach. D. (2014). How to Be a Successful MOOC Student? Wayzgoose Press.

3. Context

The activities in this presentation are meant for higher intermediate to advanced ESL/EFL college level learners. The targeted linguistic ability is academic writing, but incorporates aspects of listening and reading skills.

4. Activities

Teachers who are interested in inserting a MOOC module in their classes for the first time should be aware of the following information.

Time: Researching MOOC providers and ESL Writing Class MOOC offerings can be time consuming. Summer may be a good time to complete this first step in the MOOC integration process.

Materials:
Websites:
www.edx.org UC BerkeleyX
- Principles of Written English BerkeleyX - ColWri2.1x
- English Grammar and Essay Writing BerkeleyX - ColWri2.

Grouping:
Students work independently to access the MOOC site, to locate tests, quizzes, and video lecture segments.

Teachers still meet with ESL students 2 or 3 times per week, as regularly scheduled. However, in class meeting, teachers focus students' attention on deadlines and tests that are due in the MOOC platform review important Grammar materials, and answer questions that students have tried but struggled with. Teachers take time to plan ahead and point out how SLO of their regular ESL writing class match the SLO of the online MOOC writing class.

Adaptations:

It is important to decide when the best time to insert a MOOC module in your Writing ESL class is. If your plan is to require four (4) main essay assignments in a 16-week semester period, you need to decide which one of these four assignments can be replaced by the MOOC module.

Teachers may consider opening a blog in which students can post their questions for the duration of the MOOC module, which is typically 5 weeks long. Teachers should work with their students in class during the 5-week period to work out those difficulties and provide extra time-on-task by pulling in relevant online resources in their regularly scheduled 50-minute college writing ESL classes.

5. Materials

Websites:

www.edx.org UC BerkeleyX

- Principles of Written English BerkeleyX - ColWri2.1x
- English Grammar and Essay Writing BerkeleyX - ColWri2.2x

www.blackboard.com (ESL 091 and ESL 092 course websites)

- Syllabi from the above four (4) courses

6. Conclusions

It is important to plan a MOOC integration module carefully and thoughtfully. Some factors to consider are: length of the MOOC vs. length of the semester; beginning dates of the MOOC vs. self-paced MOOCs; Student Learning Outcomes and objectives of your ESL class vs. SLO and objectives of the MOOC you want to pair your class with; Time Zones of your ESL class and Time Zone in which the MOOC is taught (the last point is important in terms of observing deadlines in the MOOC); Verified/Cost vs. Open/Free Certificate; Design of the MOOC vs. Design of ESL writing class you teach; technical requirements; familiarity of your students with online learning; time management and content management.

If you as an educator take the right decisions in setting up a MOOC module integration, your students and you will experience an unprecedented level of motivation, engagement, and skills improvement. Trial and error are also necessary and inevitable given the proliferation and selection of available MOOCs. The advantages outweigh the pitfalls and may provide your students with the opportunity to take a writing course on an interactive and expert moderated platform. Educators' efforts are rewarded.

7. References

N/A

8. Biography

Marieta Simeonova-Pissarro is the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Director at Morehead State University, Kentucky, U.S.A. Marieta holds a Doctorate in Literacy and English as a Second Language from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, and an MA in English Philology from the University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria. Marieta has a 15-year EFL/ESL teaching and advising experience in the United States and Europe primarily at the high school and college levels.

Oral Production in a Public School

Norka Ivannia Ureña Cruz.
Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), Costa Rica
norka.urena@gmail.com

Resumen: El propósito del presente estudio es la investigación de los factores que influyen en la adquisición de destrezas orales en el idioma inglés por parte de los estudiantes de una escuela pública. Los objetivos se orientan a la investigación de los retos que enfrentan los estudiantes durante el proceso, así como la comprensión del historial de cada uno, la identificación del papel del maestro en el aula y la caracterización de los factores que intervienen en el uso del inglés en clase. La metodología empleada en el desarrollo de la presente investigación consiste en una serie de instrumentos utilizados para la obtención de la información necesaria y su posterior análisis desde una interpretación de los resultados del tipo CUAN-cual (Cuantitativa-Cualitativa). Se enfatiza el análisis de la información cuantitativa que busca "explicarla y predecirla, además de confirmarla y validarla para probar la teoría en proceso; luego verificar dicha información contra los datos cualitativos para describirlos, explorarlos e interpretarlos elaborando en su forma final la teoría propuesta" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 96).La investigación busca factores que impiden el desarrollo de destrezas de producción oral en los estudiantes. Sus opiniones son tomadas en cuenta a través de una encuesta; un instrumento cuantitativo creado con el fin de adquirir información de actitudes y experiencias de esta población. El punto de vista del investigador tiene fundamento en una serie de observaciones que consistieron en una intensa interacción social entre este y los sujetos estudiados, de las actividades llevadas a cabo en la clase. Finalmente, la percepción del educador se toma en cuenta mediante una entrevista confeccionada para actuar como un instrumento organizado que permite recolectar la mayor cantidad de información posible acerca de los estudiantes, la maestra y el ambiente en el cual se desarrolla la actividad educativa, su significado e implicaciones. El principal hallazgo arrojado por el estudio llama la atención del investigador hacia la presencia de más factores negativos que positivos en la adquisición de destrezas de producción oral. Factores que pueden resumirse en: la ausencia de trabajo colaborativo, una deficiencia significativa de exposición a la lengua extranjera, una considerable carencia de interacción en el idioma extranjero entre maestros y estudiantes, la falta de reacciones correctivas y una notable ausencia de habilidades para comunicarse oralmente.

Palabras clave: Oral, producción, lenguaje, ILE, adquisición.

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to research on the factors that influence the students' acquisition of oral production in a foreign language classroom from a public school perspective. The objectives were to research on the speaking challenges while acquiring oral production in an EFL classroom, as well as to describe the student's background, identify the teacher's role, and characterize factors affecting the students when using English in class. In developing the investigation, a set of instruments were used in order to obtain the necessary information for analysis from a QUAN-qual (Quantitative – Qualitative) Interpretation Emphasis was placed on quantitative data, so as "to explain and predict as well as to confirm and validate in order to test the theory; and then contrasting that information with the qualitative to describe, explore and interpret in order to build a theory" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 96). As for its scope, the project looked for the factors preventing the students from developing oral production skills, considering their opinions through a survey and a quantitative instrument intended to acquire information such as their attitudes and experiences. The researcher's

point of view is based on a series of observations characterized by an intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, thereby allowing the researcher to account for the activities carried out in class. Finally, the teacher's perception was collected in an interview, a structured instrument that collected as much information as possible about the students, the teacher, and the environment they interact in, bringing an insight into what happens in the classroom, its meaning and implications. The main finding of the study revealed the presence of more negative than positive factors affecting the acquisition of oral production. These can be summarized as the absence of collaborative work, a significant lack of exposure to the foreign language, a considerable deficiency in teacher-student and student-students interaction, a lack of corrective feedback, and a shortage in oral production skills.

Keywords: Oral, production, language, EFL, acquisition.

1. Introduction

The low English proficiency level exhibit by the students within the educational context represents a boundary teachers have not been able to help them cross just yet; the students struggle when performing in English up to the end of their school life. Teachers try to establish some of the speaking challenges the students face in an EFL classroom while aiming to find out ways to promote their oral production in a more practical way. However, the teaching of EFL in public schools within the Costa Rican educational system should go beyond the task of having the students producing sentences in English within a given context. It is necessary to relate the students' lives with the process of learning the target language in order to make it more appealing and with more meaning.

Recognizing that English is a universal language, used in many different fields, holds a considerable importance for the future of all children, prompts the teachers to focus on what to teach inside the classroom and to keep in mind that effective oral production stands as the ultimate achievement. After all, "the basic problem in foreign-language teaching is to prepare the students to use the language" (Bygate, 1987, p. 3). The students' attitude and acceptance of a foreign language represent an essential component toward its acquisition.

Oral production as the foremost objective of any foreign language learning process relies on the promotion of effective communication among persons, where the individuals need to be able to communicate (Ya-ni, 2007, p. 43.); not just a mere sharing of words or sounds but to effectively correspond with others.

Oral production training holds such main goal as a priority: to prepare students to face the oral communication challenges the outside English-speaking world may hold. Teachers need to center the educational process on helping the students to cope with the fact that nurturing listening and speaking skills represent a challenge they need to overcome in order to fit in this globalized world. Instructors need to use all available resources to create as many opportunities as possible to practice both skills in different contexts so as to help avoiding the panic that students suffer from, when interacting within a situation involving a foreign language.

To gain a better understanding of the factors influencing positively or negatively the acquisition of oral production; the present research seeks to observe the students' instructive background, with the purpose to understand their attitudes and motivations towards English as a foreign language. Considering their previous experience and association with the target language permits to dig into probable causes that block their ability to interact in a foreign language in order to achieve the goal of any EFL course: effective communication (as the ability of the speakers to exchange, understand and

respond to the information shared in the target language). Establishing if the background takes part in early stimulation related to the foreign language acquisition process becomes vital to understand the way the students respond to the same later on. Sadly, reality seems to contradict such premise, since external factors like the environment, understood as the place of comfort and security including interaction and input in order to help the students embrace the learning of a foreign language, fail to acknowledge the importance of learning a foreign language during early life. Human behavior obtains a remarkable influence from things children hear and see. As a result, most of their beliefs and actions arise from learned patterns; students who grow with the wrong idea that English as a foreign language has no importance or those who grow with no exposure to the target language, turn their training into a more challenging process for both the teacher and the scholars.

Motivation stands as a key element when teaching and learning a foreign language. Many children may think that English represents nothing but a strange way people communicate in other countries and some of them would never have a direct contact with it; fears, misconceptions and learned behaviors take students away from the gist of a foreign language, which results into lack of interest and acceptance. Tanveer (2007, p. iii) identifies anxiety, apprehension and nervousness as the commonly expressed symptoms foreign language learners suffer from. These are the type of things that affect not only the learning process, but also the students' ability to perform and develop oral production skills, and removing those feelings constitute a vital stage towards acceptance and learning of the language itself.

The teachers' role remains as a vital factor in helping the students cope with oral production. Bygate (1987, p. 3) mentions that "the first problem in foreign-language acquisition stands in the preparation of the students to use the language, how this preparation takes place, and how successful it is depends greatly on how teachers understand their aims", and certainly on their approach to the learning process. An outstanding teacher looks for the best attention getters and the best activities to achieve effective oral production, considering what Levelt *et al.* (1999, pp. 3-6) suggest as the four major processes of speech production: conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring. This investigation will determine whether the learning strategies currently used in schools provide an adequate input for the students to enjoy and accept without giving up on the EFL learning process. It also establishes whether it enhances oral production well enough to yield out of the classroom, people who are able to communicate at a basic level, in the foreign language.

In order to make the students' EFL learning process more appealing, the development of activities and tasks to motivate them to keep up with the language becomes imperative. The "interactions based on the students' context, opportunities to practice with different routines, ideas and desires, negotiating and/or solving problems and above all, maintaining friendly social relationships by promoting communication strategies" (Buñuelos & Dominguez, 2006, p. 2) constitute the teacher's main concerns when creating and applying materials, activities and tasks in the classroom. Many of the resources available for Costa Rican public schools, to teach English as a foreign language, seem to unsuccessfully develop oral production skills. Pushing students to interact in a foreign language without the proper tools, making them to eventually turn against the foreign language after knowing they "are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in the language, if they have the ability to communicate the information in a cohesive and comprehensible manner" (Riggenback & Lazaraton, 1990, p. 209).

Vast modifications must be implemented to improve the way teaching is carried out and learning is accomplished to educate the students to have a positive understanding of the importance English as a foreign language represents as a good starting point. A drastic progress in the design of the didactic resources needs to follow in order to allow the students to obtain a most sought EFL first-class education. The answer to the question of which are the factors that influence positively or negatively the acquisition of oral production in a public school, stands as the starting point of the present investigation, leading the researcher to discover what makes the students more or less interested in the target language. It also sets the parameters for future research on the oral production field with the intention to develop suitable, appropriate materials and lessons for the students to maintain their motivation throughout the entire foreign language learning process.

2. The study

This study intended to explore the factors that influence the students' acquisition of oral production in a foreign language classroom from a public school perspective. The objectives were to research on the speaking challenges while acquiring oral production in an EFL classroom. Among these challenges are: a low English proficiency level exhibited by the students within an educational context, representing a boundary teachers have not been able to help students cross just yet; thus, students struggle when performing in English up to the end of their school life; the teaching of EFL in public schools within the Costa Rican educational system should go beyond the task of having the students produce sentences in English within a given context; oral production as the foremost objective of any foreign language learning process relies on promoting an effective communication among persons, as individuals need to be able to communicate (Ya-ni, 2007, p. 43.) – not merely sharing words or sounds, but effectively correspond with each other. The researcher aimed to describe the student's background as an essential component in the acquisition of a foreign language. Evidence shows that language learning is the result of active processes of knowledge construction by the learner. This knowledge emerges as a result of interactions between innate intellectual abilities, social forces, and environmental conditions that certainly shape their development. The evidence supporting background as an educational aid shows that "What we understand of something is a function of our past experiences, our background knowledge, or our schemata" (Carrell, 1983, p. 81) defines our way of learning. Many theorists underline the importance of previous experiences or background knowledge in the acquisition of a foreign language since the individual comprehends something only if it relates to something already known. The home environment related to EFL acquisition supports the fact that previous experiences – particularly involving listening to the foreign language– contribute widely to its acquisition and to the process of achieving oral proficiency. It remains clear that children attain their first language without explicit learning. However, a foreign language is normally learned as an acquired process that is heavily dependent on the environmental setting the child lives in. Early experiences with the foreign language nurture what the person is capable of becoming during adulthood. According to Shonkoff & Phillips (2000, p. 1), "The structures supporting social, emotional and mental development are developed in early childhood; capacity to build these foundations is the greatest in early childhood and decreases over time." According to the same authors, "The brain develops rapidly in early childhood, creating periodic *blooms* of synapses (connections among neurons) that present *windows of opportunity* for brain development; by age six the brain is about 95% of the size of an adult brain"

(Shonkoff, & Phillips, 2000, p. 21). The early language stimulation process shows there is an optimal period for language acquisition during early childhood, which would allow a learner to develop a pronunciation very similar to that of a native speaker. The fact that human behavior influences foreign language acquisition explains how children, who constantly find themselves exposed to foreign language aural stimuli, respond much better than children with less or no contact to the foreign language in their early life. The media can account for much of this so-called learning since television, radio, the internet, books, magazines, etc. help students to come in contact with a language different than their mother tongue. Moreover, today's technologies provide valuable input that offer great opportunities for self-learning and self-growth within the boundaries of a new language. A child will reproduce whatever s/he listens to and sees at home, at school, in their community, etc.

Another idea focused on identifying the teacher's role. A study published by Thomas Peacock explains that teachers have mainly two kinds of characteristics – their teaching characteristics, and their personal ones. According to the author "Teaching characteristics include having cultural knowledge, being interested in students, listening to and understanding their problems, and using multiple approaches to solve them. Personal characteristics include being caring, being friendly, having patience and respecting students" (2006, p. 12). Along these lines, Edward Pajak (2003, p. 23-24) distinguishes four groups of teachers; *inventing teachers* expect their students to use their learning in life, and pay special attention to their ability to solve problems; *knowing teachers* emphasize on the importance of becoming proficient in a particular field, focusing on methods that allow their students to absorb knowledge; *caring teachers* help their students understand and respect themselves, and get along with others; and finally, *inspiring teachers* encourage their students to search for independence in their lives based to their goals and personal values. Teachers need to recognize the importance of bringing not only skills and knowledge to the classroom, but also their personalities.

The research also proposed to characterize factors that influence the students when using English in class, preventing them from developing oral production skills. In this line of thought, the Role of Input and Interaction described by Stephen Krashenin in his book The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implication" (1985), explains that "Humans acquire language in only one way, by understanding messages or by receiving *comprehensible input*" (p. 2), According to this input hypothesis there are only two possible outcomes. On the one hand, "Speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause. Speech cannot be taught directly but *emerges* on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input" (p. 2). On the other hand, "If input is understood and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided" (p. 2). Thus, several studies have tried to prove the importance of interaction as a means of helping students in the process of acquiring a foreign language. The significance of its role comes from the fact that it is through interaction that individuals get to share and communicate what they have learned in the foreign language. Interaction is considered to be "beneficial because it can provide implicit reactive feedback that may contain data for language learning, such feedback can be obtained through adjustments that occur in negotiated interaction" (Mackey, 1999, p. 566).While some students feel really comfortable in a foreign language environment others struggle with every aspect of it. Thus, anxiety is the most significant factor preventing the students from performing well during EFL class time. Campbell & Ortiz (as cited in Von Wörde, 2003, p. 1) have reported that at least "one-half of all language students experience a startling level of anxiety." The main problem with anxiety is that it "inhibits the learner's ability to

process incoming language and short-circuits the process of acquisition. If anxiety impairs the cognitive function, students who are anxious may learn less and also may not be able to demonstrate what they have learned" (Von Wörde, 2003, p. 21). The author also lists the factors that contribute to anxiety, where non-comprehension is one of the major issues. Students therefore seem to show anxiety whenever they feel unable to understand what the teacher says in class. The speaking activities represent a challenging situation, just like committing errors or the fear of being corrected in front of the whole class, where students may feel silly and over-exposed, ending up in frustration.

Interaction issues are another factor influencing the use of English in class. Lack of self-confidence remains as the major issue when it comes to learning to speak a foreign language; a student who fails to believe in his or her own capabilities for the new material is most likely to fail in the quest. A student with a little self-confidence may always need the opinion of others instead of acting based on his own desires and motivations. He will always look for approval and avoid either positive or negative criticism, avoid participating for fear of being observed and judged, and will always try to avoid eye contact – especially when interacting in the foreign language. Going hand in hand to self-confidence are motivation and attitude, playing a key role on the students' performance in the classroom. "The matter of a learner's attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impact on learning a language" (Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, &Alzwari, 2012, p. 119). Attitude as an affective factor depends on many circumstances and will eventually either increase or decrease students' achievements. This means that "Learning a language should be approached primarily as a social and psychological phenomenon rather than as a purely academic one" (Abidin, et.al., 2012, p. 121).

All motivational processes are notable of the goals and objective achievements of the students. The goal orientation for learning or acquiring a foreign language that a student may have, determines the level of interest and commitment put into the task itself. "Students can be motivated in multiple ways and the important issue is understanding how and why students are motivated" (Linnenbrink &Pintrich, 2002, p. 313). Motivation is rather individual, something that is not possible to learn or teach, it comes with what a person feels or expects in relation to a particular topic or subject. Since English is a foreign language in Costa Rica, most students struggle with their fears and insecurities because they are not familiar with it, and they end up using it only inside the classroom, thereby having a limited time and little encouragement to either learn or practice it in real-life situations. Among the students' fears and insecurities when interacting in the foreign language, it is important to emphasize that the environment – understood as that outside of the classroom – fails to offer opportunities for students to practice their speaking skills frequently, and people in general tend to judge those who try it out, creating in the students a feeling of nervousness and self-consciousness. These students are more likely to fail in the oral production tasks, since they are not willing to let loose and use the language no matter how good or bad they might be. The fear of making a fool of themselves prevents them from properly acquiring and using the language without much thinking of the errors and mistakes, rather than concerning themselves about nothing but their own proficiency.

The main finding of the study revealed the presence of more negative than positive factors affecting the acquisition of oral production into third grade students. These can be summarized as the absence of collaborative work, as it was observed that even when the students acknowledged having a good time when working in groups or in pairs, the teacher never encouraged collaborative work among them, so they worked

next to each other but never together as a group. Repetition and drills were used more frequently than the students were sought to be introduced to real language, its use in real life situation and to communicate with each other Students repeated words in isolation and never in a context and with no meaning for them. There was a significant lack of exposure to the foreign language; English was used to address the students in very few occasions. Teachers seemed to prefer using Spanish when giving explanations and instructions, and as a result, the students did not understand whenever the teacher used the foreign language. Such behavior reduces the students' opportunities for language acquisition since it prevents them from the necessary exposure, and if we add the environmental factors, exposure is rather limited. There was a considerable deficiency in teacher-student and student-students interaction in the foreign language. Although the students liked their teacher, their interaction was mainly in Spanish, and the same thing happened among classmates: had there been some English interaction, students would have benefited from having as much practice and encouragement as possible. A lack of corrective feedback. During class observations, it was possible to determine an absence of corrective strategies. The teacher hardly ever offered opportunities to improve the language used by helping the students with the correct pronunciation and intonation of words. Although the students said that the teacher corrected them, when comparing the survey results with those obtained during observation it became evident that no correction was taking place. Finally, a shortage in oral production skills, since there was evidence of the poor interactions in the foreign language and the activities failed to offer opportunities for the students to use the language.

3. Recommendations

With the purpose of helping further studies related to the main topic of the research "oral production in a public school," and of serving as a guide for teachers into improving those aspects that might enhance the students willingness for language acquisition, the recommendations drives to mention the features that needs to be improved either by the teacher or the researcher and that marked a difference in the obtained results.

3.1.1 To the researcher

The most significant recommendation is the time, a longer period of time would have given the opportunity to conduct a deeper study, to apply the instruments to a bigger population (students and teachers) in order to contrast the observations results, and the answers to the survey and questionnaire, having more time to develop the research could have improved the findings a great deal.

In a further investigation it could be valuable to make a study with first cycle students by assessing their level of oral production skills since the very beginning (1st Grade), it will also be fascinating to conduct a research taking two different groups of first grade students and following their progress through all first cycle in order to compare the oral production skills gathered at the end.

3.1.2 To the teacher
1- It is necessary for teachers to incorporate collaborative work as a great strategy to show students how to communicate with a peer in English, using songs to "create a learning environment; to build listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills; to increase vocabulary; and to expand cultural knowledge" (Lems, K. 2001, p. 1); the use of games provides the opportunity "to capture students' attention; lower their stress; and give them the chance for

real communication" (Deesri, A. 2002, para. 1); besides that, it serves for them to learn by playing and having fun with the language and to create a positive attitude towards it.

2- In terms of error correction strategies, the teacher needs to be more committed, helping the students with the pronunciation of the words and checking their progress every step of the way. It is an urgent need to introduce the students to the language in a slow yet continuous evolution during their learning process, challenging them more and making them practice the language as much as possible inside the classroom, which is the environment controlled by the teacher.

3- Oral production is a skill the teachers need to focus on, especially during I Cycle, mainly because MEP allows them to test only those abilities, and because giving the students as much opportunities as possible to interact and be part of English speaking environment will help them to enhance their oral production skills at school. However, it is important to also take the advantage of writing and reading exercises, but always considering the skills students can be introduced, depending on their age and level and focusing completely on trying to fulfill their oral production needs.

The researcher believes that the responsibility of educating children remains a shared task between parents, teachers and society. Ernest Istook said, "Education begins at home and I applaud the parents who recognize that they, not someone else, must take responsibility to assure that their children are well educated" (2006, p. 7205). Parents need to understand that English education is no longer just a subject in school; it is a *tool* that can help them to reach their goals in the future. It is necessary that parents encourage and help students to cope with the foreign language by providing as much interaction and contact with it as possible. Media works perfectly for such undertaking since it offers stimulus and early cognitive development.

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5. Biography

Norka Ivannia Ureña Cruz was born in 1980, in San José, Costa Rica. She attended UNED where she got her Bachelor´s Degree in Education Cycles I and II with emphasis on English Teaching in the year 2012 and a Licenciate Degree in English Teaching Cycles I and II in 2014. She is now a teacher in Carmen Lyra School. Norka holds a special interest on psychopedagogy and she is planning to start her Master's Degree on this same field at UNED.

Increasing Students' Interest in Writing with Storybird

Johanny Vallecillo Alfaro
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica, Costa Rica
johannyvallecilloalfaro@gmail.com

Resumen: Storybird es un sitio web gratuito en el que los estudiantes pueden utilizar colecciones de arte e inspirarse a escribir historias. Esta página puede ayudar a los educadores a desarrollar trabajos colaborativos dentro del aula. Ningún estudiante requiere de habilidad artística. Una vez que se eligen las imágenes, solo deben ser arrastradas para ilustrar la historia. Los educadores tienen la opción de crear una clase y asignar proyectos que coincidan con las necesidades de sus alumnos. Los estudiantes pueden colaborar entre si dentro del mismo salón o incluso estando en lugares diferentes. Este sitio tiene el potencial de motivar a los estudiantes a centrarse más en el contenido de su escritura, conceptos e ideas sobre distintos temas. En nuestro contexto, el uso de este recurso puede impulsar la creatividad no solo en aquellos que aman la escritura, sino también en aquellos que están interesados en el uso de la tecnología.

Palabras clave: Escritura, contar historias, en línea, proyecto, tecnología.

Abstract: Storybird is a free website in which students can use art collections to be inspired to write stories. This page can help educators develop collaborative working within the class. Students are not required to have any artistic skills. Once the images are chosen, they just have to be dragged and dropped to illustrate the story they are creating. Educators have an option to create a class and assign writing projects that match their students' needs. Learners can collaborate among themselves, whether in the same class or in different places. This website has the potential of motivating students to focus more on the content of their writing, on concepts, and ideas on a variety of topics. In our context, the use of this resource can boost creativity not only in those who already love writing but also in those who are keen on using technology.

Keywords: Writing, storytelling, online, project, technology.

1. Introduction

Developing writing skills in high school is a necessity. Teenagers who struggle with writing are not fully equipped to meet university demands. The most common writing activities that students engage in are writing short answer responses to homework, responding to reading material, completing worksheets, summarizing reading material, and making lists. Together, these activities involve little extended analysis or interpretation – in other words, writing without composing. In contexts where written tests and summaries are the primary means for assessing students' progress, learners would be less likely than their more skilled classmates to use writing to support and extend what they are learning in content classes.

Employees in a wide range of jobs and in the government must be able to create clearly written documents, visual/text presentations, and reports. Most life contexts call

for some level of writing skill. This is why as teachers we must aim at preparing students who are capable of adapting to various writing needs.

In the world we live in today, technology plays an important role. Today's children have grown up with lots of technology catching their attention. The use of email and text messaging has become the number one form of communication among professionals and students. Most of these people would retain more information if it comes to them through a digital source. Including more and more technology into our lessons may prove to be a catalyst for the motivation and overall performance of our students. As a way to fight the distraction caused by the various social media and messaging services, teachers may try to create activities that incorporate some form of technological tool.

Storybird is a service that uses collaborative storytelling to connect students and teachers. Students can create individual stories, or work together in small groups by writing their own text and inserting pictures. This process helps incorporate more appealing elements (images, animations, sounds, etc.) that will allow them to customize their ideas according to their personalities, thoughts, and feelings. Not only are students given an opportunity to use technology, but they also have the potential to become more imaginative with their stories (Robin, 2008).

A student can start a Storybird by finding an artist and then writing a story based on that artwork. Once they finish their story, they have the option of sharing their Storybird privately or publicly on the platform. The final product may be viewed online or printed. The site is designed to be safe place for those who are still under 18 years old. It is not a virtual world. There are no chat engines, so students cannot have a real-time conversation with anyone. No information is requested to set up a free account, except for an email address. All Storybirds that are shared publicly are reviewed before appearing on the library.

2. Context

Based on the information found in the Education Overview published by Costa Rica's Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE), The National English Syllabus implemented by the Ministry of Education uses the Common European Framework (CEF) to establish its goals. Categories are clearly established in the CEFP by skill proficiency level. Thus, a C1 level graduate is a "competent user", while a B2 level graduate understands the main ideas of complex texts, and communicates with relative ease and spontaneity. A B1 level graduate comprehends the main ideas of information in standard language.

In Costa Rica, there are academic and technical schools for secondary education. Academic instruction in secondary education takes 5 years of study (seventh to eleventh grades), and students usually graduate at age 17. On the other hand, technical instruction takes 6 years (seventh to twelveth grades), and students usually graduate at age 18 with a technical degree.

At present, there are 60 universities in Costa Rica, five of which are public (Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR), Universidad Nacional (UNA), Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica (TEC), and Universidad Técnica Nacional (UTN). The rest are privately owned and managed.

Thanks to the quality of the English courses provided by the public education system, universities and private schools nationwide, in 2013 Costa Rica was ranked as the number one country in Latin America in the TOEIC (694) test and second in TOEFL iBT in 2013.

(Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (2014) Education Overview. Taken from http://cdn.cinde.org.s3.amazonaws.com/content/resources/7.pdf?1416441023).

3. Activities

This interactive presentation is divided into three sections. The first part lasts 30 minutes. It includes an introduction of the presenter to the audience, and a motivation about the benefits of using Storybird as a tool for improving writing skills in high school and college students by using technology in our classrooms.

The second part consists of a description on how to create teachers' and students' accounts. As a way to familiarize the audience with the website, individually each person will have to create a student account and register in the class that the presenter has previously created. They will need to create a short story using the images provided by Storybird. This will take 40 minutes.

For the third and last section of the presentation, the facilitator will ask for volunteers to share their story with the rest of the audience. Finally, there will be 10 minutes for questions, comments, and suggestions.

4. Materials

Motivational Quote for the beginning of the presentation.
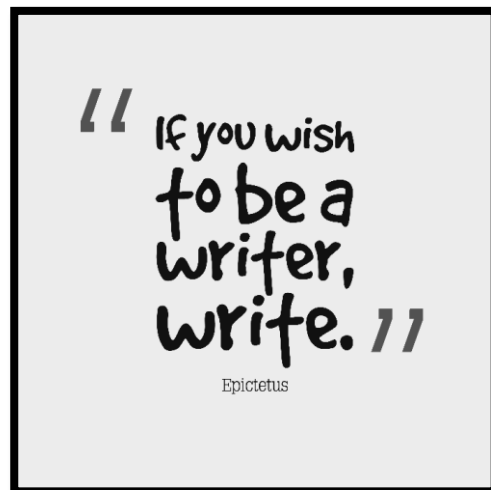
Reflection quote for the end of the presentation
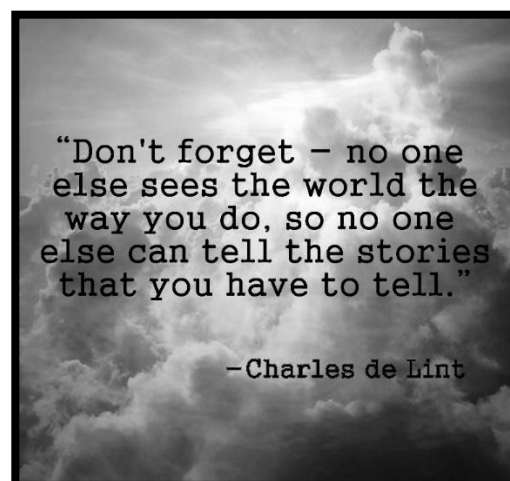
5. Conclusions

Incorporating technology into the classroom could be difficult for some educators because not all schools in Costa Rica have computers available for their learners and staff. Besides, some teachers may lack the training to be as computer-literate as their students (Giacomini, L. 2015. Using "Storybird" in Young Learners' Creative Writing Class. Retrieved from http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/etf_53_4_pg35-37_508.pdf).

However, the purpose of this proposal is to motivate teachers to try tasks and projects in which learners have to incorporate computers, art, and creativity. Assignments should not be seen as just something that students have to do to get a grade and pass their class, but rather as activities in which they can express themselves and rejoice while working. As teachers, we should aim at changing our students' way of thinking towards classwork and homework. We can achieve this by integrating more and more resources from our students' context, and teach them to use these resources in a more meaningful and productive way.

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7. Biography

Johanny Vallecillo started his teaching career in 2000. He earned both a Bachelor's Degree and Masters of Education with emphasis in English Teaching from Universidad Latina de Costa Rica. His experience includes teaching elementary and high school for the Ministry of Public Education (MEP). In 2007, he moved to North Carolina, USA, where he taught for five years. He has been teaching English at Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica on its campus in San Carlos since 2014.
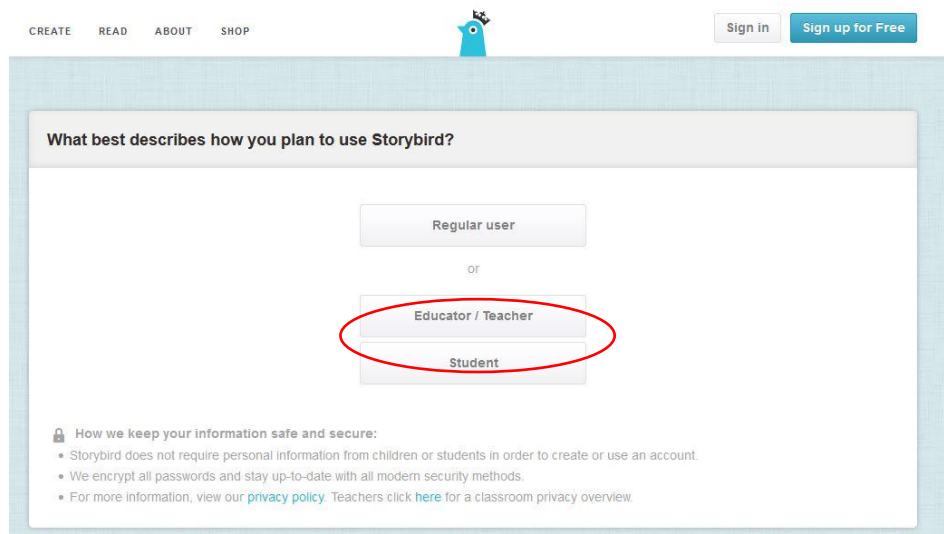
8. Appendices

Appendix A

Creating a Storybird Tutorial
www.storybird.com

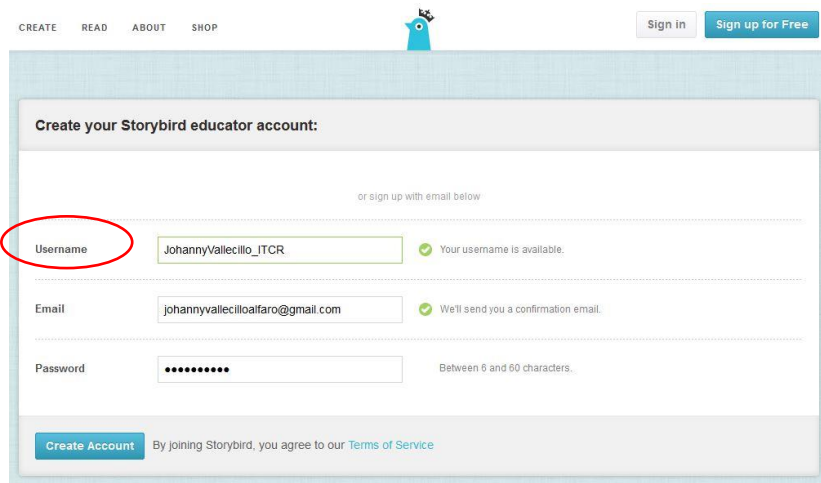M.A. Johanny Vallecillo Alfaro
Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica

Registering

- Go to www.storybird.com. Click on **Sign up for Free**.

- Account Type: Select **Educator/Teacher**

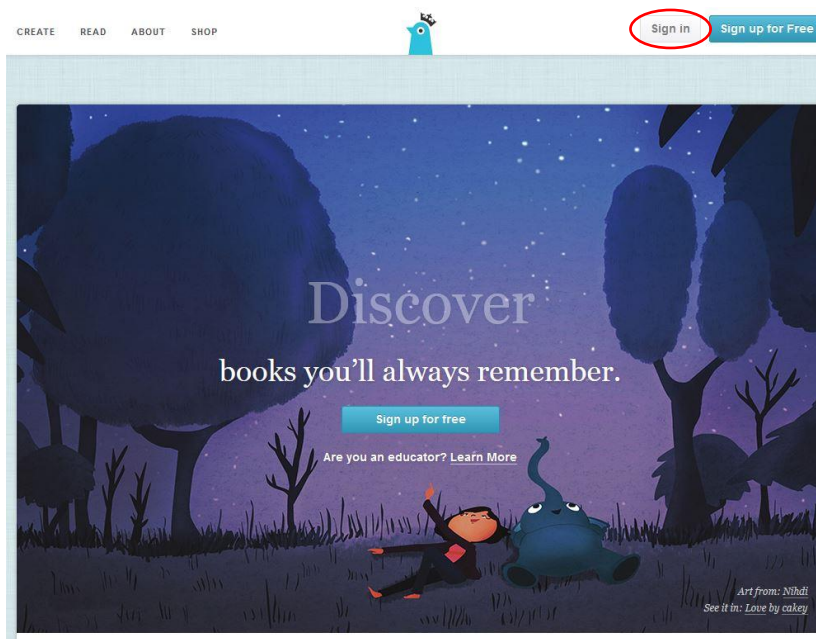- Fill in the information requested. Click on Create Account and check your email to receive confirmation.

Logging in

- Follow the instructions on your email. You should be re-directed to the Storybird website.

- If for some reason the link on your email does not automatically log you on, go to www.storybird.com and click on **Sign in**.

Creating a Storybird for your students to read

- Click on **Create**
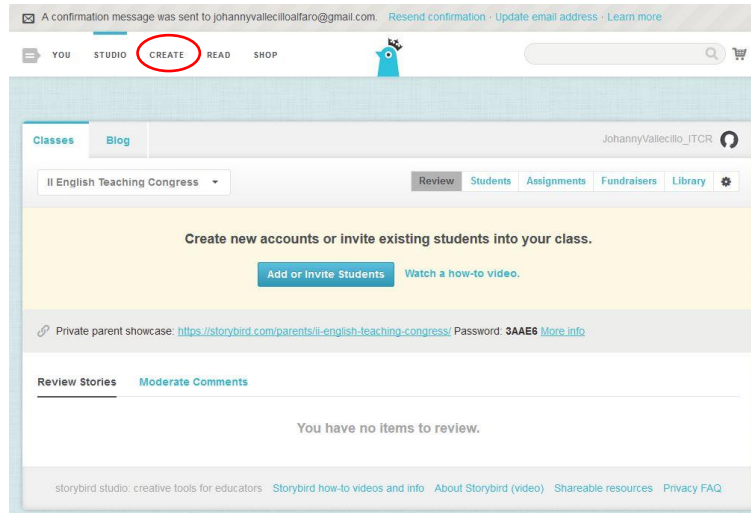
- Select **Art**. Click on **Recently Added** to see more options. Then select the artist of your choice.
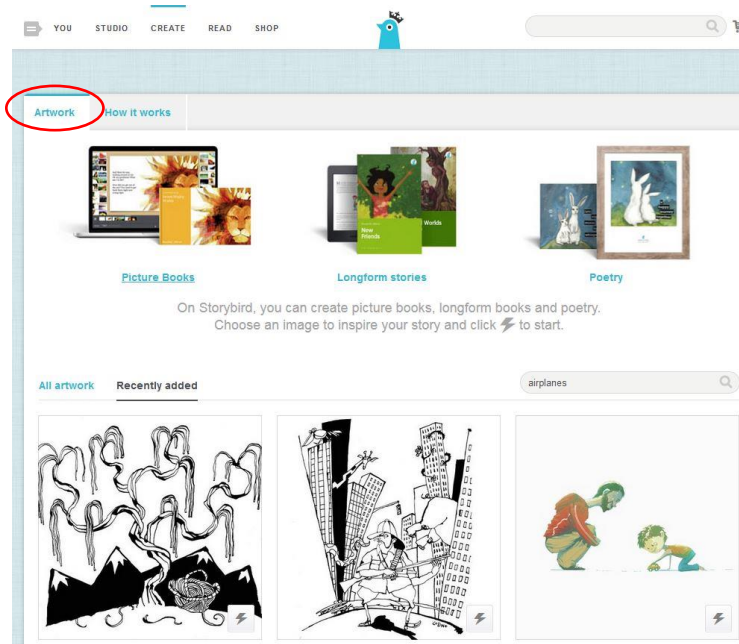
- Once you have chosen the art, click on **Use this Art**
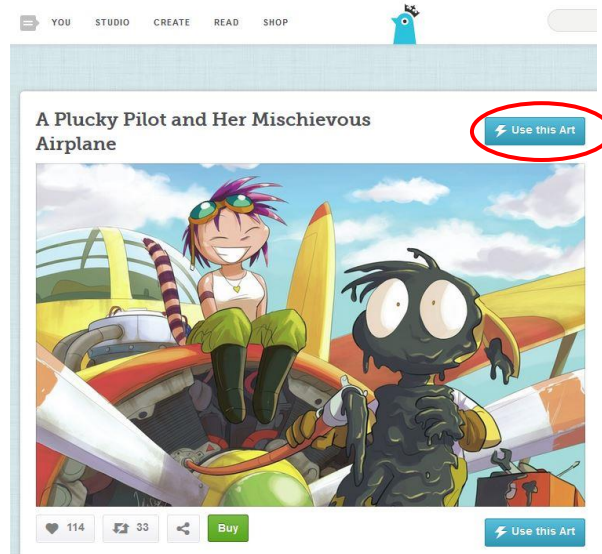
- Click on **Use this art for a: Picture Book**
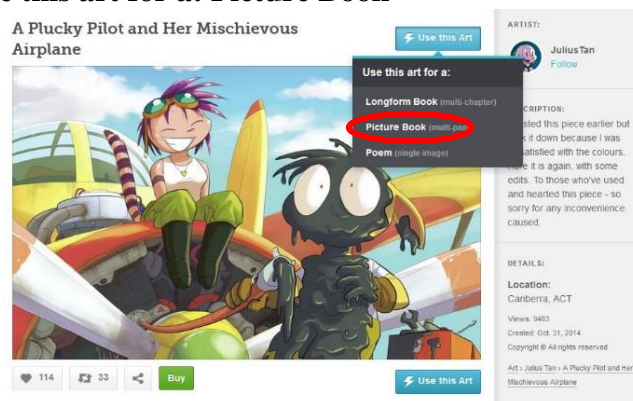
Creating a Storybird

- Drag pictures onto your page and arrange them any way you want.
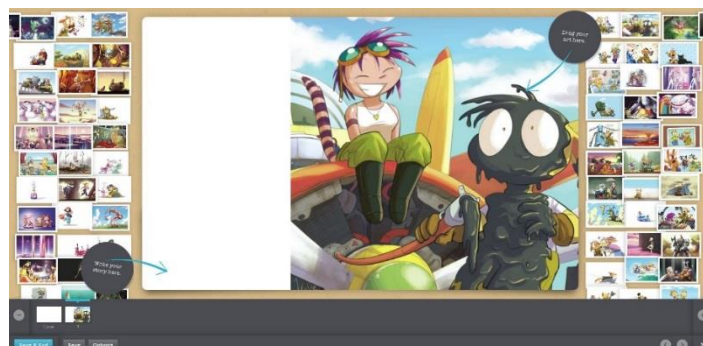
- Begin writing on the space provided.
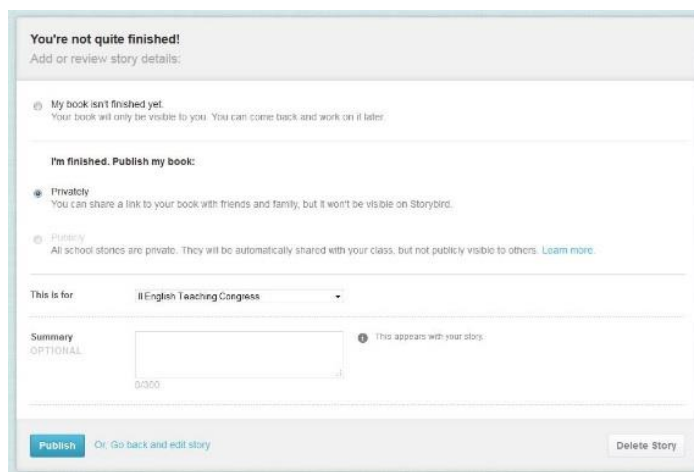

- Add pages by clicking on the **Add Page** button.

- Now that you can add pages, continue writing your Storybird.

- If you haven't set up your title page this is the time to do so. Click on the **Cover Page** of your Storybird.

- When you are finished click on **Save and Exit.**

- Once you are ready to publish, read the options carefully and choose those that match your objectives.

- Congratulations. You have created your first Storybird.
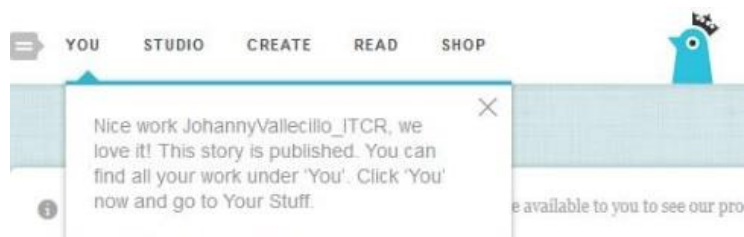
Setting Up your Storybird Classroom

1. Click on **Studio**. Then click on **Classes**.
2. Click on **Students**.
3. It's better to use OPTION 2.

Adding Classes

- If you want to add another class, click on **Add a Class**. Fill in the requested information and click on **Create your Class**.
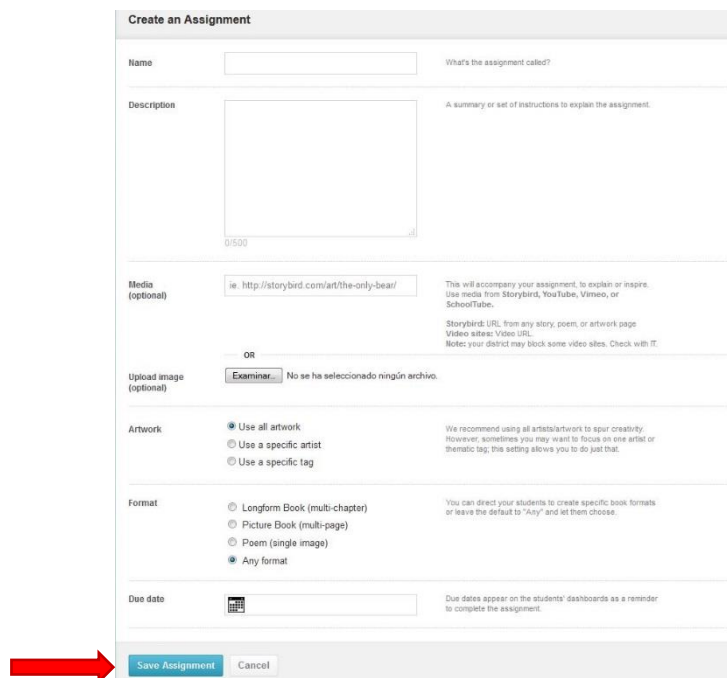
Creating Assignments

- Select the class you wish.
- Click on **Assignments**.
- Select **Create an Assignment**.
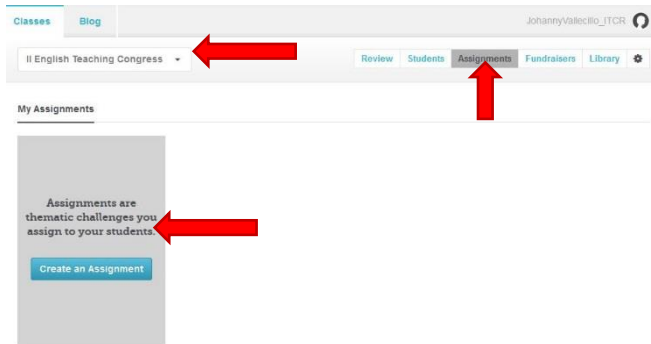
- Fill in the Assignment information and click on **Save Assignment.**

Logging in as a Student

- Students will be able to see the assignment you created for them.
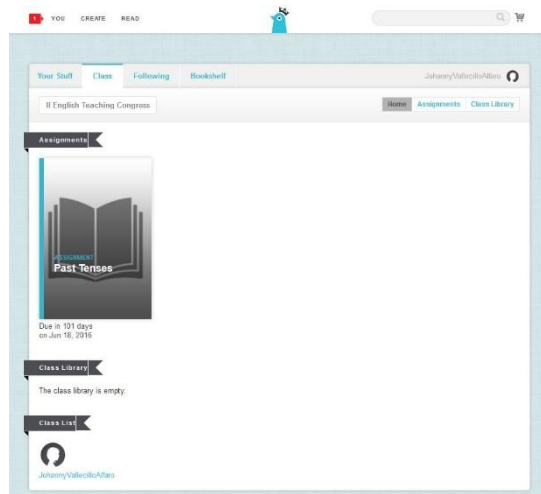
Checking your Student's Work

- Log in as the teacher.
- Click on **Classes**.
- You will be able to see your students' work under **Class Library**.

A Leveling English Course for Prospective First Year Students of the English Majors of the UCR, SO

Hazel Vega Quesada
Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica
hazelveg@gmail.com

Natalia Ramírez Casalvolone
Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica
nataliarc@hotmail.com

Resumen: La presente investigación, aún en marcha, propone el diseño e implementación de un curso de nivelación para los posibles estudiantes que han sido admitidos en las carreras de educación con énfasis en inglés en la Universidad de Costa Rica, Sede de Occidente. Este proyecto empezó en Enero del 2015 como una posible respuesta-solución a las situaciones que han enfrentado los estudiantes con un nivel bajo de Inglés. El curso ha tenido resultados positivos respecto al mejoramiento de las habilidades de comunicación oral en inglés y la actitud hacia el aprendizaje del nuevo idioma.

Palabras clave: Curso de Nivelación, habilidades de comunicación oral en inglés, aula multinivel, principiantes, estudiantes universitarios.

Abstract: This in-progress research project proposes the design and implementation of a leveling course for students admitted to various English Majors at the UCR, Sede de Occidente. This project began in January 2015 in response to situations faced by learners with a poor English level. The course has had positive results regarding improvement of communication skills and attitude towards the learning of L2 students.
.
Keywords: Leveling course, communication skills, multilevel classroom, beginners, beginners, college students.

1. Introduction

This research project proposes the design and implementation of a leveling course for students with a low level of English who are admitted to various English Majors at the Universidad de Costa Rica, Sede de Occidente (SO, the Regional Western Campus). Because students majoring in in English come from all over the country and have various academic backgrounds in English, the first and second university semesters are usually characterized by having multilevel classrooms, e.g. incorporating beginner, intermediate, and advanced students.

Therefore, this project began in January 2015 in response to common situations derived from this reality that affects freshman students. Among these are a lack of motivation, frustration, poor academic performance, as well as affective and academic difficulties associated with multilevel classrooms, often leading to a considerable amount of dropouts.

Two courses have already been taught, one in 2015 and one in 2016. Preparation of this course starts in early January when admitted students are called to take a diagnostic English Test to measure their speaking, grammar, vocabulary and listening skills. Students selected for the course usually score below 70. They attend classes during the month of February, for a total of 64 hours.

This course emphasizes on listening and speaking skills because these are the weaker areas students and the most relevant for the beginning of the major. However, the other language learning skills and subskills are integrated too, as well as learning strategies for beginners. Two English professors of the Bachelor and *Licenciatura* Degrees in the Teaching of English are in charge of designing, preparing, and implementing this course.

Objectives
General Objective:

To design, implement, and assess a leveling course for students admitted to the English majors of the UCR, SO in order to develop basic speaking and listening skills that could facilitate a better academic performance in the first year of the major.

Specific Objectives:

1. To offer admitted students spaces inside and outside of the class to develop basic skills that would give them necessary tools to be better prepared to face the challenges of the first Major courses.
2. To list administrative and academic tasks needed to implement a leveling course in a university.
3. To implement team teaching techniques and other relevant language teaching methodologies that cater effectively to beginner students' needs.
4. To explore the students' perceptions about the benefits of the course in terms of academic and affective factors.

2. Literature Review

English has been taught as a foreign language in high schools in Costa Rica dating back to the year 1900 (Ministry of Public Education, MEP, 2004). According to MEP policies (2004), public high school students in Costa Rica study the language in three 40-minute lessons a week during the third cycle, and in five 40-minutelessons during the last cycle. In night-shift high schools, these sessions are reduced to 35 minutes, but students receive five lessons a week from seventh to eleventh grade.

However, different sources continuously reveal that neither children nor teenagers or young adults who are taught English as part of their academic program have an acceptable language level, meaning they are not able to accurately communicate in English. For example, in 2015 Costa Rica was ranked six points below its ranking in 2014 in the EF EPI (Education First English Proficiency Index). The EF EPI test measures language abilities in writing, listening, and reading, and is conducted by EF English First[6]. Moreover, according to the company's web page (http://www.ef.edu/epi/) their research shows that better English correlates with higher

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[6]EF English First is an international education company focusing on language, academics, educational travel, and cultural experience. With a mission to open the world through education, EF was founded in 1965" (Education First, 2016, p.1).

income and better quality of life. The test is done in 70 countries around the world, and considers 910,000 adults (who take the test).

As stated in the document Education First (2014), Costa Rica is ranked 43 – the same as 2014– and classified as having a very low English level. Nevertheless, in their analysis of Costa Rica's situation in particular, EF acknowledges that the country is determined to improve this result, thereby referring to MEP's effort in training English teachers of the public sector.

Over the last decades, educational authorities have started to pay attention to the way English is taught in the public education system (MEP, 2004). Other than MEP offering trainings to teachers who score low in the TOEIC test, in January 2016 MEP sent a proposal to the Higher Education Counsel to change the current English Syllabus. The argument is that it is rather pertinent that students finish high school with an English level that allows them to communicate, interact, do shopping and read texts, and that the new syllabi would achieve this (Cerdas, 2016).

Meanwhile, it is worth delving on the reasons why Costa Ricans' English levels remain poor, while also offering some possible explanations for this. For example, CR Hoy digital daily reports that English teaching and learning in Costa Rica is a worrying issue for the educational sector. The text mainly points out two disturbing factors. The first is that English teachers are not well prepared, while the second is they teach English using Spanish (Ugarte, 2015).

A key element seems to be that English Major students are not properly trained.

As stated by Veenman (1984),

> The transition from pre-service to in-service teaching can be a traumatic experience, as teachers move from the ideal world of the college classroom to the reality of everyday teaching. New teachers may experience some problems because they have had only general training, and thus are not ready for a specific job in a specific school (p.43).

That is why it is essential that mainly beginning teachers, and also potential teachers majoring in both state and private universities are trained to fulfill more effectively the needs of the Educational System is not fulfilling in order for students to acquire a high to advanced English level.

It is obvious that teaching English in Spanish cannot produce positive results among students. However, even if all teachers started to use English in their classroom, another major obstacle might arise, namely the lack of time for language practice because the number of English lessons taught per week is reduced. This forces most teachers to focus attention on syllabus contents instead of language use during the class period.

Furthermore, teachers often complain about not having time for professional development. Many times, teachers are pressured to follow and complete MEP's syllabus no matter what. Moreover, they are constantly asked to fill out administrative paperwork, so that teaching is rarely given the time, space, and support required.

Beyond all the obvious repercussions students face because of their lack of English language proficiency –e.g. fewer job opportunities and limited opportunities in today's globalized world– there is a key implication that researchers have encountered over the years. Being faculty members of the Bachelor and *Licenciatura* Degree in the Teaching of English at the Universidad de Costa Rica, Regional Western Campus, the researchers have seen how former high school students, e.g. freshman students of the English Majors suffer all the drawbacks of not knowing the language. Thus, in the following pages a proposal is presented by the authors to implement a leveling course

for these students. This course is intended to somehow reduce the side effects of belonging to a Costa Rican Educational System that fails in preparing bilingual students.

Leveling Courses

According to Zamora (2012), previous knowledge may be associated to academic performance during the first university year. In this sense, students with higher scores while in high school have better chances to graduate from university. Aware of this reality, universities in the United States and Latin America have implemented measures including tutoring sessions, workshops and classes to help disadvantaged students, at least during the first year, improve their academic performance, and thus assure their permanence in their Major Degree. Studies that analyze these alternatives include Astin, Korn & Green (1987), Sánchez & Miguel (2006), Villalba & Salcedo (2008), Uscanga (2002), (Mochoino, 2009), among others.

In the case of Costa Rica, in 2007 all four public universities at the time – namely UCR, UNA, ITCR and UNED – launched a program to improve academic performance in Math (Rendimiento Académico en Matemáticas, RAMA). This program intended to have tutoring sessions offered by advanced students, with the goal of ensuring student success in university. Following this initiative, universities started conducting diagnostic math tests. In 2009, a first evaluation revealed that not even 1% of the students passed the test, and 95% scored below 51 (Zamora, 2012). At UCR, 30% of students who take basic math courses fail them. Therefore, the School of Mathematics launched the DiMa program, conducting a test to assess students' basic knowledge and skills in math. The purpose of this diagnosis is to alert the students about possible deficiencies, and based on that offer a remedial alternative –either taking a three-week leveling workshop or an extra course (http://www.diagnostico.emate.ucr.ac.cr). Research done support the notion of doing such diagnostic tests for freshman students with follow-up action plans for students who prove to have deficiencies in the subject matter.

In fact, a significant challenge for the researchers in this project has been the lack of available data on the subject. This means that in Costa Rica no public university has an English leveling course for new students to the English majors. The researchers have started from scratch in this process.

3. Context

As previously explained, this course considers prospective admitted students to three Majors offered by the Universidad de Costa Rica, Regional Western Campus: Bachelor's Degree and a *Licenciatura* in the Teaching of English, Bachelor's Degree in Primary Teaching with an Emphasis in English, and Bachelor's Degree in Pre-School Teaching with an Emphasis in English. All students who took the course in 2015 had finished their high school studies in public schools. Students came from different parts of the country in San José, Alajuela (Naranjo, Palmares, San Ramon, Sarchí, and San Carlos), Puntarenas, and Guanacaste. As well, during 2016 course, all students graduated from public academic high schools, except one student who came from an Experimental Bilingüe. Likewise, students came from different parts of the country: Alajuela (Palmares, Grecia, San Ramón, Naranjo, Zarcero, and San Carlos) Perez Zeledón, Puntarenas, and a single student from Guápiles. In both groups, students' ages ranged from 18 – 25 years old. As a common factor between the groups, not only did students come from public schools, but also most of them were made up by students from San Carlos and San Ramón.

4. Activities

Preliminary Information

Prior to developing the course, the researchers conducted some interviews to freshman students to find out if they perceived the need for a leveling course, the potential areas to be taken into account, their background in language learning, and their present experience in their Major.

Students agreed on the need for a leveling course; they all said they would have attended one if they had been given the opportunity. Interviewees felt this course would have better equipped them for their first year of Major studies. It would have given them a clearer idea of the characteristics and demands of the course, and helped them determine if they were prepared to enter. Moreover, they felt it would be important to place emphasis on the speaking component. They also considered it appropriate to include listening, vocabulary, basic grammar (especially verb tenses), speech writing strategies, and preparation for oral tests. In their view, special attention should be paid to oral communication, given their difficulty for organizing and expressing ideas orally due to a lack of vocabulary and English grammar structures. They tend to think in Spanish what they will say in English, and they had little practice in developing these oral skills during high school. They said that in the way they are taught, they fail to make a connection between grammar and speaking, so they cannot use structures correctly when communicating orally. Since they come from a model based on reading comprehension, it is difficult for them to face the new challenges their Major poses.

Students' background in language learning has been positive for those coming from regular bilingual or bilingual experimental schools, but mostly negative if they come from public academic high schools. Students expressed that what they learned during their secondary education is not relevant and has helped very little in their Major courses. Some of them did not even know the verb to be. Thus, when they start their major, they go to class and some teachers assume they know about grammar and pronunciation, for instance, when in fact they are at a loss about many contents covered in the courses. There are some basic topics that students have not learned, and teachers do not explain them. Some of them tend to assume that all the students are at the same level. When they are below the expected level, they are told to work on their own. Unfortunately, they do not know how to do it. Often times this situation creates and

uneasy atmosphere in class and is frustrating for lower level students since they feel that their skills are poorer than the rest, while their classmates wish they could help them. Consequently, some students cannot deal with the frustration the first few weeks of the course, and decide to drop out. They might try again the following year or just quit this Major.

Students agreed that a course providing a general basis for lower level students would aid the Major, since they would have the confidence needed for learning a new language. Additionally, practicing basic contents would give them better tools to succeed, and developing basic communication skills in a course before the first semester would help reduce such marked gaps in the students' linguistic level, and having prior preparation to the university life may provide more effective guidance in this new academic stage.

Procedures for Creating the Course

This leveling course requires certain logistics to be developed in an organized manner. Many of these tasks are administrative, and sometimes demand the help from other faculty members who may very kindly participate.

The first step is to obtain a list of admitted students to the English Majors by the end of the second week of January. This means logging in the system and manually obtaining every student's contact information. With this list, students may be contacted by phone or email. Here is where students are given an appointment for the diagnostic exam. This test has been previously designed by the researchers taking into account very basic aspects related to grammar, vocabulary, listening and speaking. Two dates are set due to the number of students called around 90 students are contacted, and approximately 80 of them attend to take the test. They work on the written part and are then interviewed either by the teachers in charge of the course or by a faculty member.

Tests are then graded. This information is used to choose the group that will be taking the course, namely those students scoring below 70. They are contacted again to confirm their attendance to the course. Those confirming are given the necessary information. Some students coming from distant places are not financially able to come to San Ramón a month before they had expected. As it is difficult for them to cover their food and housing expenses, so they decide not to take the course. This happens because the university cannot give these students any financial help before they officially register. However, for the 2016 course an emergency pilot plan was implemented. Current Major students who had the possibility of hosting a student offered housing, and so four students were successfully placed.

The course starts once all of these steps are completed, with all the students informed, and the materials and classroom ready. Students from the Major are invited to take part in the first day of class, as well as during the course with some on-going work. Courses have been offered to 50 students in all – 24 in 2015 and 26 in 2016.

Course Description

As noted before, the course takes place in February, four days a week for four weeks, for a total of 64 hours of instruction. The course combines theory and practice, providing an opportunity to develop basic speaking and listening skills with the aim of preparing the students for a better academic performance. Among the objectives of the course are: to understand audio material, participate actively in different communicative contexts, use correctly and understand new vocabulary, and basic grammar structures, use learning strategies, recognize elementary pronunciation aspects, and make oral presentations. All these goals are set at a lower-beginner level.

The course is based on a student-centered methodology that promotes gradual student autonomy by letting the learner take the center stage. Teachers are guides and observers of the learning process who are capable of making accurate decisions for and in the interest of student learning. An eclectic approach is proposed that integrates some fundamental methodologies for language teaching such as the communicative approach, collaborative learning, PDP for listening and reading, ECRIF, experiential learning, learning styles, and strategic learning. All of this is combined with appropriate scaffolding, considerable repetition and opportunities for practice, as well as team teaching techniques, supporting student learning at all times. Class activities include: listening comprehension exercises, controlled and free practice exercises, drills with grammar structures, reading comprehension, discussions, workshops, repetition of sounds, dialogues, role-plays, group and individual presentations, surveys, mingle activities, vocabulary practice and games, demonstrations, among others. The core textbooks used to develop course contents are selected sections from Q skills for success 1 and Basic Grammar in Use. Other supplementary material is either taken from other sources or designed by the teachers.

The students are highly encouraged to use the target language. However, given their low English levels there is a gradual use of the language throughout the course. In other words, teachers gradually increase the use of the language and ask students to do so as well. Spanish is used in some parts of explanations, especially about grammar, for certain instructions and with specific students who have problems understanding. Students are allowed to ask questions or give complex explanations in their mother tongue. This is done with the objective of providing students with a smooth transition to their language classes.

Furthermore, the role of feedback is highly valued in this course, so students often receive information about their linguistic performance and delivery aspects (body language, eye contact, movements) in regular class activities and weekly formative assessment. Teachers observe students while in class, take notes and act upon the needs they see, for instance contents that need to be reinforced. This ensures a more individualized attention and suitable follow-up on the students' progress. Weekly oral evaluations are carried out.

On the other hand, in-class activities are reinforced with home assignments that require students to watch TV series and movies, listen to music and read texts. They are given specific worksheets for each type of material. Four of these should be submitted weekly, as part of the student portfolio, which has to be handed in the last day of class. It includes home assignments, all the material handed out during the course, and a final reflection where students write about their learning experience in the course. This assessment tool is intended to keep students in touch with the target language and involved in tasks that appeal to their interests, at the same time that leaning and practice of new vocabulary are fostered.

Other course tasks involve the collaboration of two groups: one is faculty members, and the other one is made up by Major students. The former conducts complementary workshops about pronunciation, reading comprehension, learning strategies and other teacher areas of expertise. The latter helps in reinforcement classes where students can get extra practice on the topics covered in class. Major students often attend classes, or aid the researchers in various course-related tasks. Also, the first day of class, as one of the introductory activities, they kindly offer students their testimonies narrating their experiences during the first year of the Major, and including their struggles with the language and their decision to choose this Major that many students relate to.

Finally, the course does not have a summative evaluation, as has been noted, but rather makes use of formative assessment. Students are not graded for their work, and instead they are provided with comments regarding their performance in specific tasks. Feedback is given individually, in small groups, and to the whole group orally or in writing. The course ends with two important evaluations, one is an individual final presentation, and the other one is the diagnostic test. Students are asked to take the same test they took at the beginning of the process in order to compare their performance and prove their progress.

5.   Conclusions

This leveling course has certainly brought positive results to committed students. Even though it is only four weeks of intensive work, progress has been evidenced in the scores of the diagnostic test conducted at the beginning during the selection process, and then at the end of the course. As explained before, a diagnostic test that evaluates speaking, listening, vocabulary and grammar was designed and conducted by the researchers. The first time it is conducted helps to choose those students who need to take the course and sets the starting point, while the second one shows in part how much progress students were able to make during the course.

In 2015, a total of 24 students were admitted to the course, with the average score of the first course being 47.7. All student grades were below 66, and the lowest grade was 18. The second time there were 16 students, some of whom dropped out of the course for personal reasons. The average score was 75.5, with only 2 students scoring below 70 and 61 being the lowest grade. Improvement was also seen in the 2016 course. The initial test yielded had an average score of 50.9 and all 26 students scored below 70, with the lowest grade being 18 once more. The end-of- the-course test yielded an average of 80. 2, with only four students scoring below 70, and 57 being the lowest grade. Only one student did not take the final test. Such marked difference in the scores shows an undeniable development in the learners' listening and oral skills. Students take the second test with much more confidence, and are able to maintain a conversation during the interview part.

In addition, students share their perceptions on the course in a feedback session at the end of the second week of the course, as well as in their observations included in the portfolio they hand in the last day of class. In these two courses, students have expressed very positive comments towards the methodology used, the class environment, their learning process, and the affective impact.

All students who have taken the course share positive opinions about it. They agree on the linguistic improvement reached, mentioning an improvement in their knowledge and skills in pronunciation, speaking, listening, vocabulary, and grammar. The course has helped them correct some contents that they had not learned correctly in previous English classes, and review and reinforce topics that they had forgotten. Students have highlighted that preparing for and making for oral presentations and participating in communicative contexts, have been useful in helping them improve their oral skills considerably. Now they feel more confident to take part in conversations, where they can understand questions and structure ideas using short sentences. All the students seem to be very satisfied with the course. Perhaps they started with the idea that this was going to be another boring English course, but soon they realized that they were experiencing significant learning. Thus, some of them stated that their interest in language learning has grown.

In addition, while students acknowledge that this is a very short course, they agree that it is highly productive. They find the methodologies used effective, describing the

course as practical, interactive, enjoyable, interesting, and well designed. In their view, it had a proper level of challenge, and activities encouraged learning and interest in the subject matter. This created a very positive environment where learning the target language felt less threatening and more motivating. Even the homework assigned was described in positive terms: students indicated that the assignments did not feel like homework and they catered to their interests. They actually enjoyed doing the exercises, although at the beginning it was hard.

In regards to speaking in public, making a formal presentation gave students a sense of control of their own learning, since they worked at home organizing and practicing their speech. Some of them came for the teachers' feedback, but only after they had finished preparing it. Many said it was their first time speaking in English in front of an audience and that they felt very nervous, though they were impressed they were able to go through with it. For the teachers this activity meant that students were able to encounter the language and lose fear. Additionally, it was possible to once more verify an improvement in student's language skills. Most of the students who presented proved they were able to formulate basic sentences in the present tense; they were able to describe their favorite sports and food. Furthermore, some accurately talked about things they liked or disliked. Moreover, they presented in a very formal and professional way, with very good control of their body language and presentation style. Students' enthusiasm during this day and their faces of satisfaction and accomplishment when they finished were obvious.

In terms of nonacademic aspects, students referred to the opportunity of bonding with their classmates, and the importance of such friendships for them at the beginning of the Major, where social adaptation plays a significant role. They agree that the course gives them a good insight into university life, and allows them to determine how prepared they are for the challenges of upcoming courses. They feel the course has provided opportunities to develop more discipline and commitment to the Major. Besides, the course has shown them how to be an English teacher by observing how the teachers approached each of the classes and the techniques they used. Above all, the students highly recommend the implementation of this course every year because they think that just as they were given this chance to be in a class and get all these benefits, other students with similar deficiencies should have the same opportunity.

Recommendations
Following are possible suggestions that could be followed by MEP, Costa Rican public universities, and Costa Rican English language teachers. These suggestions derive from the possible results of this research project.

Recommendations for MEP
1. Use specific instruments in the Language classroom in order to become informed on the needs and opportunities teachers and students have or lack of. In other words, obtain accurate, reliable information that clearly describes actual, in-context information.
2. Systematize the information and create action plans to address the issues found.
3. Conduct studies that report on the specific characteristics of the country's rural population, and create specific English programs for these students, responding to their needs and ensuring successful outcomes in the future.

Recommendations for Costa Rican public universities
1. Continue implementing the course and offer students economic support so all of them can take it regardless of their economic condition.
2. Support teachers in charge with materials and trainings offered in and out of the country that include contents on the creation of these types of courses.
3. Recognize the weaknesses former high school students bring into university classrooms regarding knowledge of the English language.
4. Devise follow –up actions for students who take the course in order to monitor their work and progress, at least during their freshman year.
5. Find ways to allow university teachers to learn in the characteristics of new students; for example, where they come from, their level of English knowledge, age, and other important information that will evidence specific needs students may have.

Limitations

In the two years of implementing the course, we have encountered a number of factors that hinder task development of the tasks.
1. Students are not given any economic support until they are officially considered as university students. This happens in mid- February when they register, so some students who are in need of the course miss out on it because of their economic condition.
2. Due to time constraints, the researchers have not been able to continue collecting data that will inform about the students outcomes and progress during their first year as students of the Majors involved.
3. It has been difficult to obtain literature that could back up what the researchers have developed as a leveling course. In other words, there seems to be no data or only few data that could enlighten the procedure followed to create and implement this course.

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7. Biography

Hazel Vega Quesada received her Bachelor's degree in English Teaching and a Master's degree in Second Languages and Cultures at Universidad Nacional, Heredia. She has over 13 years of teaching experience, mostly working with adults and taking part in teacher training processes in Costa Rica. Institutions and projects where she has worked include the Centro Cultural Costarricense Norteamericano, Universidad Nacional and CONARE-MEP. She is currently a faculty member at the Universidad de Costa Rica, Sede de Occidente.

Natalia Ramírez Casalvone received her Bachelor's degree and a *Licenciatura* in English Teaching at the Universidad de Costa Rica. She obtained her Master's degree in English Teaching at the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica- San José. She also obtained a Diploma in Primary Teaching at the Universidad de San José. She has over 13 years of teaching experience, mostly working young adults at Colegio Nocturno de Naranjo and San Ramón's - MEP. She is currently a faculty member at the Universidad de Costa Rica, Sede de Occidente.

Implementation of Vocabulary Teaching Techniques to Enhance Oral Proficiency among Young Learners

Kelley B. Williams
UNED, Costa Rica
teacherkelley@hotmail.com

Resumen: El léxico constituye uno de los componentes más importantes en la adquisición de una lengua extranjera; sin un vocabulario amplio y apropiado, la comunicación puede fallar. Los aprendices de inglés como lengua extranjera requieren un vocabulario que les ayude a desempeñarse en instancias comunicativas. No obstante, muchos métodos y programas carecen de estrategias que promuevan una enseñanza óptima, práctica y adquisición de vocabulario. Mediante el uso de tarjetas ilustrativas, este taller pretende ofrecerle al docente de inglés como lengua extranjera una serie de técnicas que permiten incrementar las habilidades de escucha y producción oral en el estudiante. Este taller demuestra que las tarjetas ilustrativas pueden servir no solo para enseñar nuevas palabras en un ambiente positivo y motivador, sino también para fortalecer las destrezas receptivas y productivas que son indispensables para la adecuada comunicación oral en las aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: vocabulario, tarjetas ilustrativas, comunicación, técnicas, motivación.

Abstract: Lexicon constitutes a fundamental component of language acquisition. Without an ample, functional vocabulary, communication could suffer. EFL learners require sufficient vocabulary to communicate. Nevertheless, vocabulary acquisition is commonly taken for granted in several EFL methods and syllabi. This workshop provides EFL teachers with activities using flashcards as a strategy to enhance listening skills and oral production skills. This workshop demonstrates that flashcards can be used not only to teach new words in a positive and motivating environment, but also to strengthen the receptive and productive skills needed for oral communication in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: Vocabulary, flashcards, communication, techniques, motivation.

1. Introduction

The current research project examines the positive effects of basic vocabulary instruction through the use of flashcards on the oral proficiency of second grade students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment. In the mid-1990s, the Ministry of Public Education implemented an English program aimed primarily at developing oral and aural skills of elementary school children in order to provide them with the appropriate tools for meaningful communication in the foreign language[7] (MEP, 2004). Therefore, Costa Rican English teachers – whether in public or private schools – must find techniques to present language that help students cultivate and successfully use their listening and speaking skills, in their effort to communicate

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[7] Ministry of Public Education, Programa de Inglés (San José, Costa Rica: 2004) 16.

proficiently in English. To do this, educators have to rely on both textbook knowledge and personal experience, as well as on the expertise of seasoned language teachers. In a process of continuous renovation and innovation, second language teaching techniques have evolved from grammar-based, rote exercises to a much greater emphasis on the ability to communicate orally. Every year, publishers release new series of books whose authors attempt to furnish suitable materials for developing communication skills in their foreign language learners. These books, organized in thematic units, present children with colorful pictures and a variety of interesting exercises designed to capture and hold students' attention, helping to maintain the learner's motivation constantly high. Nevertheless, EFL teachers find themselves obliged to look for ways to assure that students acquire basic concepts that will afford them the language needed for effective oral communication.

Language acquisition depends on acquiring lexis, entailing a repertoire of vocabulary used in a language[8]. Furthermore, According to Nation, as quoted in Yang and Dai, "Teachers and researchers have seen lack of vocabulary as one of the main obstacles to progress in the receptive skills of listening and reading"[9]. Thus, the paramount importance of vocabulary acquisition in learning a foreign language becomes clear through Nation's remark. Teaching vocabulary in a communicative environment, however, might pose problems for many educators because deliberate presentation and rehearsal of vocabulary do not necessarily promote meaningful communication. Nonetheless, since "the heart of language comprehension and use is the lexicon"[10], vocabulary can be considered one of the cornerstones of oral communication; therefore, students need to rely on materials, techniques, and learning situations, which ensure that at least the basic concrete concepts are internalized in order to allow recalling and using them at will. According to Elgort, the natural approach to language learning has proved insufficient, making it a necessity to resort to deliberate form-focused learning of vocabulary[11]. This paper investigates how the implementation of an eclectic approach to the introduction and practice of visually represented nouns positively benefits the oral proficiency of second grade EFL learners, with the objective of compiling information from various viewpoints in order to better comprehend the effectiveness of flashcard use to present and practice vocabulary.

General objective
To provide EFL teachers with activities using flashcards as techniques for enhancing both listening and speaking proficiency through the use of diverse procedures for introducing vocabulary.

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2. Literature Review

Language Acquisition in Children

Language acquisition is a process that is common to all normal human beings. Through the use of language, people communicate their needs and thoughts. However, learning a language differs from many other types of classroom instruction because children subconsciously acquire their mother tongue in an uncomplicated fashion (Parker & Riley, 2005). Authors such as Parker and Riley (2005) and H.D. Brown (2007) indicate that language acquisition occurs in stages with children passing through the same phases at roughly the same time in their lives. These stages of linguistic development govern the acquisition of semantics, phonological components, grammatical morphemes, and syntactic elements such as negation and question formation. Furthermore, simple imitation does not develop the knowledge of language and how to use it. Instead, children construct their own form of language based on the observation and participation in the communicative interchanges they experience, learning to interpret the meanings of complex sentences before being able to produce such utterances. As a result of their experiences with language, children develop the majority of their first language, except vocabulary, before ever entering the formal educational system (Parker & Riley, 2005).

The significance of understanding the different phases and components of linguistic competence lies in being able to structure course elements so that they follow the natural development of language proficiency. Comprehending the way and order in which children acquire specific linguistic elements affords the EFL teacher with the knowledge necessary to select sounds, words, and grammatical forms according to the learners' developmental stage. Furthermore, being able to appreciate the steps and constituents present in the process of language acquisition proves helpful for providing explanations and solutions for student errors and difficulties.

Semantics

For Parker and Riley (2005), "Semantics is probably the most poorly understood component of grammar" (p. 194) because "the way that children acquire semantics is also not well understood" (p. 194). However, the language instructor must take into to account some basic considerations related to the acquisition of semantic elements. Among the phenomena to take into account, EFL teachers need to remember that the acquisition of individual words involves the processes of overgeneralization and narrowing (Parker & Riley, 2005). A child tends to overgeneralize the use of word based on its significance; implying that a child might use the word *cow* to denote any animal. Gradually, the child narrows the use of the lexical item until it resembles the meaning that adults assign to the word. Similarly, children acquire "basic-level terms" (Parker & Riley, p.196) such as *bird* before a more general word, such as *animal,* or a more specific word like the name of a species of bird. In addition, words indicating the positive connotations of a concept are acquired before their opposite negative counterpart, meaning that a child is expected to learn and use *long* before *short*, or *tall* before *short*. These basic notions of the development of semantic competence compose a portion of the examples that a teacher needs to comprehend in order to adequately cultivate the acquisition of the meanings found in the words, phrases, and sentences commonly employed to convey messages (Parker & Riley, 2005).

Child Second Language Acquisition

Brown (2007) contends that "for the most part, research confirms that the linguistic and cognitive processes of second language learning in young children are in general similar to first language processes" (p. 72). This implies that child second language acquisition mirrors the process of children learning English as their first language in the order of morpheme acquisition, and that comprehension precedes production and not being able to produce an utterance does not imply a lack of comprehension.

In general terms one can deduce that, following Piaget's scheme of cognitive development, second language acquisition depends on "concrete experience and direct perception" (Brown, p.66), and young learners not in the formal operations phase are not cognizant of acquiring language. During the years prior to preadolescence, children benefit from a flexibility in their egos because learning a new language does not present a threatening situation for them (Brown, 2007).

Finally, Brown (2007) argues that input for acquiring a second language parallels first language acquisition because second language learners benefit most from "contextualized, appropriate, meaningful communication" (Brown, p. 77). Furthermore, since children are good deep structure imitators centering on meaning instead of surface structures, the language acquisition process necessitates meaningful contexts instead of rote practice and frequent bombardment of stimuli (Brown, 2007). In taking advantage of the essence of these characteristics in the natural development of language, teachers need to incorporate a variety of didactic resources to stimulate meaningful contexts.

Didactic Resources

The concept of *didactic resources* can be defined as any of a wide variety of instructional materials that a teacher uses to help students achieve a goal in development of the learning process (Picado, 2006). This definition encompasses materials such as a blackboard, chalk, paper, books, worksheets, among the many available, that the teacher utilizes in the classroom in order to aid students' understanding and acquisition of the established pedagogical objectives. For Picado (2006), the use of any teaching material requires a previous selection, analysis, and planning of the resources in order to determine their function in the class implementation. When perusing possible aids, the teacher considers different criteria before determining the final collection to be used in the teaching-learning process. According to Picado (2006), some of the aspects to consider are: 1) the materials' motivational effect; 2) their content; 3) structure; 4) ability to provoke a mental representation; and 5) internal characteristics.

Concerning their motivational effect, resources should appeal to the learners and help get them involved into attaining a desired goal through the didactic exercises implemented in class. For language teaching, this implies that a teacher makes use of materials to facilitate authentic and meaningful communication and vocabulary learning.

The content of the didactic materials used in the class must present close association to the aspired objective. For the EFL classroom with young learners, this requisite entails choosing resources that effectively bring the students into contact with concrete objects in order to promote the assimilation and integration of the concepts. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the content of instructional materials helps not only in the presentation of concepts, but also in facilitating communication in the classroom.

Structure refers to the "methodological guide that guides the activities in such a way that they generate learning experiences" (Picado, p.134). This structural

characteristic of didactic resources calls for a careful planning of the utilization of the materials to produce enriching engagements with the language. Therefore, the language teacher has to organize the implements in such a manner that the activities employing them breeds fructiferous results.

Concerning mental representations, the EFL teacher should select didactic resources that allow students to internalize the concepts in a fashion congruent with the children's cognitive development. For Picado (2006), the educator must first provide learners with direct contact with concepts through action; afterwards, the teacher can use pictures or other images, and lastly, linguistic representation. This sequence underscores García's (1996) assumption that, because of the concrete image they provide, real objects constitute the best materials in teaching EFL.

The internal characteristics of teaching resources refers to the possible concepts depicted through a certain resource. Ideally – and especially for presenting isolated words – images should clearly illustrate the target concept in a concrete manner in order to facilitate learning. Picado (2006) stresses that students benefit from making materials because through their making, learners analyze the concept and, as a result of the process, internalize the message more effectively.

Roles of Teaching Materials

The roles of didactic resources vary widely depending on the methodological approaches implemented in the classroom. From a behavioral perspective, the teacher employs materials to elicit and habituate a response from the learner (Brown, 2007). One can witness this type of function in activities through which students' conduct is conditioned by rote-memorization and repetition, exercises associated with structural drills. Conversely, under a constructivist approach the teacher uses instructional materials to build on students' prior knowledge in an effort to aid learners in creating their own knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon. For many teachers, however, the most crucial role of didactic resources lies in providing the basis for "influencing the quality of classroom interaction and language use" (Richards & Rodgers, p168). Under this premise, teaching resources accomplish the function of "promoting communicative language use" (Richards & Rodgers, p168). Unfortunately, in many Costa Rican elementary school classrooms the development of communicative elements has encountered numerous obstacles because of factors such as the implementation of a curriculum promoting a communicative perspective, but without furnishing teachers the appropriate materials and activities that contribute to meaningful interaction and language use.

The Teacher's Role

Breen and Candlin (1980) define the teacher's role in the following terms:

> The teacher has two main roles; the first role is to facilitate the communication process among all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group (as cited in MEP, p. 24).

Within this scope presented in the syllabus, the EFL teacher becomes an active participant in the teaching-learning process, not simply a presenter of information. This implies that foreign language educators in Costa Rica cannot separate themselves from the learning process; instead, they must take on an active attitude in order to provide authentic communication and real-life situations. The secondary characteristics of a

foreign language teacher involve research and permanent learning to guarantee the constant renovation and evolution of the materials and strategies used to facilitate learning among the students.

The Learner's Role
In the EFL environment, learner roles may differ from traditional educational settings in which the teacher constitutes an authoritative figure and students are submissive and receptive. Contrary to the customary atmosphere, the Costa Rican foreign language classroom demands an active role from the learner in the construction of authentic communication. In a communicative environment "students are expected to interact primarily with each other rather than the teacher, and correction of errors may be absent or infrequent" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 166). This type of setting presents each learner with an opportunity to engage in building meaningful situations through which others benefit. In short, the students become tools for constructing genuine communication through the resolution of tasks and activities proposed by both learners and teachers.

Vocabulary and its Importance in Language Learning
Based on an exhaustive review of the literature, one can conclude that the term *vocabulary* means an array of words and phrases used by a group of people to communicate their thoughts. Merriam-Webster 11th Dictionary defines *vocabulary* as "A list or collection of words and phrases usually alphabetically arranged and explained or defined; a sum or stock of words employed by a language, group, [or] individual." Hodges (1984) adds that within the lexicon of a language there exists "a core vocabulary of the words used to name common and fundamental concepts and situations of a culture" (p. 1). Based on these conceptualizations, the magnitude of the importance of vocabulary becomes clear: Vocabulary constitutes the fundamental base of a language, allowing its users not only to identify and describe common objects, but also to communicate their feelings and needs. For Yang and Dai (2011), "No language acquisition, whether first, second, or foreign can take place without the acquisition of lexis" (p. 1). Part of this lexis consists of what Chall (1983, as cited in Blachowitz, Fisher, & Watts-Taffe, 2005, p.2) terms "meaning vocabulary…words that a student can attach meaning to, or define." Thornbury (2002) underscores the importance of vocabulary when he states that, "teachers have not fully recognized the tremendous communicative advantage in developing an extensive vocabulary," (p. 13) furthering its significance by quoting Swan and Walter (1984, in Thornbury, 2002): "Vocabulary acquisition is the largest and most important task facing the language learner" (p. 14).

Given the paramount function that vocabulary plays in both social and academic language use, EFL teachers must find ways of building a basic stock of words that students can employ when trying to communicate with others. In fact, Segler, Pain, and Sorace (2002) affirm vocabulary importance in communication while pointing out its potential as an obstacle for second language learners. However, how do children acquire vocabulary? Hodges (1984) contends that a child's acquisition of a lexical repertoire grows from contact through contextual experiences in the four skill areas, rather than from a dictionary. Pikulski and Templeton (2004) argue that children, during their first five years, acquire vocabulary through oral interaction, and upon entering formal schooling, expand their lexicon through "decoding skills" such as reading and writing. According to Nation (2001) direct language-focused learning proves beneficial "if there is an appropriate amount of usefully-focused deliberate teaching and learning of language items," (p. 2) and courses should include the direct teaching, learning, and

study of vocabulary. Furthermore, incorporating a word into one's lexical domain entails "a cumulative process involving a range of aspects of knowledge [and] learners need many different kinds of meetings with words in order to learn them fully" (Nation, 2001, p.4).

Knowing a word, according to August, Carlo, Dressler, and Snow (2005), encompasses aspects such as "its literal meaning, its various connotations…and a rich array of semantic associates such as synonyms and antonyms," (p. 51) with levels of word knowledge ranging from unknown to complete, the highest level implying the speaker's confidence in using a determined word (Blachowitz, Fisher, & Watts-Taffe, 2005). For Nation (2001), knowledge of a word involves its form, its meaning, and its use, and these aspects include the pronunciation, spelling, concept and other words associated with it. For young students with limited exposure to English, this project argues that much success can be gained by focusing on words that present what Nation (2001) terms a low "learning burden," (p. 23) i.e., words that embody concepts that learners already have knowledge of, even though this awareness may come from their first language. By teaching vocabulary words whose concepts are already present in the pupils' cognitive framework, students assimilate the terms with greater ease. Further support for this idea comes from Thornbury's (2002) statement that "…. not only do [second language learners] have the words of their first language, but they have the conceptual system that these words encode, and the complex network of associations that link these words one with another" (p. 18). Therefore, in order to increase the probability of acquisition, this research study focuses on words that are likely to exist previously in the learners' cognitive system, thus providing a first language connection that can facilitate the incorporation and effortless recall of new lexical items.

Most teachers would agree that one of the main aims of teaching vocabulary consists of learner retention in order to use the words at will. To achieve this goal, teachers must use techniques that provide a high probability of vocabulary items becoming part of students' long-term memory. For committing words to the long-term storage, Thornbury (2002) suggests not only interconnecting concepts by category and using super ordinate terms to facilitate learning, but also practicing repetition and retrieval of new words while providing adequate spacing and pacing for memory exercises and vocabulary presentation. The difficulty of a new word can also influence its storage for future use, with cognates representing a relatively easy category to assimilate, and words with multiple meanings presenting learners with more difficulty (Thornbury, 2002).

While memory represents an important aspect of vocabulary assimilation, teachers must contemplate presentation techniques for new words. The type of word must be considered, recognizing the importance that nouns play in early vocabulary, for according to Bloom (2000), "object names" constitute a priority because they make up a large share of young children's vocabulary. In Thornbury's (2002) opinion, word sets seem like a good idea, but many times, closely related words interfere with each other, explaining the reason why words belonging to a same lexical category should not necessarily be learned together. According to him, more effective manner to learn words consists in grouping them in thematic units, much like the ones found in modern textbooks. For proper presentation of new lexical items teachers should take into account the learner's level and degree of difficulty of the new words, remembering that tangible concepts present learners with less adversity than abstract ones. The number of words to be introduced constitutes another concern, as does the method of presentation. However, Thornbury (2002) emphasizes the notion that the type of activities used to practice new vocabulary potentially outweighs the importance of the presentation

techniques, suggesting that teachers should engage learners in an array of activities that bring them into contact with the new concepts, providing students with the opportunity to internalize the lexicon. Baddeley (2004) contends that short-term memory plays a role in learning a new word, but that remembering a lexical element depends on the levels of processing and depth the learner employs, asserting that students achieve greater recall ability if they relate the word to a sentence or to their own personal experiences. Throughout history, teaching methods have proposed different approaches to ensure an effective storage and use of lexica.

3. Context

The activities outlined in this study address the needs of beginning EFL students. The diverse procedures constituted a small, yet integral, portion of a private school program, and were developed and put into practice with learners between first and sixth grades. By using flashcards appropriately, teachers can develop the four macro skills while building an ample basic vocabulary. Not only do learners acquire single-word concepts, but also develop functional strategies for communication in a highly motivational environment.

4. Activities

Using flashcards of concepts that begin with the letter "a", the teacher first shows the cards, one by one, to the students, and asks if anyone knows the name of the word. Students repeat the words and learn the words basically through rote memorization. This constitutes the basis on which to build. Teachers might find it beneficial to introduce seven or eight words, so as not to overload the learners. One way to introduce words is to show the first card, having students repeat the word. Then, the teacher shows the first card, followed by the second, followed by the first. This process continues until the first seven or eight words have been introduced. By doing this, students have continual contact with each of the concepts. This could take ten to fifteen minutes. To provide more practice, teachers can tape the flashcards to the wall or board, and ask students to go point to the flashcards as the teacher, or a classmate, says the words. Additionally, teacher can arrange the students in a circle and distribute the picture cards. Student 1 shows and says his/her card. Student 2 first says Student 1's card, then his or her card. The last person ends up saying all of the words.

Depending on L1 reading ability, the teacher can introduce the written words for the concepts. In the same fashion as with the picture cards, the teacher shows the words and the students simply read the words. A variation of this activity is to show the word and allow students five to ten seconds to study the word. Then, the teacher holds the word card out of sight while a student orally says and spells the word. In addition, teachers may choose to tape the picture cards on the board, distribute the word cards, and ask students to stand in front of the appropriate picture card.

In order to provide some basic speaking and true communication, the teacher asks students if they can describe the words. For example, with the word "apple" most students have no problems saying that it is a red fruit (or green, or yellow). However, many times at least one student asks, "Teacher, how do you say *dulce*?" At this point, students are using English to learn new words in English. Through this type of activity, students learn categories such as toy, tool, food, clothing, mammal, reptile, among others.

On a blank note card, the teacher now writes a short sentence using the target word. The length of the sentence depends on the students' level. For beginning students who are just learning to read in L1, the sentences may contain as few as five or six

words, just enough to present a challenge, but not too long to be impossible to memorize. To practice the sentences, the teacher shows the note card and asks students to orally read it, first chorally, and then a volunteer to read it alone. A variation may be that students observe the card for about ten seconds and then say the sentence without looking at the card. To provide more practice, the teacher can make another set of sentence cards omitting the target words. Students then look at the card and decide what word completes the sentence. When a student knows the answer, he or she reads the sentence, inserting the target word.

To practice listening, the teacher holds a picture card so that students cannot see it. The teacher orally describes the card so that students guess the word. Additionally, teachers may wish to read the sentence cards with the target words missing, so that students guess the word. As students' confidence and productive level increase, the teacher distributes the picture cards to the students so that they are responsible for orally describing the words for classmates to guess. When the students know enough words, the teacher divides the class into groups of three or four and distributes a different set of cards to each group. Students take turns spelling words and describing them for four or five minutes. The teacher calls time and rotates the cards from one group to another. This continues until all groups have had contact with all the cards.

Teachers may use competitive games to practice the new vocabulary. For instance, individual or team competitions may be employed to practice spelling. The teacher shows a flashcard, and students must spell the word correctly. The student to spell the word correctly in the shortest amount of time writes his or name on the board. For a group competition, students can play a variation of baseball. The game consists of students' choosing from one to four picture cards, without knowing which words will appear. If a student picks one card and spells it correctly, that student goes to "first base," a point in the classroom. Students advance until they reach home plate and mark a point on the board. If the student "at bat" misspells a word, the team is penalized with an out. That means that if a student chooses four words, spells the first three correctly but misspells the last word, he or she receives no credit for bases and must sit down. When a team obtains three outs, the other team begins to bat. A variation on this activity consists of the teacher saying the descriptions instead of showing the picture card. Also, the teacher may choose to have one of the more advanced students help saying the descriptions.

Another stimulating game consists of dividing the class into groups of four. The teacher arranges four seats at the front of the class, one with the back to the board, and the other three facing opposite. The teacher or a member of an opposing team (or someone who simply refuses to participate) stands behind the single chair, holding a stack of picture cards. The cardholder shows a card to the other three, who have to describe the card so that the single student guesses the word. When the student says the word, he or she moves to the opposite side, and one of the other members of the team takes the "hot seat." The teacher provides two minutes for the group to guess as many words as they can. The group that guesses the most words in two minutes wins the competition.

Once students become familiar with the words and their descriptions, the teacher can distribute a crossword puzzle for students to complete.

Regarding writing, teachers can provide students with incomplete descriptions for students to complete. In addition, teachers may give students three to five words for students to define in their notebook. Additionally, teachers ask students to write original sentences using the target words.

5. Materials

This strategy for enhancing vocabulary originated with the use of the Addison-Wesley Picture Dictionary. The images were cut out and laminated to provide durability. Teachers use the picture dictionary of their choice, or create their own. Providing students with a personal copy allows students to study at home. Crossword puzzles can be made using an online puzzle generator. One such site is www.armoredpenguin.com.

6. Conclusions

The quest to find activities that stimulate learners to participate and produce is never-ending. By employing flashcards to teach alphabetically arranged vocabulary, teachers can get every student involved in the English class. With the repetition of the concepts and descriptions, students improve their pronunciation and fluidity. Since the activities described here are not limited to simple oral identification of the concepts, students enrich their vocabulary and in many cases, even build their own personal learning. Skeptical teachers should try to incorporate these activities into their English classes because they do work.

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8. Biography

Kelley Williams holds a *Licenciatura* from the Universidad Estatal a Distancia in Costa Rica in teaching English to elementary school children. Mr. Williams graduated from UNC-CH in 1989 with a B.A. in both English and Spanish. He has taught from elementary school to college-aged students. He worked as Regional Advisor for the Programa de Lenguas Extranjeras para el Desarrollo when English in elementary schools first became part of Costa Rican curriculum. Currently, Mr. Williams works for the UNED teaching EFL to adults, and supervising student teachers.