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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this project is to reflect on the learning acquired in the modules of the Master in Secondary Education and during the placement in the Málaga School of Languages.

In order to develop this project coherently I have considered four main aspects of education: **when** we teach, **where** we teach, **who** we teach and **how** we teach.

We teach in the twenty-first century and, therefore, we need to understand the social, cultural and technological changes that are shaping the concept of education nowadays, its functions and the new role of teachers. This context also provides the background for new educational theories and methodologies that will impact on our teaching practice.

Once we understand this framework, we need to focus on where we teach. Teaching can never be effective if the context of the school is not taken into account: its idiosyncrasy, its organisation, the legislation that rules it and its support network for students, teachers and families.

The same emphasis must be placed on getting to know the students who we are going to teach. No individual is the same and no group is homogeneous: if we do not cater for a diverse range of needs we will not be offering students a fair opportunity to build their own knowledge and to make the most of their learning experience.

All the above will determine how we teach, what objectives we set out to achieve, what contents we choose to work with, what skills and competencies we aim learners to develop and, finally, what kind of assessment will be necessary in order to offer an education, like Pérez Gómez (2003) defends, that creates meaningful learning for every student, or in other words, where priority is given to students´ diversity.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

1.1 Concept and Functions of Education

The concept of education is complex even from an etymological point of view: two Latin verbs lie at its origin, *educare* "bring up, rear" which is related to *educere* "bring out, lead forth" . The first word means an external process imposed on the individual, the second one refers to the development of innate abilities and potential.

Education is also an umbrella term which can encompass very similar concepts. *Teaching*, for example, is related to the transmission of knowledge and a possibly long timeframe, while *instruction* or *training* are connected with forming skills in a shorter timescale (Pollice, 2003).

However, the most pressing debate over the centuries concerning education is related to its functions. From a political and economic point of view, education has a social function, that is, to build citizens to enter into society in a productive and responsible manner; at the same time there is a need to develop the personal qualities of the individual.

Traditional methods of education have prioritised its social aspect and have centred around the transmission of knowledge. Esteve (2003) described a concept of education as "mould", a strict system based on rigid rules and values where children are not encouraged to think for themselves but to repeat what they are taught; or education as "teaching", where teachers decide to focus only on their subjects, without any other individual, moral or social responsibility for their students.

Esteve (2003) argues that traces of both systems still coexist nowadays. He proposes a model of education as "initiation" which strikes a balance between individualisation and socialisation: the teacher initiates the learner in the knowledge and values accumulated in his own personal experience and in the collective memory of centuries of culture, but he does not impose them. The learner builds his own scale of values and his own social reality through his critical thinking.

Most current authors agree that this is the model that defines education in the twenty-first century. However, as Pérez Gómez (2003) reflects, compulsory education in Spain continues to be organised in homogeneous groups by age, with the same curriculum, the same methodology and the same pace for all, a school concerned with transmitting knowledge and not with creating meaningful learning for every student, or in other words, priority is still given to socialisation and not to diversity.

The concept of education, therefore, is multi-faceted and made more complicated by the challenges that it faces this century.

Challenges and Opportunities

The postmodernist society is facing rapid and extraordinary changes, which are posing unexpected challenges but also opening enriching opportunities.

- **Socio-economic changes:** globalisation and extreme competition to conquer markets have changed production and work organisation. Technology has caused productivity to increase but many jobs to be lost. This fact has led to poverty, social exclusion and inequality to rise, and to global migration to be the key social feature of this century (Tedesco, 2003).

- **Multicultural and intercultural realities** are now the idiosyncrasy of most countries. An intercultural environment must be aimed for, where a common culture is developed from the interaction of several. The role of education is crucial, therefore, in helping to understand what all nations have in common and what makes them different from a positive and inclusive stance. A multicultural environment can be the source of both enrichment or conflict in schools, education many times being the factor that tips the scales.

- **"Knowledge society"** is a direct consequence of the advances in technology. Information is now easily accessible and immediate. Pérez Gómez (2003) argues that the shortages in students´ education are not due to a lack of access to information, since they live in a world saturated with it, but to most of the information being irrelevant and meaningless to them. Schools, therefore, have a responsibility to help students learn where and how reliable information can be found, and how to analyse, evaluate and look at it critically in order to construct their own knowledge. Digital competence must

be developed in the classroom, however, as Adell (2011) points out this competence goes beyond knowing how to use a computer, and it includes other main aspects like digital literacy, generic cognitive competence (how to transform information into knowledge) and the development of a responsible digital citizenship.

- **Evolving concept of family:** traditionally families have been considered the source of primary socialisation and schools of the secondary one. This means that a child would receive from his family environment social rules and values, as well as developing his sense of self and personal growth (Savater, 1997). Nowadays, family structures are changing, there are more dysfunctional households than ever before, due to social and economic crisis, and new emerging family models. This implies that education must undertake a compensatory task, offering that basis of socialisation and individualisation. Equally, universal values such as respect, civic norms, tolerance, justice or freedom must be practised from school, sometimes clashing with values promoted at home or by society. Segura (2006) explains that moral growth is directly linked to emotional control and the ability to think critically, and that both abilities need to be supported by families and schools. They have a shared responsibility in education and, consequently, must find ways to work together.

All these challenges and opportunities are defying the fundamental concept of what education must provide. It becomes apparent that education needs to adopt a broader view than it has had traditionally and this is clearly reflected in the UNESCO report by Delors (1996) where he stated that education in the 21st century must rest on four pillars: *learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together* and *learning to be*. In Delors´s own words "education is an ongoing process of improving knowledge and skills, it is also - perhaps primarily - an exceptional means of bringing about personal development and building relationships among individuals, groups and nations" (p.12).

At the same time, the ever-changing society and economic climate are calling for education to be longer. Skills and knowledge need to be constantly updated both for personal and professional purposes. The concept of *lifelong learning* is crucial to this century. Not only adults wish to further their education by non-formal channels, but also young learners share their formal education with other non-formal activities.
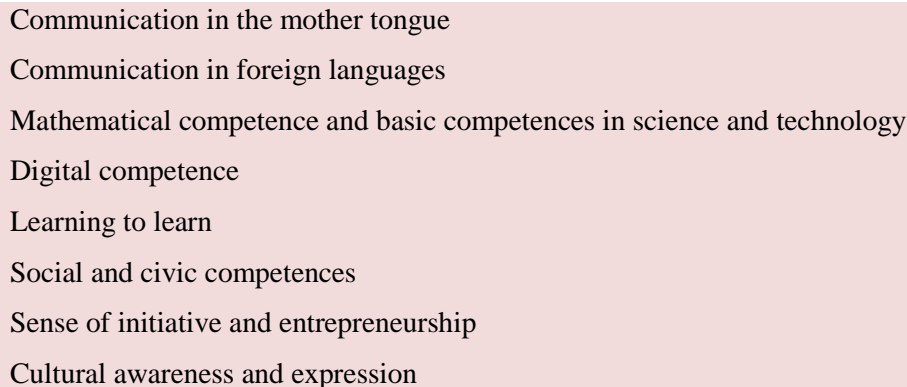
Colom (2005) explains that the barriers between formal, non-formal and informal education are muddled nowadays, allowing the three modalities to complement each other rather than being separate concepts.

1.2 Planning, Teaching and Evaluating

1.2.1 Competencies and Skills for Lifelong Learning

In the late 1990´s there was a shift in educational policies towards developing not only knowledge but how to apply that knowledge to real life with the objective that after compulsory education young people would have acquired competencies which would allow them to embrace adulthood and enter the professional world satisfactorily (Alemañy, 2009).

The European Commission led some focus work to define what these competencies for all citizens should be. *The Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning: A European Reference Framework* (2006) built on previous developments by the OECD (DeSeCo project, 2005), UNESCO (*Learning: The Treasure Within*) and Member States. This document established eight key competencies:

> Communication in the mother tongue
>
> Communication in foreign languages
>
> Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
>
> Digital competence
>
> Learning to learn
>
> Social and civic competences
>
> Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
>
> Cultural awareness and expression

As Alemañy (2009) explains key competencies represent a combination of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values and emotions, and they are transferable and multifunctional. The notion of "transferable and multifunctional" is crucial for the concept of lifelong learning. Although the acquisition of these competencies starts at school, it is not exclusive to it. They are also developed at home, in extra-curricular activities, through the media, and in all personal and professional experiences.

The development of competencies is directly related to the possession of a wide repertoire of skills needed for today´s world. The Partnership for 21st Skills (2009) pointed out the following key skills for this century´s learners: critical thinking, problem-solving, good communication strategies, collaborative work, flexibility and adaptability, innovation and creativity. The European Reference Framework added others like risk assessment, initiative, decision taking or constructive management of feelings.
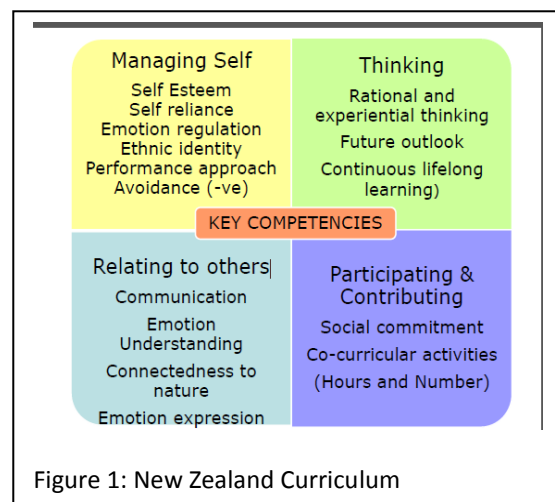
Figure 1: New Zealand Curriculum

Competencies in the Curriculum

The competence-based approach has impacted on all areas and levels of education, however it has become particularly relevant in the compulsory stage. In just over a decade most European countries and some others worldwide have integrated key competencies in their Curricula.

Nonetheless, as Egido (2011) remarks upon, there are certain discrepancies in the number and the nature of the competencies adopted. For example, the National Curriculum of England and Wales calls them "Basic Skills", while in Scotland they are referred to as "Core Skills". These Curricula, unlike Spain and other European countries, have incorporated broader competencies than the subject-related ones recommended by the European Commission. In England and Wales there are only five: communication, calculus application, information technology, working with others and problem-solving, some related to subjects while others to general skills.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (2003) underlines even more accentuated differences in countries outside Europe. In New Zealand (See Figure 1[i]), for instance, there is no resemblance to any content subjects and competencies relate to general skills.

The Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOE, 2006) introduced key competencies in the Spanish Curriculum. There are some communities, like Castilla-La Mancha, which

have added the emotional competence. The model that has been adopted is the one recommended by the European Commission, where competencies are related to some content subjects. Egido (2011) warns that this system creates the false impression that competencies correspond to subjects and, therefore, the temptation exists to see them the same as contents. Bolívar (1999) supports this view and concludes that there is a risk that the competence-based curriculum ends up being a purely formal change of denomination with no methodological transformation. Competencies do not equal subject contents, in fact, the Law establishes that all competencies must be developed for every subject.

However, the biggest challenge faced by the competence approach is not the lack of uniformity but the difficulty of its assessment. The European Commission (cited in Peterson, Hamilton, Farruggia, Brown, & Elley-Brown, 2010) stated "while schools are ready to change, the main obstacle seems to be the assessment of competencies and the dominance of factual knowledge in exams and national tests" (p.6). It is only contents and rote learning that continue to be assessed in exams, therefore, the fundamental breakthrough of a competence-based curriculum is the change in methodology and assessment strategies, so that not only contents, but abilities and skills are also included.

Nonetheless, there is some concern about grading or measuring attitudes that are part of a learner´s personality, or reducing competencies and skills to a mere quantitative system of labeling individuals. Peterson et al. (2010) proposed that competencies should only be monitored, using tools like Portfolios, learning logs, reflection time and self and peer-assessment based on qualitative information.

1.2.2 The Social Aspect of Learning: the Socio-Cultural Theory

The Socio-Cultural theory, known as well as social constructivism, is based on the ideas of the writer and psychologist Vygostky (1978) who understood that learning occurs in the interactions with others and in a specific socio-cultural context.

Vygostky accepted that learning is ultimately constructed individually, a theory defended by Piaget, but he emphasised the role of social interactions as the agent that made learning possible.

Another important element in Vygostky´s theory is the role of language as the tool that supports our thinking. Language allows us to name and understand the world, to deal with abstract and concrete concepts and to organise our ideas. The basis of language is social and external, and it is shaped by the cultural context.

Several of Vygostky´s ideas about learning have influenced education in general and second language acquisition in particular:

- **Mediation** is the influence that social interactions have on the individual, and is the basis for learning and development. These social interactions occur in particular cultural contexts, therefore, learning is always culturally mediated: our perceptions, beliefs, feelings and actions are determined by the context, and the main tool for mediation is language. This concept is particularly relevant for the classroom environment since it is the interaction between teacher- students, and students-students which supports learning, using language as the vehicle. This idea is connected with the principle of the *communicative approach*: a language (mother tongue or second) is learnt by using it. The cultural aspect of learning is also relevant for second language acquisition since the knowledge of another language offers us a different perception of the world.

Mediation equally supports current tendencies of collaborative work. In Lantolf´s (2000) own words "It seems clear that people working jointly are able to co-construct contexts in which expertise emerges as a feature of the group" (p. 17). These words accentuate the importance of peer instruction in contrast with more traditional views that all learning occurs between a more experienced individual, i.e. the teacher, and a learner.

- **Internalisation** is the process whereby the individual " knows how" to master skills and knowledge that have been learnt in social interactions. This concept is crucial for second language acquisition: after a language has been practised, its meaning and use are internalised, and the learner will develop their communicative competence.

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first,
> on the social level, and later on the individual level; first, between
> people (inter-psychological), and then inside the child (intra-

psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formulation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57)

Vygotsky differentiated between higher and lower mental functions. The lower or elementary mental functions are those genetically inherited, our natural mental abilities. In contrast, he saw our higher mental functions, like problem-solving, as developing through social interaction. Yet again, this is vital for current educational theories since it implies that learning will only occur when higher mental functions are encouraged in the classroom.

- **The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** is the potential each person has for learning. It is the notional gap between the learners´ actual developmental level , or what they can do independently, and their potential developmental level, or what students will be able to do with assistance by someone with greater expertise (Wertsch, 1991). The ZPD will be the area where the teacher intervenes to help the learner progress towards their potential level.

The ZPD is essential for teachers´ planning of lessons. If tasks are planned within the learner´s actual developmental level, students will feel unchallenged and bored; if tasks are planned too advanced into the potential developmental level, learners will be frustrated and feel unable. Vygotsky suggested that the teacher's job is to identify the ZPD in order to provide the appropriate support, for example, modeling, questioning, probing, setting up a particular task to develop specific skills etc. (Darling-Hammond, 2003). One of the available support tools is *scaffolding* or changing the level of support to suit the cognitive potential of the learner.

The term "scaffolding" was coined by the American psychologist Jerome Bruner in the 1970´s mimicking its original meaning in construction. In teaching it implies building the right support structure to allow students to move within their ZPD and complete the given tasks. As learning takes place, the support structure will be gradually withdrawn until students can function independently. Scaffolding can take many forms: coherent sequencing of activities, clear instructions, activating previous

knowledge, oral or written frames, verbal and non verbal cues, monitoring during tasks, breaking down tasks in simpler chunks, range of resources (visual, musical, digital), developing learning strategies, giving feedback etc.

To sum up the importance of Vygostky´s theory in education, Oldfather (1999) stated that "social constructivist teachers help their students understand that they are co-constructors of knowledge, that they can make sense of things themselves" (p.16). This conception of learning taps directly into students´ motivation and self-esteem and lays the foundation for a pivotal approach of the last decades: collaborative learning.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is a broad term for a variety of educational approaches in which students work together in pairs or groups to achieve a common goal. This means students are not only responsible for their own learning, but for that of others. The characteristic feature of collaborative work is that students look for understanding, negotiate meaning or create a product together (Leigh Smith, 1992).

It has been extensively researched that collaborative work increases interest and involvement in the learning experience, it promotes critical thinking and as Gokhale (1995) argues, it helps students apply higher order thinking skills and retain information longer. This author reaches these conclusions based on Vygostky´s theory that students perform at higher intellectual levels when they work in collaborative situations rather than individually, and Bruner´s research that collaborative work helps problem-solving skills since students learn to interpret the situation from different points of view. This is why a great amount of collaborative learning tasks start with problems, where students must use new information, previous knowledge and skills in order to resolve them (Leigh Smith, 1992). Other authors argue that tasks involving judgement   work the best, when students must make a decision after evaluating a situation (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith,1991, cited in Gross, 2009).

A variety of approaches are regularly adopted using the collaborative learning principle, such as cooperative learning, learning communities, peer teaching, peer

learning, team learning, study groups, discussion groups, simulations, writing fellows, guided-design etc. The grouping can be as informal or formal as the situation requires, for example, ad hoc pairs or groups can be formed during different stages of a lesson to resolve an exercise; or they can be formally arranged to carry out a task or a project during an extended period of time.

In the latter case, it is vital for the teacher to consider how groups are going to be formed and assessed. Gross (2009) explains that some teachers may prefer to randomly assign students to groups to maximize heterogeneity; others let students choose who they want to work with; and there is always the option of assigning groups depending on criteria, such as ability, interest, learning styles etc. It is of the utmost importance to weigh up the possible consequences of arrangements, for example, mixed-ability groups may cause frustration in the most advanced students, or they may encourage the least advanced to work harder. The dynamics of each group will be different and, therefore, teachers must monitor group work and intervene when necessary.

A second aspect to take into consideration is how groups are going to be assessed. Some teachers are reluctant to use group work as they do not feel it is fair to give every student the same mark, as some members might shirk work. Walvoord (1986) recommends that each student submits to the teacher an anonymous assessment of the participation of the other group members, and if several students coincide on one person doing less work, he or she should receive a lower mark. Effectiveness of the whole group should also be evaluated to reflect on how they have worked together (Gross, 2009) and what they have achieved thanks to the strengths of all its members.

Finally, collaborative work addresses another fundamental issue: in any group there will be misunderstandings, disagreements, differences to be resolved or tolerated, and empathy for others to be activated, and these are all essential skills to learn to live with others.

1.2.3 The Individual Aspect of Learning: Attention to Diversity

By definition no group of learners can be totally homogeneous. It may seem like an obvious statement but one that is not always present in teachers´ minds when planning, delivering and assessing teaching.

All individuals are different at many levels: gender, age, interests, social class, ethnic background, self-esteem, previous life experiences, family life, knowledge and skills. These differences will determine the behaviour and the results of students in class.

Equality in education is a right declared in Spain in the Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOE, 2006, title II). In Andalusia, the Law 17/2007, of 10th December, chapter II, establishes the autonomy and obligation of every compulsory education school to cater for the diversity of their students and adapt the curriculum to their personal, social and cultural characteristics. This does not mean creating two parallel curricula: the reference for diversification must always be the ordinary curriculum, which must be adapted to integrate the needs of all students.

This is the concept of *inclusive classrooms* where all learners can fulfill their potential. Although diversity is an accepted feature of any group, many attempts have been made to minimise differences in the classrooms, and there is an ongoing debate about the benefits or disadvantages of streamed or mixed-ability groups of students (Pachler, Barnes & Field, 2009).

Differentiation should not be spontaneous, but a carefully thought-through mechanism which will affect planning, delivery and assessing of teaching. When any element of the Curriculum is adapted it will imply the alteration of other elements. For example, objectives can be simplified, made more complex or created anew for a specific student, but this means that contents, competencies or assessment criteria will have to be reviewed as well.

Teachers need to plan for minimum and maximum contents that students will learn, and this will determine the objectives and assessment criteria that he or she establishes (See Figure 2[ii]). In the same line of thought, the National Curriculum Council (cited in Pachler, Barnes & Field, 2009) in the UK suggests dividing activities in the classroom into:

Figure 2: Planning Pyramid
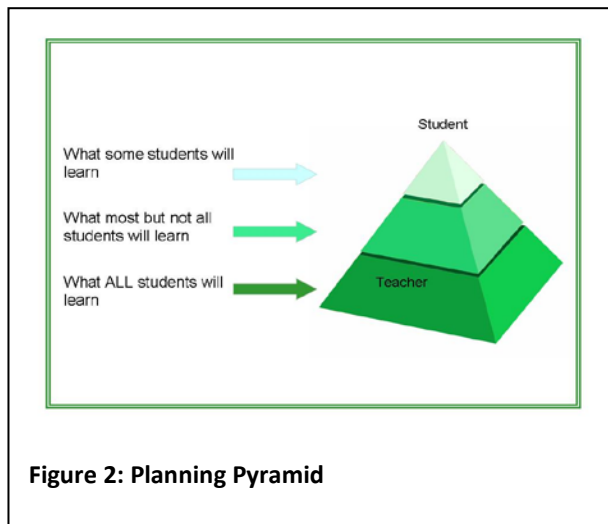
- Core: all pupils are expected to fulfill them

- Reinforcement: extra practice needed by some students to fulfill learning objectives

- Extension: more advanced and complex work for students who require it.

There are three cases where differentiation becomes more obvious in the classroom: students with SEN (Special Education Needs), gifted and talented pupils, and learners with motivational difficulties. This classification is based on the ability, skills or behaviour of students. There are, however, more personal elements which make students different, like interests, motivation, cognitive aspects (such as learning styles), age and some authors, like Barton (2002), have even carried out some interesting research about gender differences.

There are two theories regarding cognitive aspects which are particularly effective tools for differentiation and that have been taken as the basis for the Unit Plan delivered in my placement: the Revised Bloom´s Taxonomy and the Multiple Intelligences Theory.

Revised Bloom´s Taxonomy (RBT)

Also known as Bloom-Anderson´s Taxonomy (2001), it means the revised work of the original classification of thinking processes into six cognitive levels completed by Bloom in 1956.

The RBT levels defined by Anderson & Krathwohl (2001, pp.67-68) are: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating.

Figure 3: Revised Bloom´s Taxonomy

The Taxonomy offers a clear and visual framework (See Figure 3[iii]) for teachers to take into account when designing activities and lesson plans. It is a hierarchical structure, therefore, each level requires more complex thinking skills than the one before. As Forehand (2005) explains this has caused a natural division between lower-order and higher-order skills, being the latter analysing, evaluating and creating.
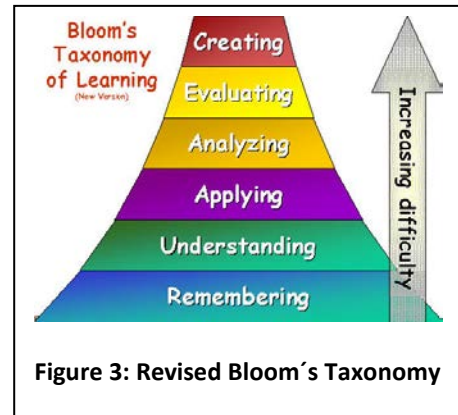
It is important for teachers to include activities that would progressively require the development of all different skills. The work at higher-order levels not only ensures the development of critical, creative and meta-cognitive thinking, but also guarantees a deeper kind of learning. Activities and questions that keep students in lower-order levels will only provide a surface learning, which will not allow them to construct effective and meaningful knowledge.

Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Gardner (1983) proposed that there are different types of intelligence, which he defines as "the bio-psychological potential to process information in certain ways in order to solve problems or fashion products that are valued in a culture or community"(p.34).

Before Gardner the term *intelligence* only referred to a unitarian ability of the brain, measured with IQ tests. His theory has been inspiring for education policy around the world and has allowed a wider consideration of people´s abilities. No intelligence is better than another and it is the teacher´s responsibility to encourage, plan for and value them all in the classroom.

Originally Gardner differentiated seven intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Gardner´s concept of intelligence is inclusive and flexible, that is, we are all born with

the seven intelligences and can develop each of them to an acceptable level of competency, even though naturally we might prefer some and shy away from others.

All intelligences work together in complex ways and even depending on social, individual or work-related circumstances one intelligence previously underdeveloped can be favoured above others. This concept is very relevant for educational purposes, since a variety of intelligences should be used in the classroom not only to appeal to different ways of processing information, but also to work underdeveloped intelligences in students.

Adult Learning

Another way to differentiate teaching is attending to students´ ages. Adult learning is particularly relevant nowadays given the importance of lifelong learning, and specifically for my placement because, although Official Schools of Languages are not exclusive to adults anymore, all the members of the group I taught fell into this category.

Most authors agree that adult and young people´s learning share many features nowadays since the barriers between formal and non-formal education are disappearing (Colom, 2005). However, Brookfield (1986) points out some important aspects:

- Adults reach the classroom with a whole baggage of experience, skills and knowledge from their personal and professional life which will filter the new learning, so educators should try to utilise such prior learning.

- Adult participation is voluntary, so their motivation to learn is high, but at the same time if their needs are not being met they will disengage quickly.

- Collaborative learning is encouraged. They will see natural to discuss and talk with others as they will be used to it from professional and personal experiences.

- Adults are performance-oriented as they wish to apply newly acquired knowledge or skills (Knowles, cited in Brookfield, 1986).

1.2.4 New Approaches to Assessment

Purposes and Types

Assessment always involves making decisions about what students have learnt, how that evidence is going to be collected, how to interpret it and how to grade it and communicate it to learners. To a great extent, assessing implies passing judgement on students´ performance.

Bloxham and Boyd (2008) consider that assessment influences students´ learning experience and behaviour more than any other aspect of teaching. In practice, students tend to engage with the lessons´ material only when faced with assessment tasks or exams, and sometimes it is difficult to interest them in activities which are not going to be assessed. From this reflection it is easy to understand the premise that there is ample opportunity to improve teaching by changing assessment methods (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004).

Recent changes in education, like the learner-centred curriculum and the emphasis on learning-to-learn, are forcing assessment to consider not just knowledge of core subjects but also a wide range of skills and capabilities. New approaches and methods of assessment are being proposed, but they are being implemented very slowly.

As seen before, all elements of the Curriculum can be adapted. However assessment may be the curricular component that has changed the least. The Curriculum also emphasises different types of assessment must coexist: summative, formative, continuous, personalised and final (Sanz, 2005). Mc Alpine (2002) identifies the following types of assessment:

- **Summative (assessment of learning):** it involves measuring student learning by giving them a grade or a mark, normally at the end of a learning process, like a unit, a lesson or a term. The focus is, therefore, on results.

- **Formative (assessment for learning):** it helps the learning process by giving students feedback about their performance so that they can improve it.

- **Formal:** students are aware that they are being assessed

- **Informal:** assessment is integrated in a task, for example, feedback or teacher´s notes on an assignment but without giving a mark
- **Final:** one mark is given at the end of a learning period
- **Continuous:** the learning is broken up in smaller parts and an average is worked out at the end of a period
- **Product-oriented:** what has been learnt (knowledge) is measured
- **Process-oriented:** skills and abilities developed by students to arrive to a final product are assessed
- **Convergent:** questions only have one right answer, concerned with quantity of learning
- **Divergent:** open-ended questions, concerned with the quality of the learning

Following Sanz´s (2005) previous reflection, we can conclude that most assessment in schools continues to be summative, formal, product-oriented and convergent.

The purpose of conducting an assessment can also be varied, including measuring learning, helping learning, monitoring levels of achievement or even research. As Harlen (2005) argues sometimes the information collected from assessment is not used for what the assessment was designed for. This is the case of students´ test results being used to evaluate the performance of schools and teachers. This is what happens in the UK, where lists are published with schools´ results in national tests and this information is used to inform parents´ choice of school for their children and also to manage teacher´s performance contracts.

In the next section, Assessment for Learning will be examined in more detail for two reasons: its relevance in the current educational scene, and it is an integral objective in my Unit Plan.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning or formative assessment provides the basis for lifelong learning. UK Professors Black & Wiliam (1998) carried out an influential research, titled *Inside the Black Box*, where they concluded that assessment for learning contributes to improve learners´ achievement. They also established some important principles for this type of assessment to be effective:

- Students need to know **what** knowledge and skills they are expected to learn. The teacher must inform learners of the intention of an activity or a lesson, so that this is recognised as the learning goal or objective.

- Students need to know **how** they will be assessed. The teacher must share the assessment criteria (newly called *success criteria* in the UK) so that they can judge for themselves if they are achieving them. Assessment criteria may be only a few sentences or a more complex format, like a *rubric*, for tasks or projects.

- Students learn more if feedback is given without a mark.

- Students must monitor their own learning through self-assessment. It is also important to notice the difference between self-assessment (students grade their work), self-evaluation (students reflect on how they have learnt), self-regulation (students set own targets and organise their learning).

- Students need to know how to offer peer feedback (formative) and peer assessment (summative) as a way to develop their own learning strategies.

Opportunities for formative assessment must be included in the classroom and they can take many forms, for example, a question at the end of the class about what has been learnt that day, a thumbs-up round after an exercise, students completing a rubric after a group presentation or an essay handed back to students with annotations. The advantage is not only to help students´ learning but also to inform teachers of the learners´ understanding and introduce changes to their teaching planning as appropriate.

Formative Assessment vs. Summative Assessment

So far, formative and summative assessment have been discussed as if they were completely different or even antagonistic. However, they do not need to be. Both assessments have vital roles to play in the education of students and there are ways in which they can work together, for example, the same information collected by the teacher during summative assessment can then be used for formative purposes.

> **"When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative; when the guests taste the soup, that's summative."**
> (Robert Stakes)

Using only summative assessment means that key skills and abilities are not assessed, and that importance is given only to the results and not the process. Harlen (2005) reflected that if a student achieves a B in English during three terms, it would be simplistic to conclude that no learning has taken place. Formative assessment would allow us to see how the student has reached that mark every term and what new skills or strategies he or she has developed to solve the different tasks in a particular learning period. As Harlen (2005) explained:

> [Summative assessment] is universally associated with teachers focusing on the content of the tests, administering repeated practice tests, training students in the answers to specific questions or types of question, and adopting transmission styles of teaching. In such circumstances teachers make little use of assessment formatively to help the learning process. (p.3)

Unquestionably, formative assessment is more difficult and complex than summative, like Black & Wiliam (1998) stated it takes a great deal of courage for teachers to turn from a test-oriented practice to a learning-oriented classroom environment.

There are several consequences of the excessive use of summative assessment: firstly, exam marks might be good, but that does not mean that meaningful learning is happening for students; secondly, there is an increased pressure and anxiety for learners, and thirdly, what is assessed tends to be reduced to knowledge, which is easier to mark,

leaving out important skills and abilities, such as problem-solving, creativity or critical thinking.

Maxwell (2004) suggests *progressive assessment* as a solution, which would be the synergy of formative and summative assessment. The same information collected by the teacher serves both purposes. A good example would be the use of portfolio in the classroom: students build up the portfolio with evidence of their learning. This work is assessed formally and feedback is provided, then the improved work is assessed again. The aim is to report 'where the student got to' in their learning journey, not where they started or where they were on the average across the whole course. (Maxwell, 2004, pp. 2- 3).

The advantage of portfolio is that students take responsibility for their learning by selecting their work, reflecting about it and deciding what to do next (Paris & Ayers, 1994). However, rote learning has a role to play in education, but it is important that acquired knowledge can be applied so that students make it meaningful: we all understand that being able to do mathematical operations is not meaningful until students know how to resolve problems.

To sum up this section, changing assessment is undoubtedly a difficult task, and although some authors may even see it as "an unrealistic ideal that can never be attained" (Boud, 2000, p.159) it is definitely one worth focusing on and where any progress would mean significant benefits for students and teachers.

1.3 The New Role of the Teacher

The new concept of education explained so far calls for a new role of the teacher. As Latorre & González (1987) explain, the Traditional School considered the teacher a transmitter of knowledge, who had the active role in the classroom and the students reproduced and repeated what they were taught; the New School considered the teacher a facilitator of learning, supporting students in constructing their own knowledge. These authors go a step further, following the ideas of Stenhouse, by assigning teachers the role of researchers.

The main function of the teacher continues to be teaching and facilitating the learning of students, but this practice can only be improved by a critical and reflexive attitude towards their own work and that of students. The teacher, in this way, is also a learner who must observe, plan, implement, reflect and take some learning from that evaluation so that new planning can take place. In this way a continuous cycle of action-research is put into practice (See Figure 4[iv]). This is called "practical theorizing" by Hagger & Hazel (2006) and is the reflection that the teacher carries out over their own practice and which is supported by educational research and theory. An important fallback of this model is how, after observation, the teacher uses innovation and creativity to propose adequate alternatives for his practice as part of the plan-action-review cycle.

Figure 4: Action-research cycle

Creativity is a major twenty-first century skill, however, teachers are reluctant to incorporate it into their students´ learning activities or to use it themselves. Contrary to popular belief that considers creativity as a gift that only a few have, Robinson (2006) explains that we are all born creative and imaginative, because we are not scared of making mistakes, but that it is the educational system that "kills" creativity.

Creativity is not the only skill that teachers and learners share. Pérez Gómez (2012) defends that it would be fair to expect teachers to possess the same skills as the ones required of students, that is, the twenty-first century skills: critical thinking, problem-solving, good communication strategies, collaborative work, ICT skills, flexibility and adaptability, innovation and creativity.

Sarramona (2008) distinguishes four main teacher´s functions: didactic (all aspects related to teaching), tutorial (personal interaction with families and students), relationship with the school community (network with other teachers, management team, other professionals), and professional development. The author pinpoints professional development as the key to influence an educational change in Spain and argues that no reform will be possible in education unless teachers are prepared for it. Although an incredible work is carried out in teacher training and development, the author illustrates that participation on courses is considerable lower than in the rest of Europe (OCDE 55% against 32% in Spain). Sarramona (2008) continues to explain that professional development is considered something voluntary and optional, sometimes motivated by the need to acquire credits more than by personal conviction, however, the Ley Orgánica de Educación states that teachers´ development is both a right and an obligation (art. 128.2i).

Pérez Gómez (2012) in his lecture at Málaga University explained that although the education system may have "important dark areas and deficiencies", teachers need to be positive and assume their new role of "facilitators of learning" in the twenty-first century. He understood that a major drawback in the Spanish Curriculum is excessive contents, in his own words "kilometres in length but millimetres in depth", but he encourages teachers to be brave and not take as the syllabus what textbooks tell them to but to choose fewer topics to work deeper. This would mean a cooperative work amongst all teachers in a school so that by the end of the compulsory education all contents would have been covered.

1.4 Teaching Modern Foreign Languages in the Twenty-First Century

The current multicultural society and the global economic scene have placed languages at the forefront of the skills required by citizens of the twenty-first century, and language teaching has had to change and adapt to this reality. For some decades now the priority has been on developing the communicative competence, but also in using language learning as a vehicle to acquire a multicultural competence and the ability to be "world citizens". Schools offer second languages from an earlier age and even an optional third language in secondary education.

As Eaton (2010) explains, the focus in language education in the twenty-first century is on using language and cultural knowledge as a means to communicate with others, and those "others" could be anywhere around the globe. The emphasis is no longer on grammar, memorising and learning from rote.

A great effort has been placed on teaching languages all across Europe. In Andalucía, for example, the Multilingual Development Plan has the ambitious aim to develop the multilingual competence of   students (bilingual schools), teachers (courses at Official Schools of Languages) and the Andalusian society (Multilingualism and Society Programme).

However, the results do not always reflect this investment. There is a general feeling that students do not leave school with a high communicative competence (Sanz, 2005), which throws some doubts as to how the new methodologies have been implemented or if the emphasis has really been on "meaning and not form". This reflection will be particularly relevant for my placement experience which will be developed in section two of this project.

The biggest effort concerning language learning and teaching in Europe in the last decades has been the Common European Framework of Reference, which will be explained in detail as it has been the pivotal tool for the design and assessment of my Unit Plan.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

All current language teaching in Europe takes as a reference the work of the European Council and more specifically the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It is not possible to talk about curricular design, methodology or assessment criteria without taking into consideration this document.

A first draft of the CEFR was published in 1996 and a final version in 2001. As Heyworth (2006) explains the CEFR was developed in order to promote communication between the citizens of EU member states, with its intentions being the following:

> a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. (Council of Europe 2001, p.1).

From the quotation it becomes clear that the CEFR aims to provide consistency in language learning across Europe, and that some of its principles towards language learning have shaped current education policies.

Firstly, it develops a competence-based approach. The CEFR distinguishes:

- General competencies: knowledge, skills, existential competence and ability to learn
- Communicative language competencies: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic
- Multilingual and multicultural competence where a person has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures.

Secondly, an action-oriented learning is established, where learners act as social agents, that is, they have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to complete in a specific context. The task-based instruction is, therefore, a communicative approach favoured by the CEFR.

The best-known aspect of the CEFR, however, is the Common Reference Levels. They are becoming increasingly important in the organisation of language teaching and assessment. The members of ALTE (Cambridge ESOL, the Goethe Institute, the Alliance Française and other national bodies) have adapted their examinations according to the six levels, and they are influencing the way in which text books are designed (Little, 2006). There have been some voices, such as McBeath (2001), who see in this manoeuvre by ELT institutes a use of the CEFR as a marketing tool and insist that it was born only as a reference for consistency in qualifications and language learning.

The Framework itself is not free of criticism. Fulcher (2004) underlined the unrealistic aim of providing proficiency descriptors that are applicable across languages, so he considers the CEFR a model more than a framework. The Council of Europe itself expressed clearly in the first draft of 1996 that the Framework "does not imply the imposition of one single system" (Council of Europe, 1996, p. 3). The truth, however, is that the CEFR has become the system recognised by institutions, schools and teachers as the model to follow.

Fulcher (2004) claimed that the danger is to see the scales in the CEFR as the natural progression in which languages are acquired, that is, learners would learn languages in a hierarchical way which coincides with the levels of the Framework. This notion would imply, as Saville explained (2010), that one-size-fits-all in measuring language ability, when anyone who is in contact with teaching languages would know that students do not conform to levels as easily and that age, context, motivation and many other factors play an important role in how languages are learnt; in other words, a lack of attention to diversification can be noticed in the way the CEFR is being used.

In answer to these discrepant voices, important work is taking place to adapt the CEFR to specific contexts and to develop descriptors for particular languages, even not European, like Japanese. At the same time, there is a conscious effort by the Council of Europe to show the Framework as a work in progress, and to emphasise its character of reference and not of a prescriptive tool.

In Spain the Royal Decree 1629/2006, 29th December , determines that compulsory secondary education for a second language would have as a reference the competencies of the A2 level. Levels B1 and onwards would be offered in Official Schools of Languages.

The Post-Communicative Era

In the last decades communicative language teaching (CLT) has come to dominate the scenario of second language acquisition, and it has been understood that communicative teaching is synonymous with "good language teaching". The main author to voice some deficits of the CLT is Swan (1985, cited in Tejada, Pérez & Luque, 2005) who presented the following arguments:

- "Rules of communication" (or use) are difficult to specify, and even if it was possible there is not much point in teaching them as they are non-language related and, therefore, learners possess them thanks to experience and common sense.
- The focus of CLT on appropriateness hinders the need to teach vocabulary, which should be learners´ priority.
- The development of skills and strategies should not be an objective since learners already have them through using their mother tongue.
- The "meaning over structure" principle only leads to lack of accuracy. It is necessary to isolate some structures to practice them out of context and more emphasis must be given to grammar teaching as it speeds up the learning process.
- Language in the classroom cannot be 100% real, therefore, teaching activities of no immediate communicative value, such as repetition or memorising, should be used.

Checa Marín (2002, cited in Tejada, Pérez & Luque, 2005) pointed out that the Communicative Approach has not had as strong an impact on language teaching in Spain as it presents "serious obstacles" for Primary and Secondary School teachers who simply cannot match its main principles to their teaching reality.

Taking all this into consideration, some authors are starting to talk about the "post-communicative" era since the conviction is that no single method offers the ideal

answer to language teaching and learning. This eclecticism is supported and justified by Nunn (2001) who views as positive the idea of language teaching as an adaptive process and not the application of a particular method. He believes that the classroom should encompass a series of holistic activities in order to meet all learning needs.

These times of change seem to be supported by Ofsted inspection findings in the UK and the *Nuffield Inquiry* mentioned by Grenfell (2000), where he explains that three conclusions were drawn: current methodological doubts, curriculum confusion and loss of purpose regarding language teaching and learning, and a new direction needs to be found for the twenty-first century.

2. DESIGN AND JUSTIFICATION OF A UNIT PLAN: A DIFFERENTIATED TASK-BASED APPROACH IN THE MÁLAGA OFFICIAL SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

2.1 Context of the School

2.1.1 Characteristics and Location

The Málaga Official School of Languages is a public centre, depending on the Education Board of the Junta de Andalucía. It is dedicated to the teaching of Modern Languages, and is framed within the non-university special denomination education, according to the Decree 239/2007 of 4th September.

The School opened its doors in the academic year 1970/71, being the oldest in Andalusia. As its Headmaster, D. Juan Vicente Vega, highlights this is not the only feature that makes this school unique. It is also the Official School which offers the most languages in Andalucía as well as employing the most teaching staff and having the highest number of students.

It is located in the long-standing area of Martiricos, best known for being the home to Málaga Football Club and a very popular area for music bands to rehearse for Easter processions. This information would be superfluous if it was not for the fact that band tunes and football hymns are a characteristic background droning in the evening classes, and very commented upon by students.

Martiricos is not an affluent part of the city, in fact, it adjoins some deeply deprived neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, the geographical location of the School does not determine the general profile of its students. Unlike the direct relationship between location and students´ profiles in Primary and Secondary Schools, the students who attend this School come from all areas of Málaga, as it is the only one in the city.

The School has an overwhelming demand for new admissions every year. This contributes to its singularity as no other School in Andalucía comes close in students enrolled or in languages offered. Just to give an approximate idea, the School in Málaga offers eleven languages, while the one in Seville only four. This vibrant and diverse character centre makes this School unique.

2.1.2 Organisational Structure

The Málaga School currently employs 96 teachers, including civil servants and interim staff.

The centre is organised in 12 departments, one for every language taught: English, French, German, Italian, Arabic, Russian, Greek, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish as a second language. There is also a Cultural Activities Department.

The Management Team is formed by the Headmaster, the Deputy Headmaster, a Secretary, a Head of Studies and three Deputy Heads of Studies.

There is also a School Council, which is formed by a Secretary, a President, a Head of Studies, and representatives of teaching, student and parent bodies, as well as a representative from the Town Hall and from the Administration Department.

Finally, the Teaching Staff Board, which is made up of all the School´s teachers.

2.1.3 The School´s Comprehensive Education Plan[v]

Legislation and the Curriculum

The School´s Comprehensive Education Plan has been shaped by significant changes in the last few years. A new **Curriculum** was defined in the Royal Decree 1629/2006, 29th December, which meant a substantial transformation in the conception of language teaching and learning:

   a) Focused on a practical and communicative command of the language

   b) Framed in lifelong education, therefore, giving special relevance to strategic skills and self-learning

   c) Lined up with the reference levels established by the European Council

   d) Included in the Multilingualism Development Plan, to appreciate cultural diversity through languages.

Out of these four principles, I believe that only the attention to the reference levels has truly penetrated the School´s methodology. The practical approach to the teaching of languages continues to be patchy and depending more on individual teacher´s styles

than on a generally adopted philosophy. As for the communicate competence, its linguistic aspect continues to dominate the classes (especially grammar and lexicon) leaving very limited space for pragmatic or sociolinguistic aspects.

The next legislative change came with the Order of 27th September 2011, which regulates the curriculum of levels C1 and C2 of the European Framework in Andalucía. The Málaga School has been pioneer in offering level C1.

The latest reform in legislation took place only a few months ago, the Decree 15/2012, of 7th February, by which the Organic Law for Official Schools of Languages in Andalucía was passed.

The implications of the new Decree were explained by the Inspector D. José Sempere at the VI Provincial Symposium for Official Schools of Languages:

- More autonomy and governing flexibility for Schools

- New selection criteria for students: priority given to the unemployed, qualifications, academic records and income.

- New Department for education, training, development, evaluation and innovation in every School

I consider the introduction of a Department for development and innovation the most necessary of these measures, however, it was generally overlooked by teachers. Although the School prides itself in following the latest trends in methodology and language teaching, it is my opinion that they are complacent with following in most cases the communicative approach suggested by textbooks and that the teaching staff are, in general, quite oblivious to approaches like collaborative work, differentiated teaching and learning, creative work or assessment for learning.

Levels and Courses

The following levels are currently offered in Málaga:

Levels	Years
Basic A2	Year 1 - A1
	Year 2 - A2
Intermediate B1	One Year - B1
Advanced B2	Year 1 - B2 (*called B2.1*)
	Year 2 - B2 (*called B2.2*)
Operative and Proficient C1	One Year - C1

Level C1 in English, French and German started in Málaga this current academic year 2011/2012.

Types of Teaching

The diverse character of the School is reflected in its wide range of teaching modalities:

1. Official face-to-face teaching: daily classes, alternate-day classes, intensive *Spanish as a Second Language* courses, and refresher courses[vi] for teachers in bilingual schools as part of the Multilingual Development Plan.

2. Blended course: *That´s English* created by the Education Ministry in collaboration with the BBC and TVE.

3. Sitting-only accreditation exams, in lieu of an actual course.

2.1.4 The Students

The School currently accounts for 10,277 enrolled students, who fill this busy school from 8.30 in the morning to 21.30 in the evening. Four main characteristics define them:

- Difference in ages: ranging from 14-year-olds to pensioners

- Diversity of nationalities: the current growing multiracial society is reflected in the classrooms, many studying the languages of countries where their own families come from.

- Variety of motivations to study languages: from a mere personal interest or curiosity, especially in languages like Arabic or Chinese, to real professional and academic needs.

- Social and professional background: secondary education, university and postgraduate students, unemployed, professionals and pensioners share a common interest in languages.

Although this variety is looked upon as a strength by some teachers, it is also regarded as a real challenge by others. Teenagers have been the most controversial group in recent years, and some members of the team find it demanding to teach them or deal with their occasional disruptive behaviour. The newly announced admission criteria will cut down on teenage students in future years.

Tutorials

Tutor-student meetings are not common in the School, but they demand a great flexibility on the part of the teaching staff, always taking into account the personal circumstances of students. Adult students tend to ask for advice on extra materials, or wish to review their term exams with the teacher.

Tutor-parent meetings do not happen often. Families or guardians of teenagers do not usually wish to be involved, and it comes down to tutors to contact them to discuss matters such as progress, disruptive behaviour or absenteeism. The Decree

15/2012, of 7th February, emphasises this obligation of teachers and right of families to be informed.

Attention to Diversity

There are no guidelines from the Administration regarding curricular adaptation, which leaves Official Schools of Languages to internally manage complex and potentially delicate decisions. For example, in the case of a student who is auditively impaired, the Staff Meeting had to decide if full certification is awarded or only a partial one for the skills that the student can fulfill.

What is surprising regarding diversity is that the concept seems to be   limited in all discussions to physical or mental disabilities, while there is little mentioning amongst teachers on how to adapt their teaching strategies to address, for example, students´ differing learning styles, ages, interests etc.

2.1.5 Multiculturality

The Department of Cultural Activities organises numerous events to promote a multi-cultural environment like photography exhibitions, short-story contests, guided visits to monuments, Christmas and San Valentine card contests, music concerts or Tai-chi workshops. Students enjoy discount to some museums or sport events. The School runs its own radio station and two magazines *Martiricos* and *Algarabía*, films in original version are shown regularly.

During my placement at the School, the "Day of the Book" was being organised. The English Department had to suggest books and quotations to decorate the School with. It surprised me that they would only propose classic authors, who might be more appropriate in a University Literature Course, and not current writers who might suit the profile of the students better. An enormous and commendable effort is put into the multicultural life of the School and this is a vital experience for lifelong learning, I would just encourage a more pragmatic approach to culture to cater for the interests of the majority.

2.1.6 Facilities and Resources

There is a reception, a hall, an audiovisual room, two language labs, a library, an IT room, a photocopy service and a coffee shop.

All classrooms have a TV set and DVD player. Nearly half of the classrooms have projectors that can be connected to a laptop. It is common for teachers to work with digital copies of the textbooks. There is wi-fi in the School, but the connection to internet is not always reliable.

2.2 Planning of the Unit "Our Sensual Brains"

2.2.1 The English Department

The English Department, lead by Dña. Carmen Carmona as Head, is the biggest in the School with thirty eight teachers, 3,546 students enrolled in face-to-face courses, 2.500 on *That´s English* and nearly 1,000 who will just sit the official exams.

The Study Programmes of this Department follow the objectives, contents and assessment criteria of the Curriculum[vii]. Textbooks are used in all the levels, although some teachers bring some support material to classes.

Although not stated explicitly, there is a biased attitude in the Department towards British English, especially in the written form.

2.2.2 Group for Intervention

My placement tutor has been Diego Nieto, who teaches the three level C1 groups in the afternoon/evenings.

These groups are unique for different reasons. This is the first year that this level is taught in the School, therefore, it is a real test-run for both students and teacher. Secondly, all students are teachers in bilingual schools, this means that they are all English teachers themselves or they teach their subject (Biology, Maths, Music or Physical Education) in English.

The fact that all students of level C1 are teachers has been controversial. The Junta de Andalucía gave a high weighting in the admission criteria to teachers, resulting in the exclusion of other students. Next year no preference will be given to any student profile.

The way these groups came together, however, was very relevant for the planning of my Unit because of their **unique homogeneity**:

a) There are no great differences in their level of English

b) Their relationship with English is both personal and professional

c) They are "model" students since they understand the role of the teacher

d) They have developed self-learning strategies

e) They are all professionals in the same field (teaching), which binds them together in background experience.

f) There are no huge differences in age, but the existing ones are overcome by the fact that they all share a profession.

g) They all share a common goal, namely, to pass the C1 exam, as this will be a professional requirement in the future.

When I met the three groups I felt both excited and nervous. On the one hand, they were bound to be easy and understanding pupils; on the other hand, their circumstances and background would make the classes demanding and intense.

The following table shows the groups and their timetables:

Classroom A.O3 Level C1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Group A	17:30-19:30		17:30-19:30	
Group B		17:30-19:30		17:30-19:30
Group C		19.30-21:30		19.30-21:30

Although the groups have been described as "homogeneous", each group had its own dynamics and characteristics. I will refer from now on to them as Group A, Group B and Group C:

a) Group A is formed by 31 students. Their general experience of living or spending a lengthy amount of time abroad is more limited than in the other groups. They show more difficulty in the listening exercises and in the speaking and oral interaction skills.

b) Group B is formed by 32 students. They have a competent command of the listening and speaking skills, but they are in general quiet personalities.

c) Group C is formed by 33 students. This group is similar to group B in ability, but the personality of its members is more outgoing and forward. They get on very well and this makes it the most prone to oral participation. Their fluency and accuracy are more advanced than in the other two groups.

After my first week observing the three groups, it was agreed with my tutor that I would deliver my classes to group C.

2.2.3 Classroom Observation

An important element to design my Unit was to observe the groups in order to decide what routines and techniques that they were used to I would incorporate or change in my planning and what learning aspects I would focus on.

Based on the lesson observation criteria by Ofsted[viii] , *The New Teacher Project 2011*, and some personal ones, I designed my own observation table. The following template shows a summary of my notes.

The teacher	
Style	Formal both in language register and manner used, but at the same time relaxed and approachable. He is a very calm, reflexive person, his voice quiet, which creates a comfortable environment. Often uses own personal anecdotes or stories to illustrate the subject studied and to encourage conversation and response from students. His experience and knowledge gain him students´ respect.

Lesson planning	The book *Inside Out* is followed. The teacher makes notes of exercise answers, and foresees possible problems with vocabulary or grammar. Plans direct instruction slots, for example, how to write a narrative text. Students take notes and follow these instructions as strict models. It clips their creativity but it prepares them to pass the exam. The lesson plans for the three groups are not differentiated, this is a comfortable strategy for the teacher as he always knows where he is with the groups but students´ differences are not catered for. No extra materials are used.
Lesson objectives	Sometimes the purpose of a particular exercise is explained. The assessment criteria for the C1 certified exam are always referred to. All exercises done in class are framed in the context of the exam and how they are relevant to it.
Lesson strategies	Constantly activates students´ previous knowledge of the topic, grammar or vocabulary studied. This always works as a good warm up and starts group debate. Questions are directed to the whole group, so the same students tend to answer all the time, while others do not participate much. Communicates clearly key concepts, providing own examples Highlights strategies for the different skills (for example, skimming and comprehension in reading, listening for key words etc.). This makes students focus not only on learning content but on how to develop skills that will support their learning. Uses digital version of the textbook (projected). The advantage is that all students focus on one point and do not hide or disconnect from the class by looking at their books. It makes group conversation easier as they are all looking to the centre of the room, and not looking down. Explicit grammar explanations. Students tend to take notes and not talk or ask much, which indicates that they are understanding. When they do the practice exercise afterwards they tend to get everything right which makes me wonder if the explicit explanation was really necessary. Drilling techniques used for pronunciation of new vocabulary or complex sounds and structures No differentiated strategies for different types of students
Activities	Students only carry out activities from the book, which cover mainly reading, writing and listening. Not many oral interaction activities in the book, so students work in pairs through grammar or reading exercises to encourage speaking practice. I noticed that pairs are very quick in completing these exercises and have time to spare. I believe for groups B and C could follow a faster pace. Especially for group C some activities are not challenging enough.
Corrections	Paraphrasing what the student has said or repeating it correctly is the usual method. I can see students quickly pick on what they have said wrong and either repeat it back correctly or take notes. Direct correction not used a lot, only errors that would warrant students a fail in

	the C1 exam. No peer correction or self-correction encouraged.
Classroom management	Students speak English all the time, even outside the class. Occasionally the teacher translates a difficult or tricky word. This speeds up the pace of the lesson, but also avoids confusion, as at this level the nuances of words are hard to grasp. Instructions are clear, asking students to clarify their understanding. This practice is very good for these students in particular as they are teachers and will have to give instructions to their students all the time. It also shows that instructions are not easy to give or to understand, most of the time they were discrepancies in what students had understood. Instructions are very important for them as well to "train" for the exam. Students are addressed by name, this creates a relaxed and cosy atmosphere. Questions are normally asked to the whole group, and if no answer obtained, then a named student is asked. Students are not given an approximate time to complete each exercise. Teacher monitors and corrects when most pairs have finished. It is difficult for pairs to plan their work without a time limit, sometimes they rush through it, other times discuss too long some answers and do not finish the exercise.
Homework	Grammar exercises and written essays every two weeks
Assessment for learning	The written essays are co-assessed by the group, giving the opportunity to build a better composition all together. This practice develops collaborative work, but also metacognitive skills, as students reflect about language. The fallback is that too many are done and too long (two hours) so students tend to lose concentration and lower standards. The term exams are also reviewed in class, as a chance to share knowledge and to train for the final exam. The downside of this technique is that it only focuses on students´ mistakes, there is no personal information about what they have done well or what their strengths are.
Students	
Engagement and attitude	Enthusiastic and a positive attitude. Most of them are self-reliant in their learning but do not use other resources apart from the book. This makes me think that the classroom must be used to introduce real materials as a way to increase the contact of students with real English.
Response to activities	More enthusiasm shown for activities involving oral pair work, even if it is to do a grammar exercise, than writing or reading, which shows that students´ priority when coming to class is to speak.
Participation and interaction	Participation is high in pairwork. Participation as a whole group tends to fall on the same students all the time. My belief is that this is due to students feeling shy speaking to the whole group.
Assessment	Students are well aware of the exam criteria and can analyse their performance

for learning	to such standards. They can recognise what skills or types of exercises they find difficult and can find strategies to improve on them. They also ask the teacher for advice and support material. They set themselves objectives to work on for the next term exam.
Physical environment	
Seating arrangement	Desks are arranged in a U-shape, with 8 desks in the centre. The class is not very big, so re-arrangement of layout is difficult.

My tutor and I discussed my role during the observation period deciding an active role would benefit me the most. During the lessons I would sit with a student and work through the activities with him/her, or I would monitor the whole group during pair-work, checking their progress and answering questions.

When it was time to deliver my lessons I felt I knew the students: who were the most forward and the quietest ones, which exercises they took longer in doing and common problems, and strengths and weaknesses of the three groups. I was familiar with the textbook and with the set routines of the classes.

This helped me not only in the planning and designing of my Unit Plan, but in the delivery and management of it.

2.2.4 Classroom Research

From my observations in the classroom, I decided to focus my work on increasing participation and oral interaction time, as this was an identified priority of students, to encourage real communication strategies and to raise motivation in exercises concerned with reading and writing. I established the following hypotheses:

- A task-based approach would increase interaction and develop communication strategies and real language use

- Differentiated tasks would increase motivation, especially with exercises that students   responded to more passively

2.2.5 Design of the Unit Plan

I delivered the Unit Plan "Our Sensual Brains" specifically designed for my target group (group C). I gave it a catchy name to make it more appealing and to link the main topics of the unit: the brain and the senses. It consisted of 3 two-hour sessions, planned for days 10th, 12th and 17th April.

The design of the unit follows the objectives, contents and evaluation criteria specified in the Order of 27th September 2011 for level C1, and adapted to the topic and the focus (increase oral interaction) of my unit (the brain and the senses).

Objectives

Listen and understand complex texts about a highly specialised topic such as the brain

Take active and effective part in extensive oral exchanges, about the topic of the brain and the senses,   where both resolution and agreement are required

Express clear, structured and fluent oral messages, incorporating new concepts and vocabulary   about the brain and the senses

Understand and critically analyse specialised texts about the brain and perception through the senses in advertising

Write a clear and structured persuasive text about a topic related to the brain or the senses, adjusted to a specific format and audience

Take part in evaluation activities about their own learning and performance, and those of their colleagues

The learning objectives consider the development of five of the six skills considered in the Curriculum (listening, speaking, oral interaction, writing and reading), but in the tasks I gave a special weighting to speaking and oral interaction as part of my focus for the lessons.

The objectives allowed me to narrow down the scope of the contents: I introduced highly specialised real texts (both written and audio) about the topic of the brain, and I linked it with a closer topic for students, such as the use of the senses in advertising. The use of real material of different registers is a requirement in the Curriculum for C1 level.

The last objective is concerned with the evaluation of own learning and performance, and those of their colleagues. This is part of the life-long learning promoted by the European Framework, and I believed it to be especially relevant for these students as they are teachers in bilingual schools and will need to give regular feedback to their own students.

As seen in 1.2 *Planning, Teaching and Evaluating*, I have included knowledge (new concepts and vocabulary), skills (resolution of problems, analysing) and competence (evaluating learning and linguistic) as part of the objectives (Alemañy, 2009).

Contents

The contents have been divided into: discursive, functional, grammatical, strategic communication, semantic, and phonetic and orthographic following the Curriculum.

The functional (expressing consequence), grammatical (participle clauses) and semantic (vocabulary about the brain and the senses) were taken from the textbook unit and I designed the activities to incorporate them.

I have given special relevance in the Unit Plan to discursive and strategic communication contents, as part of my focus on increasing oral interaction. They were realised through pair and group tasks where real communication was needed to resolve a specific situation.

Discursive contents:

Strategies to understand two scientific videos about the brain and the mind: verbal and non-verbal, anticipation of content and activation of previous knowledge.

Identification of specific information from two scientific short videos about the brain and the mind.

Oral interaction strategies when resolving group tasks about the brain, such as turn-taking, asking for clarification, maintaining and following communication

Negotiation of meaning and unforeseen aspects of communication, such as differing opinions, information gaps etc., when holding informal conversations about the topic

Cohesion of both oral and written texts about the brain, the senses and reflection on learning, adapted to the communicative context

Strategic communication contents:

Coordination of general and communicative competences to undertake group tasks about the topic of the brain efficiently.

Adaptation of a written text to an audience, like advertisements for a brain training game or a cereal bar.

Deduction of the meaning of words and sentences from the context about the topic of the brain and the senses, by analysing the structure or previous knowledge in other languages.

Inference of non-explicit intention of texts, like an article about a brain training course or an article about how advertising appeals to our senses

Distinction of main and subsidiary ideas in specialised texts about brain training, and in an informative newspaper article about advertising appealing to our senses.

Resolution of communication breakdown during activities and tasks about the brain and the senses, and the resolution of a problem-solving activity, using linguistic and paralinguistic resources.

Methodology

The emphasis on strategic communication and discursive contents is justified by the choice of a **communicative approach** or communicative language teaching (CLT).

The goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence, that is, not only knowing how a language works but also how to use it appropriately depending on the context, the other participants and their purpose.

According to Richard´s (2001) principles of the communicative approach, the following ones have been incorporated in the unit plan:

a) **Real communication** is the focus of language teaching. In several activities students engage in a real conversation with a real outcome, for example, prioritising brain functions according to their importance in everyday life and justifying why *(Lesson 1, act.3)*

b) **Learners should experiment and try out what they know**. Mistakes, hesitations and uncertainty are part of the learning process, that is why opportunities are given for students to try what they know and build knowledge by themselves, for example, there is an activity with new vocabulary about verbs of the senses where they need to infer their meaning by the context *(L. 2, act.2).*

c) **Learners should develop both fluency and accuracy**. Fluency is the priority in the CLT, however, a balance of activities should exist and accuracy should support the development of fluency. There are some activities where accuracy is required, for example, a video about the brain where they need to identify brain functions and parts *(L. 1, act. 2)* or a vocabulary task where only one answer is possible *(L. 2, act.4).* However, most tasks in the unit focus on fluency where students´ priority is to use language as a vehicle to resolve a situation.

d) **Linking different skills**. In real life listening, speaking and reading tend to occur at the same time, therefore, activities should interlink skills. There are times when students listen to an audio or read a text only to interact orally afterwards to complete an activity. For example, after reading two texts about brain training and the senses in advertising, the need to do orally in pairs an analysis of the texts´ purpose, style, cultural references etc. (*L. 2, act.6)*

e) **Introduction of grammar rules**. There is only one activity in the unit on grammar *(L. 2, act.3)*, and I have chosen Savage, Bitterlin, & Price (2010) "hybrid" approach for its introduction. This means that participle clauses were first introduced implicitly in a meaningful context: students had to classify sentences that contained this structure according to the vocabulary of the five senses. Afterwards, I asked students to *infer* the form, meaning and use of the structures, so grammar was explicitly explained and some guided practice of the new structure followed. I chose this approach to introduce the novelty of reflecting about language but to also maintain the style that students feel comfortable with regarding grammar (explicit) and which Savage et al. (2010) believed that "students with academic goals [...] need to learn grammar more explicitly than students with non-academic goals"(p.19).

f) **Task-based instruction (TBI)** organises language teaching around tasks specifically designed to promote interaction amongst learners, using language as a vehicle to resolve a given situation. TBI, therefore, develops communication strategies, as well as resolution and thinking skills.

The Unit Plan is a continuum of tasks, each task following the most common stages of pre-task, task and post-task, based on the original model introduced by Willis (1996).

The pre-task allows for previous knowledge to be activated and introduces the topic of the task; the task cycle focuses on learners resolving a matter, by researching, debating, summarising, analysing or any other skills; in the post-task students consolidate what they have learnt, focus on language or create own product or evaluate the learning.

The Unit Plan is divided in three lessons of two hours. The tasks of the first two lessons provide learners with sufficient back-up knowledge and practice of communication strategies to produce a **final product** on day three, such as creating their own script for a TV advert appealing to the senses.

Different types of tasks (Willis & Willis, 2007) have been included in the Unit Plan:

- **Ordering and sorting:** learners classify the brain functions and parts after watching a video (*L.1, act.2*)

- **Comparing**: students are given two texts, one about a brain training course and another about how advertising appeals to our senses. They need to compare the two texts from the point of view of their function, tone and style (*L.2, act. 6*)

- **Problem-solving:** a real life brain training riddle is given to learners to resolve in groups. Reasoning and communication strategies are needed, while language becomes just a vehicle (*L.1, act.6*). As mentioned in the section *Collaborative Learning* (p.13), some authors argue (Leigh Smith, 1992) that tasks involving problem-solving work the best in encouraging real communication and in developing higher-order thinking skills.

- **Creative** (Willis, 1996): students have to create their own sayings containing the word "brain" *(L.2, act. 9)* or the final product where groups create a script for an advertisement appealing to the senses (*L.3, act.2*)

- **Visual support:** students are offered a mind map to complete after listening to a video about the brain parts and functions *(L.1, act.2b),* three photos to associate with music to understand how perception is different for everyone *(L. 2, act.1*), colours to

differentiate parts and functions of sentences, and photos of the senses to arrange the sentences around *(L.2, act.2)*

g) **Emphasis on pair work and group work:** Vygostky´s theory that learning occurs thanks to the interactions with others has underpinned language teaching and learning in the past decades (See section 1.2.2 *The Social Aspect of Learning: Socio-cultural Theory*). Pair or group tasks are the way to realise this social learning in the classroom, and most of the tasks in the unit follow this model. As Savignon (1991) stated language learning results from participation in communicative events where there is interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning, that is, collaboration.

I have also included some individual work to attend to the needs of those who need some "own time" to process information. For example, after introducing the grammar structures, students are left time on their own to produce some examples *(L.2, act.3b).*

h) **Importance of authentic materials.** Although some authors believe that the use of authentic materials is not appropriate for lower-levels (Richards, 2001), most authors agree that their use at post-intermediate and advanced levels have clear advantages, such as increasing learners´ motivation and exposing them to real culture and language. My target group is not exposed to real materials on their course, for this reason, authentic videos, articles, brain training activities and real sayings have been used.

Attention to Diversity

Students learn in various ways. This diversity has been addressed in the Unit Plan by the use of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, the Revised Bloom´s Taxonomy (both theories explained in section 1.2.3) and by differentiated activities:

a) **Theory of Multiple Intelligences :**

Images have been used to introduce vocabulary *(L.2, act.2)*, music to demonstrate differences in perception (*L.2, act.1*) and to understand the effect of music and images on emotions (intrapersonal intelligence), cards to appeal to those kinaesthetically

sensitive (*L.2, act.2*) and problem-solving or information classification for logical-mathematical learners *(L.1, act.3 and 6)*.

b) The Revised Bloom´s Taxonomy (RBT):

- To establish learning objectives of different cognitive levels: understanding, analysing, resolving and evaluating (See unit objectives on p. 43)

- As a checklist to ensure that higher-order skills were being promoted. For example, there is a listening *(L.1,act.2)* that requires students to recognise information (remembering), and students are asked later on to classify that information according to own criteria (evaluating) in order to increase the cognitive difficulty.

c) Differentiated Activities, for example, in the final task (*L3, act. 2*), the product required from all the groups is the same (an advertising text), but there is a differentiation in process, in format and in content (Theisen, 2002). Students have a choice to write the text for an advertisement photo about a brain training game, or to dub a video advertising a cereal bar, trying to appeal to our senses.

Cultural Awareness

The Curriculum for Official Schools of Languages explicitly points out the relevance of promoting a multicultural and multilingual competence in students as language is in itself a manifestation of the community that speaks it. The following cultural elements have been introduced in the Unit Plan:

- Standard American accent in the two videos about the brain and the mind *(L1.act.2 and 8)*
- Reflection on the social and cultural perception of brain training techniques in our society *(L2, act.6 and 7)*
- Cultural references to American society in the texts about brain training, and the role of the senses in advertising *(L2, act.6)*
- Proverbs containing the word "Brain" from different countries *(L.1, act.9)*

- Reflection on cultural similarities and differences regarding the perception of intelligence *(L1, act.9)*

Evaluation and Assessment Criteria

As Harris & McCann (1994) indicated it is important to link formal, informal and self-assessment. In the Unit Plan there is no formal assessment, as this is limited in the School to the exams at the end of the academic year. I have incorporated informal and self-assessment, being mainly formative and process-oriented (See McAlpine´s classification in on page 18).

a) **Students´ Own Assessment for Learning**

There are several moments when students, individually or in groups, review their own learning as a way of reflecting on areas for improvement and existing strengths.

- Assessment of a listening task´s difficulty and their performance in it (*L.1, act.4*) with a simple technique of "hands-up" indicating a score from one to three, reflecting on why they believe they have found it easy or not.
- Reflection on group work to solve a brain training activity (*L1, act.7*), it is a process-oriented assessment where students aim to understand how they worked and what helped them or hinder them from achieving the task
- Self-monitoring / Self-correction of work *(L. 1, act. 2b, act.6 and act.8; L. 2, act.4).* After students complete a mind map on brain parts and functions, a filled-in one is projected for them to correct their work. In this visual way, they can identify success and mistakes easily. The same technique is used in pairs to correct their grammar and lexicon exercises. Time is also saved by not having to explain answers one by one to the whole group.
- At the end of every lesson (*L.1, act.11; L.2, act.8*) students were asked to say one thing that they took from that day´s lesson
- Groups give peer-feedback to other groups about their final presentation of an advertisement appealing to the senses (*L.3, act.3*). Students were presented with the following rubric:

	Completely	Reasonably	Partly
The group has clearly expressed the purpose of their work			
The purpose of the advertisement has been fulfilled			
The language in the advertisement was suitable and convincing			
The advertisement was creative and/or original			
The group has made a fluent and accurate presentation			

The assessment criteria do not only focus on linguistics factors, but on nonlinguistic ones, such as the purpose of the presentation or the creativity. This is what Harris and McCann (1994) called the "overall educational development" of learners to develop in terms of language but also in attitude towards language.

b) Evaluation of the Unit Plan

Different tools and resources have been used to evaluate the Unit Plan:

- Answers and reaction from students to the tasks, to assess if the lesson is being followed and understood.
- Monitoring of pair and group tasks as they were working
- Tutor´s feedback at the end of every session, focusing on what has gone well and what I could improve on for the next session.
- Assessment criteria of the Unit Plan, which were designed to measure the achievement of the learning objectives:

Identify complex detailed information from two scientific videos about the brain, and the differences between the brain and the mind.

Exchange arguments persuasively and logically to resolve group tasks about brain training and perception through the senses

Put into practice effective communication strategies to complete group tasks about the brain and the senses, where agreement is required

Produce fluent and lexically accurate oral interventions to express theories, own opinions and feelings about the brain, the senses and the relationship between them

Make a clear and structured presentation, with a persuasive intention, about a topic related to the brain or the senses

Identify the communicative value of two texts about brain training and perception on advertising, recognising implicit attitudes in them

Write a clear and well-structured persuasive text about brain training or perception in advertising, fulfilling the text purpose and taking into account its audience.

Evaluate own learning and performance in individual activities, reflect on group work related to the topic of the brain and the senses, and provide feedback to colleagues on their work

These assessment criteria were reviewed with my tutor after every lesson to check if they were being met and if any re-arrangement needed to be considered for the next lesson.

- Students completed an open-question questionnaire with feedback about the lessons. This is the form that was completed by the students:

School placements are only worthwhile if the experience can be reflected upon and be improved for the future. This is only possible with your help.

I would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire with honest and constructive comments about this unit:

1. What do you think about the task approach used in this Unit?

2. How would you describe the level and the contents of the tasks?

3. What was the most useful and/or interesting aspect of this Unit?

4. What would you change in this Unit?

5. What personal piece of advice would you give the teacher?

Before the questions, I included a paragraph to place myself as the student who needed their help to improve my practice. This is important for two reasons, firstly it highlights that learning is constructed together (collaborative work) and secondly because it positions my placement in the frame of learning-to-learn and the action-research cycle (see section *The New Role of the Teacher*).

The questionnaire that I gave students was didactically oriented, that is, I asked specific questions about methodology or language learning processes. The students in my group were teachers, so I felt it was appropriate to include this kind of questions. They were familiar with a task-based approach through CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Language) in bilingual schools, and I knew they had well-developed meta-cognitive skills to reflect about the process of learning (appropriate contents, level, usefulness of activities etc).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE DELIVERY OF THE UNIT PLAN

In this section the three lessons that I delivered will be analysed. For each lesson, a table is provided with the sequence of activities, followed by an analysis of how the lesson plan worked in practice, and finally a few notes on my personal and professional development after each experience.

I have included timing (T), skills (S) and grouping (G) to highlight the pace of the lessons, the relevance given to speaking and oral interaction, and collaborative work.

Analysis of Lesson 1

Activities (2-hour session)	T	S	G
1. Pre-task (the brain) Photo of the brain projected. *What do you think about when you see this? What do you feel? What does the brain do?* *We´re watching a video called "we are our brains", what do you think it means? What could it be about?*	10	SP	All
2.Task cycle: **Video: We are our brains!** (*University of Bristol, 3/3/2010*) **a)First listening:** Write down key concepts of the video Feedback from students **b)Second listening:**	15	L SP	Ind All
Fill in the mind map with areas and functions of the brain *(Annex I)* Students compare and complete answers with a partner A completed mind map is projected. Students self-correct their work	20	L OI OI	Ind Pairs Pairs
3. Post-task: Order brain functions mentioned in the video according to their importance in everyday life. Pairs must provide a joined answer and justify it.	15	OI	Pairs
4.Self -assessment: Show of hands: from 1 to 3 (1 easy; 2 medium; 3 difficult) *Who found the listening a 1? a 2? a 3?And the mind map activity?*	3	SP	All

5. Pre-task: (brain training) Brainstorming: what ways do you know to train your brain? **6. Task cycle:** **A problem-solving brain training activity.** Photocopy handed out (*Annex II*).Groups have exactly 10 mins to work out the answer. Right answer is projected.	10	OI	Gx4
7. Post-task: Groups reflect on their work. Guiding questions (projected): *Why do you think you solved or didn´t solve the problem?* *What abilities /skills did you use? Need?* *How did you feel while doing the activity? How did the group work?* *What would you do differently if I gave you another problem to solve?*	15	OI	Gx4
Some groups feedback their conclusions		SP	All G
8. Pre-task: (language focus) Discuss and agree the difference between the brain and the mind Correct your answers with this video (2mins) (*GaiamSearch, 22/5/2008*)	7	OI	Pairs
9. Task cycle: Proverbs with the word BRAIN are projected. Endings are missing. *(Annex III)* Students make up the endings for the sayings. Original sayings are shown. *What country do you think these sayings are from?* *Why is it difficult to differentiate these proverbs culturally?*	20	OI	Pairs
Can you think of other topics that are difficult/ easy to differentiate culturally?		SP	All G
10. Post-task: Homework: useful phrases with Mind *(Ex. 3 from textbook, p 63, Annex IV)* **11. Wrap up:** One thing you take from today´s session	3	SP	AllG

a) What worked well

The **audiovisual material:** (act. 1) I started the session projecting a photo of the brain, and this started a debate between the more scientific students and others who did not like to see photos of organs. It was a good way for students to show their interest towards the topic and the probing questions gave me an indication about the technical vocabulary and previous knowledge they had about the brain. I provided a few key words as a way of *scaffolding*, because I knew they would appear in the video. Activity 2 was the listening exercise with the video. I noticed that students paid more attention to watching the video than taking notes, opposite to what tends to happen when there is just audio. Concentration was also higher than with just audio, I believe because non-linguistic factors helped with the understanding (lip-reading, explanatory images about what was being said etc. This means that visual support was positive for understanding.

After this, students had to fill in a mind map with the parts of the brain and their functions. This created mixed reactions, I observed that students that are more visually and scientifically oriented enjoyed categorising information in this visual way; a minority seemed to find it confusing and turned to writing lists in the margin. I find this very interesting, mind maps tend to appeal to visual and logical-mathematical students, but they are also a tool that needs practice to grasp. Students who were Science teachers commented that they use this technique in their classes so they were more used to the format.

The **problem solving task** (*act. 6*) generated the most energy during the lesson. Group conversations were hectic and fluid, in my opinion due to the strict time-limit. There was a focus on finding a solution rather than thinking about the correctness of the language used. Learners recognised during the feedback that some students were better at resolving the exercises because of their logical and reasoning skills, and that they hardly noticed they were using English as all they could think about was solving the riddle.

The **creativity task** (*act.9*) was carried out in pairs. At the beginning students were surprised to be asked to complete the sayings and there was a cautious fear of being wrong. They commented that it was difficult and that they had no imagination. I believe this is due to the fact that they are not used to open-ended or creative activities.

However, when they put themselves to it there was a high level of concentration in the pairs, together with some laughs. The exercise made students reflect on language, as they searched for words that rhymed, that kept the style of the saying, and that provided a punch line. Even they were surprised at some of the results and believed them to be better than the original sayings when they were shown. Pairs had to use real language and activate communication strategies such as negotiation, influencing each other and presenting their arguments persuasively. I noticed that this activity was a confidence-booster as it started with hesitations and ended up being a very reassuring exercise.

Assessment for learning: students enjoyed assessing the difficulty of the listening activity *(act. 4)* with a hands-up technique. Most of them found it "Easy", so it was a quick way to obtain feedback. My conclusion was that students would have needed a higher level of listening. This activity also gave kinaesthetic students a moment to recharge. They were also very participative in the wrap-up of the class *(act.11)* when they reflected on what they had taken from the lesson. The majority said the problem-solving activity. It is interesting that they answered naming activities, instead of new vocabulary learnt, confirming the theory that tasks make students focus on the experience and on completing the task, using language only as a vehicle.

b) **What was challenging**

Time keeping: the sequence of activities was fast-paced to fit the group. As a result, time keeping was hard because there were many activities, some of them just 5 minutes long. I also had to have my unit plan visible to remember what came next.

Reflection on group work (*act. 6*): students found it really hard to reflect on how they had worked as a group. I gather there were two reasons for this: firstly, it is not the kind of language they are used to, as it involves group dynamics, communication strategies etc; secondly, after such an intense activity, they were most interested in knowing the answer and the reasoning behind it. It created a spontaneous debate where some groups were helping others understand the solution to the riddle. Students expressed how much or how little they enjoy this kind of reasoning exercises in real life. It was fruitful from the point of view of real communication, but it was not meeting the main objective of the task which was to reflect on group work. However, when

probed, most students agreed that the communication in groups had been harder than in the usual pairs they are used to. .

c) What needed to be changed in real-time

The problem-solving created a buzz and it overran. I decided to shorten the debate I had planned after the activity and provided students with my own reflection on what I had observed while they were working. I also altered on the spot activity 8 and instead of giving them time to discuss the difference between brain and mind and then correct it with the video, I played the video directly. I did this because I wanted to gain some time since activity 9 (creation of sayings) was bound to cause the same kind of buzz as the problem-solving one.

I also changed the time-management strategy: in the first two activities I did not tell them how long they had to complete them, after that I gave them a specific time limit with the instructions. This helped the pace of the lesson and delegated some self-regulation in the students.

d) What would be changed for a future delivery of the same class

Reflection on group work: I would plan a less energetic group activity to ask groups to reflect on their work, and just leave the brain training activity for a warm-up at the beginning of a class, an energy booster for after the break or as a closing activity at the end of a lesson.

Classroom layout: the class should have been arranged in groups of four from the start or during the break as it caused some time wasting. I needed to be conscious where I was standing since I sometimes had my back turned on some students. I would not plan a reflection about group work immediately after a buzzing activity, maybe later on in the lesson or the following day.

e) Meeting Session and Personal Objectives

The unit plan objectives for this part of the session were met, however not with the same degree of proficiency. Students succeeded in understanding information from the videos, this was relevant since it was authentic material and contained a standard American accent. However, I believe that the contents were easier than I had anticipated since many students are Science teachers and the technical words were similar to Spanish.

Students were able, in general, to express opinions about the topic of the brain and brain training coherently and clearly, however, communication strategies were harder to apply when resolving group activities, especially using persuasive communication or negotiating meaning. These areas would be noted down for further practice.

My personal objective for this session was to face the classroom with a calm attitude, but at the same time be dynamic as I knew it was packed with activities. My tutor told me that I had achieved this. I felt very relaxed with the group. I also called most students by their names, as I consider this crucial to build rapport.

f) Professional Learning and Development

Sometimes we can be driven by our own agenda and not by students´ needs. For example, the introduction of the cultural aspect in activity 9 was possibly too forced. There was no real justification for talking about culturally differentiated topics, only that I had included it in the unit plan. The use of international sayings or the American accents of the videos would have been enough cultural slant for the unit. There was no didactic justification in this context and students would have gained a lot more discussing their creations of sayings a longer time.

An important learning for the future is to ask myself why I am introducing a particular element, and the answer should always be because it adds learning to the students and not because it fulfils **my** objectives.

Analysis of Lesson 2

Activities (2-hour session)	T	S	G
1.Pre-task: (the senses) Few seconds of 3 pieces of music are played. 3 images are projected. *(Annex V)* Students associate one photo to a piece of music, and to the feeling provoked Some students feedback. Note differences in perception / answers *What areas of the brain have been activated?* *Can you give other examples when our senses and emotions are connected?* *For example, how do you feel when you eat?*	15	SP	AllG
2. Task cycle: Cards are given with sentences. (*Annex VI*) Students decide how to group them around photos of the 5 senses. Each group feeds back answers from one sense Questions are asked about the new vocabulary that has not been resolved in the groups. Students who know the answers are encouraged to mime/explain them to the others *(Sheet with all sentences handed out)*	20	OI SP	Gx4 All G
3.Post – task: (language focus, enabling task) a)Students look at sentences from previous exercise: What forms are used in the green part?	15	OI	Pairs
What idea is expressed by the parts in red? Condition, consequence or opposition		SP	All G
Would you find these structures in formal or informal texts? Written or oral? b) Write down 5 or more similar examples using other verbs of the senses about your own life.			Ind
Some students share their answers and the partner sitting on their right will say a less formal (typical of oral speech) version of the formal structure given			All G
4.Check homework: Students check their answers about "Useful phrases with Mind" with a partner. Ask questions about meaning or answers to the group/teacher	10	OI	Pairs
5 .Pre- task: **First reading***: (Annex VII).*	10	R	Ind

Identify the topic of each text. Students share some answers			
6.Task cycle:	30	R	Pairs
Second reading:			
Complete the table with the analysis of the two texts (*Annex VIII*)		OI	
If you wish to (or have time to spare):			
Add other analysis criteria of your own.		SP	All G
Some students share analysis.			
7.Post- task: Students have a choice to debate and give a group answer: (Projected)	15	OI	Gx4
- Decide which of the courses in text 1 you would go to and why			
- Think of current adverts on TV, can you find examples that appeal to all our senses as text 2 claims?			
8.Wrap-up:			
One thing you take from today´s session	3	SP	AllG

a)   **What worked well**

Experimenting with the senses *(act.1)*. This activity appealed especially to those who like to try things, and to those with a more visual and musical intelligence. It also created a sense of intimacy. I introduced this activity to make a scientific topic more personal. Three pieces of music were played and needed to be associated with three images. Students were very active in this discussion and were genuinely surprised at how each of them had joined the music and the photos differently and still could justify why. The music and the photos triggered personal memories and feelings, and it was surprising how they shared them. Students said that they found it difficult to find "the right word" when trying to express feelings. I believe emotions are hard to express but they are not often brought into the classroom either. This activity was one of those moments when it is easy to forget you are in a class as there was a real conversation and a genuine wish to communicate.

Vocabulary and grammar introduction (*act.2*). They needed to arrange sentences around the five senses. The group discussions were fascinating to observe. Some members were comfortable just identifying the word necessary to classify the sentence and solve the task, while others needed to know the meaning of every word of every sentence, and even stopped during the task to write down vocabulary. This meant some groups did not complete the task. However, there were very detailed discussions about nuances of words and building knowledge together. All the sentences that they were working with had the structure of participle clauses, but students were not told this. Once the first part of the activity was finished, they were asked to reflect on the structures of the sentences and to deduce what their form, meaning and use were. Students also needed to use their previous knowledge of the language to gauge if the use of these sentences was formal or informal. This was an enabling task, which introduced vocabulary and grammar, but students resolved it correctly and felt very comfortable during this task as they have a very good control of linguistic terminology.

Consolidation of the new grammatical structures and vocabulary (*act.2b*): This activity was a guided practice to consolidate the new structures and the senses vocabulary. I had some doubts about including this exercise, as both grammar and vocabulary had been well understood. However, this exercise introduced the use of a very important communication strategy which is the change in register. For some this conversion was not straight forward as they tend to use a higher register when speaking than the average native speaker would. It was a good opportunity to offer them some new "colloquial" expressions.

Detailed reading (*act.6*): this activity was initially confusing for students. They were given two texts and were asked to analyse and compare them according to some criteria (tone, function, etc). It took some time for them to realise that there were not comprehension questions, which are the ones they normally have to answer in reading exercises or vocabulary questions. The moment they realised this, they relaxed and stopped asking for all the new words that they were finding. The interesting part of this activity is that they were invited to make up new criteria by which to analyse the texts. Some pairs chose not to do this option (differentiated activity), but some enjoyed finding similarities and differences between the two texts. My impression is that some students find it hard to create or be creative as this is not an emphasised skill in

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education, and those who enjoy it is because of personal strengths and learning styles. Another explanation is that creativity activities are open-ended and students feel more comfortable when they know there is a right answer. There is a clear fear of making mistakes or "getting it wrong"

Differentiated debate in groups *(act.6)*: the choice was given to attract personal interests or simply a preference for one of the texts previously read. The aim was to have a specific answer as a group, and not just an open debate. Communication skills were again necessary to reach a common answer.

Wrap-up moment (act.8) Most of the students mentioned the activity with the images and the music as a technique that they would like to try with their students.

b) **What was challenging**

Breaking the atmosphere: Students really liked the first activity (images-music-feelings). There was genuine interest in what the others were saying. However, I was conscious that this was only a pre-task, that there was a demanding lesson ahead with new vocabulary and grammar to be introduced, as well as the reading part of the unit. I used some of the comments made by some students to sum up the general feel of the conversation and lead them into the next exercise.

Desire to understand every word. In activity 4 the objective was to skim the texts and just write down what they thought the text was about. The strategy of skimming was explained. However, after a few seconds of reading, there were several hands up with vocabulary questions. I decided not to answer them and clarify that they did not need to understand every word, only to understand the gist of the texts. However, most students were highlighting vocabulary at this stage. I answered all the questions at the end of the activity inviting the group to help each other. The belief that every word needs to be understood is deep rooted, but my impression is that there is great pressure in terms of the exam, where a high level of specification and accuracy is required.

Change of register from formal sentences to more informal registers (*act. 3*). There was some difficulty in finding colloquialisms or everyday expressions to convey the same meaning as the formal sentences. Better options were offered by students who have spent some time abroad. It was also difficult to explain very subtle differences

between a colloquial sentence or a rude one. I was surprised at the formal language that students are exposed to in class all the time. In fact, they transfer some of these formalities even into the oral speech making it sound very artificial.

c) What needed to be changed in real-time

I needed to answer all vocabulary about the texts although I had said it was not necessary. The same happened in activity 2, after completing it students asked so much vocabulary that I decided to cut short the following activity and not ask them to write the grammar sentences just to share them orally. This probably did not suit some more visual students who prefer to see everything in writing.

d) What would be changed for a future delivery of the same class

My tutor actually asked me to repeat the activity with vocabulary about the senses with group B. Group C had a higher level than group B and still I had to extend the time planned for this activity because of the amount of vocabulary they asked. I decided to design a new activity *(Annex XI)* where students only had vocabulary about "ways of looking" (instead of all the senses) and they needed to join it with images. They found the activity very helpful as a way to remember vocabulary and I felt that it had been better for them than the original activity I had planned. There were less questions than in the first group, so the activity was more fluid. It especially appealed to visual students who commented that some of the words they would never forget because they will always remember the picture it was associated with.

e) Meeting Session and Personal Objectives

Students critically analysed the texts but I do not believe the objective was fully met by some students as they were concerned about the vocabulary they did not know and found it difficult to look at the text just in a meta-cognitive way.

Students found the group discussion more fluid than in lesson 1 and activated more effectively communication strategies. I believe this could be because they already had experience of working in groups from the previous day; also this debate came after a reading exercise and not after a buzzing activity like the brain training one. This means that after a reading is a good moment to ask students to talk in group as concentration is high and they can use the debate to unwind and energise.

My personal objective for this class was to answer questions in a brief and more direct way than the previous day. The text was bound to be the source of many questions and I wanted to be clear for them but not engaged in unnecessary debate. I believe I half achieved this although my tutor told me that I was concise and direct, without being blunt, but I still felt like I was letting students down.

f) Professional Learning and Development

Taking into account groups´ characteristics means more work for the teacher, as materials need to be rearranged or redesigned. However, I believe it is a best practice that is part of the teacher´s responsibility. If I had taken the original vocabulary activity to group B they would have completed it, but I would have created unnecessary stress in students to learn the same as they learnt with the adapted exercise.

It is very important to be clear with the students about the objective of the activity. If it is not a new-vocabulary-acquisition exercise, it must explained and repeated as necessary, so that other objectives can be fulfilled.

Analysis of Lesson 3

Activities (two-hour session)	T	S	G
1.Pre-task: Explanation of Final Task and questions from students	5	SP	ALLG
2.Task cycle: Choice of task: *(Annex X)*			
a) Write the text to accompany a photo of a brain training game. Join them on the computer to be projected as it would appear in a newspaper spread (A5)	55	OI	Gx5
b) Dub a cereal bar advert, which appeals to our senses. When presented, the video will be played and live- dubbed by you, so the script should be written down.	40	SP	GX5
3.Presentations: Each group makes their their presentation . Receives feedback from one group (criteria detailed in section 2.2.5)			
4.Post-task: **Evaluation of the unit plan by students:**	10		
Open-question questionnaire (detailed in section 2.2.5)			ALLG

Lesson 3 could not be carried out due to unforeseen circumstances. Students needed to have a debate session in preparation for the oral exam in June. My tutor offered me the opportunity to be involved in these sessions instead of delivering my third lesson.

Two students introduced a topic that they have prepared at home, they ask questions to the other students in the group and they all hold a debate. My tutor and I sat outside the group and filled in individual feedback forms on students´ performance *(Annex XI)*

After 45 minutes of debate, feedback is given to the group on some general matters and individual forms to each student. In total there were 4 sessions of one hour, with groups varying from 8 to 12 students.

The form only deals with linguistic aspects, such as pronunciation, fluency, use of lexicon or use of grammar, in great detail and length. I realised there was no mentioning of communication strategies such as maintaining the conversation, negotiating skills, influencing skills, presenting arguments persuasively etc. I decided to mention these skills as part of my feedback and also to ask the group themselves how they thought the debate went. When I mentioned these skills during the feedback students were grateful but they quickly asked about their mistakes as this is what they needed for the exam.

I also made a conscious effort to give positive feedback as well, and it was interesting to notice that most students when told that they had argued their point really clear or that it was good that they had not been influenced under the pressure of other colleagues, they commented "I didn´t notice that" or "I was too busy concentrating on speaking properly". I believe that feedback is a tool for improvement but it must help self-confidence as well. I could sense that students take feedback as "a list of mistakes".

The same happened when I asked students how they felt they had done as a group, and they all came out with the mistakes they had made, instead of thinking of good strategies that they had employed. When probed, they could tell things that had gone well, but they also remarked "it doesn´t matter, we would have failed with the grammar mistakes we have made".

This phenomenon is described as the "washback effect" (Harris & McCann, 1994) where the whole teaching and learning experience is determined by the objectives, contents and assessment criteria of the exam.

f) Professional Learning and Development

Sometimes one can feel that a million things can be commented on in a particular situation. However, the needs of the students and the context of the learning experience defines what needs to be taught. Although I believe in always innovating, you should always give students what they need first. It was good to introduce positive and meta-cognitive feedback, but students still needed the detailed corrections that will help them pass the exam.

My second learning of the day was not to be hesitant to make last-minute changes. When you stand in front of a class you get a feeling where they are and if you can justify to yourself any changes going through your head, I believe you should do it, if you believe that learning will be maximise.

The Students´ Feedback

Out of the 25 students (on average) who attended the classes, ten sent me their feedback forms by email and another five preferred to talk to me directly. The questions on the form were detailed in 2.2.5 *Evaluation and Assessment Criteria*.

Most of students found the approach dynamic and felt a great deal of work had been carried out during the lessons. They found tasks fun and challenging and they felt the use of real materials had been a plus. They recognised that group work had been harder than pair work, and that in some occasions they lacked the fluency and strategies to communicate effectively. Some added that more group practice would be an advantage.

They all mentioned that they had spoken more than usual as most of the class was based on pair or group tasks. A few mentioned that grammar and vocabulary had been introduced in a "more subtle way" which made it less dry. One person commented that he does not like brain teasers, so he did not enjoy the brain training activity, although he admits it made the group interact intensely.

They all agreed that the level and the contents had been appropriate, finding it more challenging than the textbook but the right stretch for them and most students were grateful that varieties of accents and a more informal register had been introduced. They

also mentioned that they felt "quite stifled" in this sense and that their colloquial register was very poor.

Some of them commented that the approach of the lessons was appealing but they could not see it reconciled with the exam format, and this is what they suggested as something to change in the unit, the inclusion of some "traditional" exercises that would provide them practice for the exam.

They all found the activity with the senses and music the most interesting and a few suggested they would use it with their students. They appreciated that talking about personal memories and feelings increased participation, made them forget they were using a second language and felt "real".

Analysis of other Non-teaching Experiences

a) Group Interview with the Headmaster

Placement students held an informal group interview with the Headmaster, D. Juan Vicente Vega, who welcomed us to the School, shared general information and offered his personal view on current education issues. I thought it was very interesting that he considers the biggest challenge for the School the adoption of a more communicative approach. My impression is that the new Curriculum was introduced in 2007 but it is a work in progress, sometimes more dependent on personal teaching style than an institutionalised way of working.

b) English Department Meetings on 30th March and 27th April, 2012

The main topic of discussion during these meetings was the new PUC, or standardised exams. This June all Andalusia will do the same B2 exams the same day at the same time, designed by a commission in Seville. This reminded me of the Cambridge examinations, but I am hesitant if this is a beneficial choice for students and teachers. I believe standardised exams depersonalise teaching, and increase pressure. Some teachers did express some concern about and others added that objectives and evaluation criteria needed to be observed more rigorously from now on.

My understanding from conversations with some teachers is that some are very aware of the content requirements, plan their classes around them and assess their students accordingly, while others take them more as guidelines.

I wonder what PUC´s will do in terms of methodology, when students will be assessed by exams not even designed by their own teachers.

c) **Teaching Staff Meetings on 30th March, 2012**

The meeting started with a 15- minute training session lead by one of the English teachers. He demonstrated a technique called "Phonetical Dictation". The session was excellent but too short and with little participation from the teachers. My belief is that teacher training should be a more formalised and structured part of the School, especially when current teaching approaches and techniques are in constant evolution.

The new Decree 15/2012 of 7th February was presented (explained in section 1.3). I found the mentioning of these aspects of methodology very significant since they emphasise the work-in-progress already mentioned.

- Emphasis on evaluation as a way to improve action

- Amongst the obligations of teachers, the knowledge of the TICs and a communicative approach in the classroom

d) **VI Provincial Symposium for Language Schools**

Apart from the presentation of the new Decree 15/2012 of 7th February, there was a thought-provoking lecture by Dña. A. Carretero Ródel about interaction in the classroom as a way to "inter-think" and create own knowledge. It surprised me that some teachers were very willing to try group work in their classes but others could not see it working. Next I attended a presentation by D. Juan Vicente Vera summarising the feedback from all schools delivering level C1 this year which was interesting to understand my target group´s priorities.

e) Visit to the International English School in Marbella (4th May 2012)

This visit was organised by my tutor at the University, D. A. Marmolejo, and it was an incredible opportunity to see another education system at work.

I observed classes varying from year 7 to year 13 where students spent most of the time resolving tasks as a group. This is helped by the fact that 10 students is the average class number. Own ideas are actively encouraged and students often build on each other´s comments to create personal knowledge.

The use of the Multiple Intelligences is integrated in the classes, with a thoughtful combination of visual, logical, practical and physical stimuli in the activities. Teachers use Bloom´s Revised Taxonomy when designing their lesson plans. This academic year is "*The Year of Critical Thinking*"; the aim is to develop critical and creative skills with a variety of strategies, for example the Theory of the Six Hats by De Bono. Sports and Arts are a very important part of the School life, with students taking part in many painting, acting, music and sport events.

Academic results are also very important for the School, as they are in the Spanish system, but the difference, in my opinion, is that the process of how those results are obtained is what decides what kind of people the schools form. Creative, critical, social and self-managing skills should be a priority for all students and in some cases this is taken over by an emphasis on memory and repetition of contents.

It could be argued that this way of working is easier when there are few students in a class, and this is true in some respect, but my belief is that the key difference between the two educational systems lies in two other aspects: firstly, the English syllabus has less contents and this is helped by the fact that textbooks are not used. This means that teachers feel freer to choose the few topics they want to teach and work them with the depth they desire; secondly, teachers´ conviction, thanks to very intense and compulsory training, that contents are only the vehicle to develop key skills and abilities for life.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REFLECTION

Conclusions of the Classroom Practice

I intended to increase participation and oral interaction through the use of a task-based approach, and to help motivation by differentiating activities. In section three I analysed the lessons delivered, how I would improve them and what I learnt professionally from each lesson. Based on all these aspects and the feedback from students (detailed on p. 66) these are the conclusions I have reached:

- Tasks increased participation in the classroom, as teacher´s talking time was reduced and students spent nearly 80% of the class time working in pairs and groups

- Pedagogical tasks made students focus on resolving the activity, sometimes forgetting they were using English. This was particularly the case in activities where there was a time limit and when the task in hand was closer to a real-life situation than to a language class. Enabling tasks, however, did not have the same effect: interaction was high but the focus turned to language nuances and not resolution.

- Tasks helped students learn the same contents (vocabulary and grammar) as their usual class method, but added the development of communication strategies, such as negotiating meaning, influencing others, turn-taking, maintaining communication, expressing trains of thought persuasively and coherently.

- Tasks carried out in class would not prepare students for exams as well as the exam-oriented method the students normally follow. Tasks do not provide "exam training" unless the exam was task-based.

- Tasks made some students feel they were practising English but "not learning anything new", so there is an association of "learning" to acquiring new vocabulary or structures, in other words, a focus on contents and not skills or abilities.

- Differentiated activities using a variety of formats and resources increased participation and motivation, especially noticeable with students who were normally quiet. This was the case in activities involving music, personal experiences and visuals.

- Activities involving higher-order thinking skills, especially evaluating and creating, motivated more interaction than lower-order thinking ones, but were initially received with "cautiousness" by students. They were also the activities were students thought less about the language used and were more fluent.

- Differentiation made some activities easier for students by appealing to their preferred style or intelligence, for example the use of visual, kinaesthetic or intrapersonal elements.

- Differentiation can cause stress in some students as the chosen format of an activity might not be appealing to their preferences. It can also create some insecurity in students as they believe choices are given for "the more and the less able".

- Differentiation would not help for exam preparation, as exams have set formats for everyone and they require specific training. For example, it is not relevant if students understand a video easier than a listening, as the exam will be a listening.

Other general considerations about the Unit Plan:

- The right level of support or *scaffolding* was offered in general, as students could complete the tasks and no major changes needed to be introduced in real-time.

- From the principles of adult learning (seen in *Adult Learning*, p.17), I would conclude that *collaborative work* is a learning strategy that this group maximised. It was also important to pull from their *previous personal and professional experience* to as they had much interest in the topic of the unit and wanted to share it.

- For these students the principle of *meaning over form* does not apply. Accuracy is their utmost priority in all the skills due to the preparation of the exam. This places the emphasis on mistakes and corrective feedback.

Reflection on the Placement Experience

"I wish I worked here" were the opening words in my placement diary after I observed my first class. Many classes after and with a thick notebook full of comments, ideas, small frustrations, anecdotes and some unintelligible scribbles, I still closed the diary with the same sentence. The eight weeks at the Málaga School of

Languages have been enriching and intense, both from a personal and a professional point of view.

I have understood how the School works effectively thanks to a complex structure of teams, and how it provides an important educational service to society. However, it is also an institution challenged with an arduous transition from a traditional stance to a more practical and communicative concept of language teaching. I believe this transition is still a work in progress, and not always due to a resistance to change on the part of teachers, but mainly to the academic restrictions of the exams.

I have proposed a task-based approach and differentiated activities as a way to increase participation and to reach all students because I firmly believe that this is the best way to learn a language, or at least "real language", but I have felt the dilemma that this methodology poses for the rigid structure of the testing system. Students also feel this contradiction. They want to have as much oral practice as possible, and they wish to learn the language that would allow them to make real use of English, i.e. understanding films, music, colloquial conversation with native speakers etc., but they also want and need to pass their exams. For some incomprehensible reason the two aims seem to get in each other´s ways.

My ideal proposal would be to alter the assessment method to allow for a complete implementation of the methodology that is established by the European Framework and the Curriculum: an action-based, learner-centred, competency-led and diversity-aware method with clear, practical application in real life. Meanwhile, my suggestion is a balanced combination between exam-practice and a more practical approach that would get students in touch with real language, with all its sociolinguistic, pragmatic and cultural aspects, in other words, the language of native speakers. On the subject of multiculturality, and maybe due to my personal experience of English as an international language, it has surprised me and I have struggled to understand the bias towards British English that limits not only the contents of the lessons but sometimes also goes against students´ own preferences and interests. I believe an individual´s language should be coherent but according to their choices not those of the school they attend.

I have also learnt that assessment for learning is an important tool in the classes, but not only to focus on mistakes but to find out and work on strengths: feedback should be a sensible balance to achieve both.

I have confirmed that teaching is about planning, acting and reviewing constantly. Even last-minute changes must be welcomed as an opportunity to experiment and improve. But I have also understood that the main aim of reflection is to help students achieve their goals, however distant they might be to your own.

Finally and most importantly, I have got to know a group of professional people who go every day into the School with the sheer determination to teach and learn, and this apparent "basic fact" will always have my admiration. This is particularly the case of students, who have decided, regardless of or because of their personal circumstances, to find the time and the motivation to further their learning.

Reflection on the Master´s Course

Not many times in life has one the opportunity to experience a situation from two different sides, maybe if we did we would all be wiser.

The Master has allowed me to look at education with the eyes of a learner and those of a teacher. As a learner my expectation was to gain a general knowledge about current educational theories and practices, an understanding of the Spanish education system and to acquire a set of tools to improve my teaching practice. All these objectives have been fulfilled. I never expected the Master to teach me how to be a teacher, I do not believe that any course can teach you that, but to be the framework where I can start to lay the foundations of the teacher I would like to be.

It has been seven months of intense work and conflicting experiences. The reality of the Master is the same as that of any other school: each teacher has their own concept of education, of their subject and how they want to teach it. As a student I have found myself experiencing a variety of learning situations.

I have memorised pages and pages of theory, and realised, as I had read in so many articles, that a few days after I could hardly remember anything, and I have sat in

some classes wondering how what I was being told was relevant to the teaching practice. I have been part of real collaborative work, where as groups we have had to build our own knowledge, pull from each other´s strengths and resolve unexpected situations. I have been involved in individual and group practical work that required designing and creating real activities applying newly acquired theories. I have been asked to critically analyse author´s works and legislative documents, and to evaluate in a formative way my own work and that of others; I have also felt that my creativity and own preferred intelligences could be put into practice in some assignments and I have felt constricted and limited in others. I have needed to develop organisational and self-regulation skills to manage the amount of work, and, finally, I have realised how the attitude and degree of enthusiasm of teachers and the different types of assessment affected my learning experience.

This is what I felt as a student but this has no value if it is not analysed with the eyes of a teacher. I have reflected on all these experiences not as negative or positive, but considering what each of them developed in me as a learner so that I can decide which ones I wish to incorporate in my teaching practice, how I can do that and most importantly why. This is for me the great value of the Master.

I would make the following proposals to improve the course:

- The contents of some subjects overlap. It would be a more efficient use of time to coordinate the different syllabuses and in this way there might be the opportunity to go more in depth in some topics.
- More feedback should be received on assignments and not just a mark. When teachers set an assignment they should always reply with personalised comments on the strengths and areas for improvement so that formative assessment becomes an integral part of the course. It feels the opportunity to learn from our own work is lost.
- The period of practice should be longer and run alongside the classes at the University, in this way there would be a more real situation of learning – implementing – reviewing and starting the cycle again.
- It is sometimes difficult to see the real application to teaching of some of the theoretical and academic sides of the Master.

I would like to finish this reflection with the article that has inspired me the most this year, in fact, in a few "low" moments I have picked it up and read it. Education is, no doubt, a complex concept and teaching a challenging profession. Everything I have studied on the Master, everything I have experienced in the School of Languages and everything I have written in this project is proof of it.

But it is also one of the most human professions that exist. I cannot think of many jobs where every day you have the opportunity to feel and learn something new and the incredible gift to help somebody feel and learn something new as well. Every class is what you make of it. We cannot forget this.

"Nunca encontré una mejor definición del magisterio: dedicar la propia vida a pensar y sentir, y a hacer pensar y sentir; ambas cosas juntas […] Y junto a mí veo a un nutrido grupo de colegas […] trabajando día a día por mantener en nuestra sociedad los valores de la cultura y el progreso…Entre ellos hay valiosos maestros de humanidad: hombres y mujeres empeñados en enseñar a sus alumnos a enfrentarse consigo mismos desde la Educación Infantil hasta la Universidad"

(Esteve, 1993, p.4)

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Annexes

ANNEX I

Fill in this Mind map with the information from the video

BRAIN AREAS
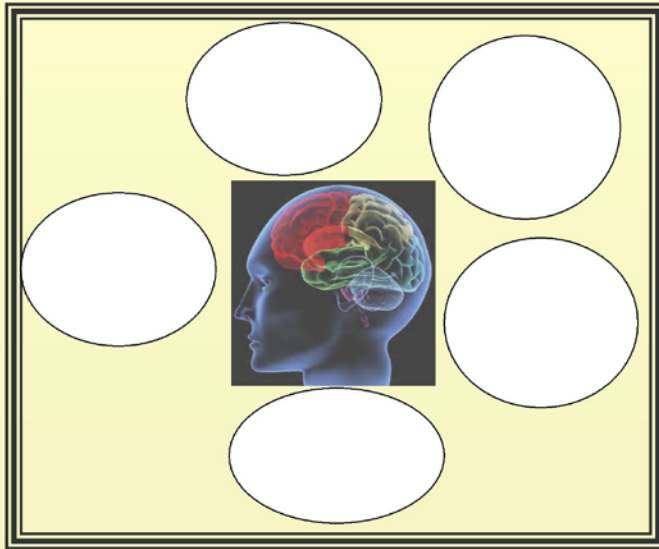
BRAIN FUNCTIONS
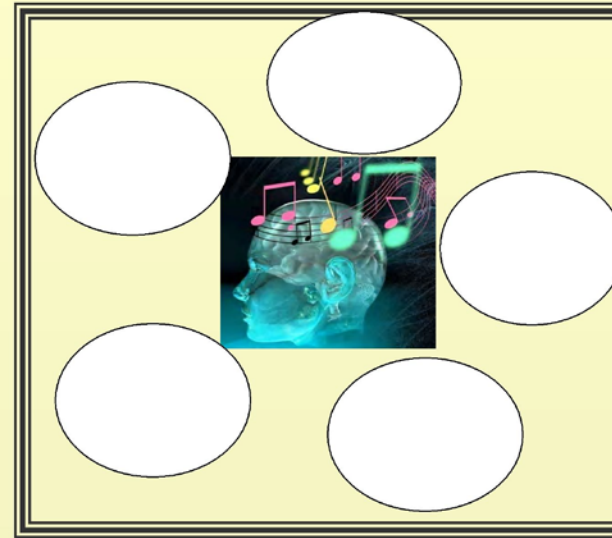
- Serge, Chris et Marc are married to Lise, Monique and Lily.

Hints:
1) Serge loves golf but hates boating.
2) Chris is Lise's neighbour and loves boating.
3) Marc's daughter babysits one of Lily's children.
4) Lily's husband is the only one who can walk to the train station.
5) Lise has two daughters.
6) Monique can't make knots.

Question : Who are the married couples?

Answers :

- Serge + Lily,
- Chris + Monique,
- Marc + Lise

ANNEX III

Complete these proverbs:

A brain is worth little without . . .
An idle brain is . . .

He who at thirty has no brains . . .

When brains are needed . . .

Answers:

A brain is worth little without a tongue
(French proverb)

An idle brain is the devil's workshop
(English proverb)

He who at thirty has no brains, will never purchase an estate
(Spanish proverb)

When brains are needed, brawn won't help
(Yiddish proverb)

2 Look at the collocations in the sentences (*a–j*). **How many of your collocations from Exercise 1 are in the list? Look at the collocations again. Is *mind* a verb or a noun in each one?**

a) Have a nice trip. **Mind how you** go on the roads, they're terrible at this time of day!
b) They pay really well. **Mind you**, they can afford to.
c) I wish Bill would **mind his own business**. He's always asking awkward questions.
d) Jen's invited me to go on holiday with her, but I'm **in two minds about** going.
e) A good night out will help you **take your mind off** your exams.
f) Could you **mind** the cat while I'm away?
g) I'll go **out of my mind** with boredom if I have to stay in this job.
h) **Great minds think alike**, but fools never differ!
i) Do you believe that healing is a question of **mind over matter**?
j) Holidays are **the last thing on my mind** at the moment.

3 Match the collocations (*a–j*) in Exercise 2 to one of the definitions (*1–10*).

1 the least important problem to deal with at the moment
2 make you stop worrying or thinking about something
3 be careful
4 to look after something or someone for a short time
5 to add a comment that makes something you've already said less strong or general
6 (humorous) used for saying that you are both very clever when you and another person have the same idea
7 to be uncertain about something or to have difficulty in making a decision
8 not interfere in other people's affairs
9 mad, insane
10 the belief that our minds are stronger than our bodies and that we can control pain or other unpleasant situations through mind power
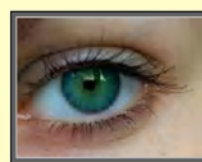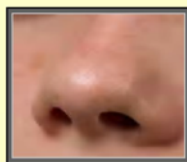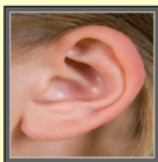
Associate these images with a piece of music and a feeling:
Music: "Human" by The Killers; "Swan Lake" by Tchaikovsky and "Just the way you are" by Bruno Mars

ANNEX VI

Having scratched all the car paint,	she went home feeling happy
Egged on by his friends,	he stroked the alligator
Eavesdropping at windows,	you can learn a lot of secrets
Having scored a hat-trick,	he yelled with joy
Exhausted by a hard day at work,	he patted his friend´s shoulder at went to bed
Mumbling through the meeting,	he struggled to get his ideas across
Amused by the prank,	she tickled her daughter
Glancing over his shoulder,	he noticed the danger
Surprised by the loud noise,	Oliver blinked
Continuously whining about school,	the boy got on my nerves
Peeping over the edge of the wall,	Tom saw Lady Godiva naked
Realising it was late,	he grabbed a quick lunch
Having been sniffed by the dogs,	the young man got nervous
Overwhelmed by the accident,	the witness babbled non-stop
Having fallen in the container,	the foreman stank to high heaven

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ANNEX VII

Welcome to our Free Brain Training Programme

"The right kind of brain training and exercises can significantly improve mental performance. While all ages will benefit from these exercise a recent study showed that brain training can improve an elderly person's memory by ten years as well as improving their mental agility"[1]

During the course of this Brain Training Programme you will give your brain a solid workout, exercising all aspects of mental functioning in a fun and exciting way. The strategies used in this programme have been extensively tested both in the UK and USA where significant intellectual gains have been reported in terms of greater speed, flexibility and mental agility, across all age ranges.

The programme is the result of two decades of research and has been developed by Dr David Lewis BSc (Hons) DPhil, FISMA, FINSTD, C.Psychol.

David is a neuroscientist, a chartered psychologist and a Fellow of the International Stress Management Association. He is also currently Director of Neuroscience at Mindlab International, a brain research organisation based in the Innovations Centre at the University of Sussex.

David will be your guide through this course in mental enhancement.

Brain Training Programme Modules

The brain training programme is divided into four modules. Each module has been designed to exercise your brain in a different way, building stamina, strength and agility as you go.

- **Mind Juggling:** Focus and concentration. Mental agility, Logical analysis, Strategies in taking IQ tests

- **Pumping Iron:** Improve your powers of logical analysis. How to break complex problems. Skill in abstract reasoning.

- **Memory Jogging:** Hold a large numbers of items in your mind at once. Remember to do things in the future. Memorise map-routes, names and faces. Training your ability to remember the things you see.

- **Bending and Stretching:** Master mechanisms of thought. Solve intellectually demanding puzzles. Develop valuable brain training techniques. Improve your skill in identifying relationships between words.

Research

A matter of taste: Food ads work better if all senses are involved

By Bernie DeGroat
News Service

Do potato chips taste better if an advertisement describes their crunchy sound? Is popcorn more flavorful if its buttery aroma also is depicted in an ad? Researchers at U-M think so.

Companies spend billions each year on food advertising, but many ads may be ineffective if they only mention taste and no other senses, say Ryan Elder and Aradhna Krishna of the Stephen M. Ross School of Business.

In a new study in the Journal of Consumer Research, Elder and Krishna show that multisensory advertising — ads that describe taste, smell, texture, sight and sound — can enhance the taste perceptions of consumers.

"Mentioning senses other than taste can increase positive sensory thoughts about the food and, consequently, taste," says Krishna, the Dwight F. Benton Professor of Marketing. "Because taste is generated from multiple senses, ads mentioning these senses will have a significant impact on taste over ads mentioning taste alone."

In a series of experiments involving chewing gum, potato chips and popcorn, the researchers found that ad slogans designed to appeal to multiple senses lead to higher taste perceptions than single-sense slogans — when consumers are able to "appropriate an ample amount of cognitive resources" to the multiple-sense ads. In other words, if consumers are distracted when viewing a multisensory ad, the ad's effectiveness suffers.

Elder and Krishna believe their research has many practical implications for ad executives and managers since it can easily and readily be applied in directing ad copy for food products.

ANNEX VIII

Complete the following chart with the information from the texts:

	Purpose	Type	Tone	Found in	References to country of origin	Internal organisation	Other relevant features
Text 1							
Text 2							

ANNEX IX

Activity designed for group B.
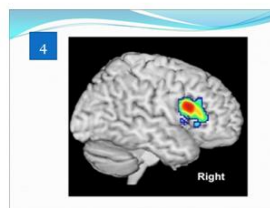
ANNEX X

Photo to write the text for

Video to be dubbed

Kelloggs Special K Advert

ANNEX XI

CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN EXPRESIÓN E INTERACCIÓN ORAL C1

NOMBRE	GRUPO	FECHA	PISTA	TEMA

Nota numérica

A. Fluidez y Entonación (1)

Ritmo **fluido** y natural con **entonación apropiada**	1				
Ritmo **interrumpido** y con **entonación a veces apropiada**	0,5				
Ritmo **interrumpido y abrupto. Entonación inapropiada**	0				

B. Pronunciación (3)

Corrección en la **mayoría** de los sonidos ingleses; **unión de sonidos**; uso **correcto** del **acento** en la palabra; **contracciones** apropiadas	3				
Con **alguna interferencia** de la **L1**; uso **correcto**, en su mayoría, del **acento en la palabra**	2				
Con **mucha interferencia** de la **L1**	1				
Con **marcado acento** de la **L1** que dificulta la comprensión	0				

C. Interacción (0,5)

Gran participación	0,5			
Escasa participación	0			

D. Cohesión y coherencia (0,5)

Mensaje **claro** y **estructurado**. Uso de **oraciones complejas y coherentes**	0,5			
Mensaje **confuso**. Oraciones **inconexas e/o incoherentes**.	0			

E. Expresión (5)

Riqueza y corrección léxica (2,5)

Léxico **variado** y **preciso**. Uso de **sinónimos y expresiones idiomáticas**	2,5			
Léxico **adecuado** a la tarea. **Poco** uso de **sinónimos y expresiones idiomáticas**	2			
Léxico **limitado**	1			
Muy limitado, repetitivo y **erróneo**	0			

Riqueza y corrección gramatical (2,5)

Gramática **variada, correcta**. Uso de **oraciones subordinadas**	2,5			
Gramática **adecuada** con algún **error esporádico** al hacer **oraciones complejas**	2			
Gramática **limitada** con **algún error de su nivel**	1			
Muy limitada y repetitiva, con errores de **nivel inferior**	0			

	Sí / No
Cumple los contenidos mínimos	
Se adecua al tema propuesto	
Se adecua al registro	

CALIFICACIÓN	NOTA NUMÉRICA:	APTO / NO APTO

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Símbolos:
bien: √ • mal: X • no usa: — • debería haber dicho: →

A/B. Fuidez, entonación y pronunciación

Interferencia de L1							Entonación de la oración						

"s" final (pl/3º pers.)							acento de palabra					

final -ed								unión de palabras					

realización del fonema

b/v							d/							t/tʃ					
/							æ/							h					

Observaciones:

E. Expresión gramatical

Concordancia			Relativas			voz pasiva			tiempos simples		
Comparación			voz. indirecta			Inversión			tiempos perfectos		
Concesión			part. activo			"Cleft"			tiempo correcto		
Condicionales			infinitivo			Modales			orden palabras		

Observaciones:

E. Expresión Léxica

verbos frasales							Ex.idiomáticas					
preposiciones							formación de palabras					

Observaciones:

CONTENT NOTES

i Image taken from Peterson et al., 2011

ii Planning Pyramid adapted from Schumm, J.S., Vaughn, S., & Leavell, A.G. (1994). Original
  image taken form Google Images.

iii Image taken from Google Images.

iv Image taken from Google Images.

v Proyecto Educativo del Centro

vi CAL: Cursos de Adaptación Lingüística

vii Royal Decree**1629/2006**, of 29th December, which establishes the basic aspects of the
  Curriculum for language teaching in special denomination teaching regulated by Organic Law
  of 3rd May, 2006

viii Office for Standards in Education. The non-ministerial government department of Her
  Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools In England