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DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR EFL IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: A DIDACTIC UNIT PROPOSAL

Student: Bayer Lopez, Noelia

Tutor: Dr. Ana Maria Ortega Cebreros
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Abstract

A newborn develops into a child who eats, drinks, speaks, sings and listens, crawls, sits, runs, jumps, dances and climbs by means of innate instincts and a constant learning process. Therefore, if we let our students act and learn by themselves we can achieve great results. Distance learning arose in the attempt to ease the path to such a challenging task and the COVID-19 pandemic forced families and government to experiment it.

This pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting learners in all continents. Therefore, this dissertation will show a didactic unit proposal inside an organized platform in order to define efficient virtual lessons. The main aim of is to get a common target: learning and motivation. The didactic unit promotes an active learning taking into account learner-centred teaching methods. Moreover, the activities will encourage a methodology based on the communicative approach.

Keywords: Distance learning; communicative approach; learner-centred methods; didactic unit

Resumen

Un recién nacido se convierte en un niño que come, bebe, habla, canta, escucha, gatea, se sienta, corre, salta, baila y trepa mediante instintos innatos y un proceso de aprendizaje constante. Por lo tanto, si nuestros alumnos actúan y aprenden por sí mismos, podemos lograr grandes resultados. El aprendizaje a distancia se creó para facilitar esta tarea tan desafiante y la pandemia del COVID-19 obligó a las familias y al gobierno a experimentarlo.

Esta pandemia ha creado la mayor alteración de los sistemas educativos de la historia, que ha afectado a los estudiantes de todo el mundo. Por lo tanto, este trabajo muestra una propuesta de unidad didáctica dentro de una plataforma organizada con el fin de definir lecciones virtuales eficientes. El fin primordial es conseguir un objetivo común: aprendizaje y motivación. La unidad didáctica promueve un aprendizaje activo teniendo en cuenta los métodos de enseñanza centrados en el alumno. Además, las actividades fomentarán una metodología basada en el enfoque comunicativo.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje a distancia; enfoque comunicativo; métodos centrados en el alumno; unidad didáctica

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning foreign languages is one of the most traditional practices related to human beings, and in the attempt to support this process, a great deal of different methods and approaches have arisen within the field of applied linguistics. The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (from now onwards EFL) has suffered great changes throughout the years. In the past, language teaching used to be concerned with a more traditional approach based on the learning of fixed grammar structures. Nowadays, however, we are witnessing a massive emergence of English as the leading language of the international panorama. Within this multicultural environment, communicating in English implies the promise of success, social status, better labour conditions and, in turn, a better future. Hence, language teaching should be more dynamic and focused on the learner, and effective communication should be the main goal of any language lesson. Concerning the role of the EFL teacher, it will be that of providing students with the necessary tools to communicate in real situations, to become fluent in English and, also, to appreciate English as an essential tool of cultural transmission. As a result, targeting a student-centred approach becomes a must in present EFL lessons; lessons where students will become the main protagonists of the learning process.

The most suitable methodology to apply will be the Communicative Approach; a method regarded as the state-of-the-art in current foreign language teaching trends. According to critics, it is considered the generally accepted norm in the field of second language acquisition, as it places the learner in the centre of the action providing them with real opportunities to experiment with the foreign language.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thoroughly shaken up the management of schools in Spain, but has also shown the high flexibility of the education system, which some have criticized as being resistant to changes in the teaching process. Distance education has been introduced in one way or another in almost all schools. Most teachers have a lot more work to do during distance education than before. The meaning of the term has acquired new connotations due to the COVID-19 pandemic since it allows students to continue lessons in the home environment instead of trying to protect children from the supposedly pernicious influence of the state school system, as it has been often believed in some countries. Therefore, distance education is at the moment a variant of individualized teaching, in which the work in the classroom is temporarily suspended and replaced by homework which is supported with digital teaching media. Moreover, distance education requires basic skills for

self-regulation and control of learning, but remains integrated into the school curriculum. Above all, it can be successful if the students have already acquired working techniques and attitudes for self-regulated work before starting distance education.

The overarching **objective** of this Master's Thesis is to present a didactic unit which takes into consideration students' needs related to English learning in this specific situation of the Coronavirus pandemic and tries to appeal students' motivation. Therefore, the activities of the didactic unit will take into account affective aspects, since a positive attitude towards the process of learning will be necessary. As we all know, language learning is a lifelong task; therefore, our role as English teachers will necessarily turn around two aspects: to motivate our students and to reinforce their own skills and confidence when facing a new language so that they can benefit from this experience for the rest of their lives. Besides, this didactic unit will be preceded by a theoretical framework on language teaching methods and on distance education, since this teaching method has become essential in the current health pandemic.

All these considerations are going to be taken into account within the different sections included in this master's thesis. Hence, in the theoretical framework of this dissertation, a brief bibliographic review of methods and a comprehensive picture of what distance education is in language teaching will be offered. Likewise, within this section, the typical learning difficulties of students in distance education would be brought to force, alongside with the didactic foundations of this education. A third section of this thesis is devoted to the design of a didactic unit based on distance education and the presentation of its main characteristics. The final part of this dissertation will present the main conclusions derived from the theoretical and practice work developed, including a reflection on future teaching and possible improvements to be added to this teaching proposal.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The focus of this dissertation is a didactic unit proposal based on distance education due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the presentation of its main characteristics. The achievement of this aim requires reviewing some of the most recent literature on the topic. Starting with the most important language teaching methods, since some of them are going to be important in the didactic unit proposal and following with a comprehensive picture of distance education, to finally conclude with the didactic foundations of this education.

2.1. Methods in Language Teaching

Learning a language could be considered as an inherited need that has been present in human beings for decades. The communication process in one's mother tongue is so natural that many human beings would learn a foreign language. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 3) pointed out that "throughout history foreign language learning has always been a practical concern"; therefore a lot of people have been attracted to this challenging task for many centuries. In the past, the outstanding foreign language was Latin and nowadays English has taken its dominant position. Nevertheless, the way a foreign language is learned is an important issue to deal with since teachers and researchers have been searching for the best method to learn a language for centuries.

As Kelly (1969) stated, "nobody really knows what is new or what is old in present-day language teaching procedures. There has been a vague feeling that modern experts have spent their time in discovering what other men have forgotten [...] Much that is being claimed as revolutionary in this century is merely a rethinking and remaking of early ideas and procedures ...". Besides, Grenfell (2002:14), citing Hawkins (1987) shows twenty-four methods that have been applied over years in language teaching and have been useful in the search for the best method.

As Sánchez (2009: 13) stated "the last hundred years have been very prolific in the search of the best method". Moreover, all methods seem to appear with the same purpose of trying to find the best process for foreign language learning. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 3), "efforts to improve the effectiveness of language teaching have often focused on changes in teaching methods". Besides, these changes require curricular considerations and adaptations of materials. It has been demonstrated that the choice of a suitable method in language teaching is a very difficult task.

The Collins Dictionary defines the term *method* as "a way of proceeding or doing something, esp a systematic or regular one" and "the techniques or arrangement of work for a particular field or subject". However, these are quite general definitions and it is necessary to go deeper and to bring the term close to the field of teaching and learning. Therefore, a distinction between the terms *approach*, *method* and *technique* is necessary. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), following the definitions given by Anthony (1963), "approach" refers to beliefs and ideas about language learning, which means that it focuses on the language theories in order to apply them to the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, "method" consists of selecting and putting into practice a theory which requires

designing a plan in order to decide about specific skills, content and objectives. Furthermore, a “technique” involves the classroom activities. In fact, teachers should adapt these terms to their particular context.

In the past of language teaching, the search of the best method has marked this process. Sánchez (2009) pointed out the existence of a considerable number of approaches and methods in language teaching and that the best method is far from being found. Nowadays, there is not such a high obsession of coming up with the best method; however, it is necessary to be aware of the different methods and ideas applied throughout the history of language teaching. Therefore, in this paper, the most significant ones will be analysed in order to perfectly understand the ideas which have pervaded language teaching. And for this reason, the classification of Richards and Rodgers (1986) and Sánchez (2009) will be taken into account.

2.1.1. Traditional methods

Until some years ago, there has existed a preference to teach foreign languages using traditional methods and, in many parts of the world, these methods still strongly influence teaching. One of the most characteristic methods is the **Grammar Translation Method**, which was commonly used during the 19th century in European countries to teach Latin, Greek and other foreign languages (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 4). This method has been used in different forms for a lot of years, and some of its characteristics are still found in the present teaching practice. Sánchez (2009: 34) indicates that “grammar aspects are also included in teaching materials and lessons which claim a use of a direct method, a communicative method or a silent method (just to pinpoint some examples)”. Its main objective is to make students competent in reading and writing whereas listening and speaking is not important. *Grammar* is the most important element to consider and students applied it to translate one language into another.

In this method, Sánchez (2009: 47) identifies four categories of activities, which are:

1. Description of the rules of grammar.
2. Learning these grammar rules and lists of vocabulary.
3. Creating sentences through the application of the grammar rules and the vocabulary learnt.
4. Using the previous points to translate sentences from the L1 to the L2 and vice versa.

It could be stated that the applied methodology was deductive and memorization was the most important feature. Moreover, learners were mere receptors of information whereas teachers had the knowledge about the language and the textbook since the teacher was the centre of the class (Larsen-Freeman, 2003)

Due to the lack of real language use, teachers got frustrated with the limitations of this method and, as a result, new methods arose, such as the Direct Method.

During the nineteenth century, the **Direct Method** movement was originated. In this approach, scholars believed that students could understand the L2 by only listening to it a few times and that students could speak it by only listening to people. Sánchez (2009: 51) points out that the methodology of this method was similar to the process that children follow to learn their native language. This method avoided grammar rules since the learner should learn them through practice. Omaggio (1986, based on Rivers 1981) establishes the following characteristics of this method:

1. The use of constructed pictures or objects for explaining the life of the country where the target language is spoken.
2. New vocabulary is learnt through paraphrases in the target language.
3. Employment of the question-answer exchange to construct simple sentences.
4. Reading goals are attained through the understanding of the text without translations or dictionaries.
5. Use of phonetic notation to reach a correct pronunciation.

These characteristics mainly provided a more communicative class performance, and were based on the following practices:

1. Everyday aspects and situations lead to communicative interaction of the teacher and learner.
2. The teaching process is guided.
3. Imitation takes place.
4. Collaborative learning is necessary.
5. Spoken narratives.
6. Translation is forbidden
7. Textbooks are elements of reference.
8. Demonstration of pictures and objects to learn new words and sentences.

The Direct Method reached popularity through the end of the nineteenth century and it was also the first attempt to use real language and to train the learner to leave the first language as the reference language.

Sánchez (2009: 64) states that in the Direct Method “there is no concession to learners’ errors” since the correction was done by an improvement of the communication, and therefore, no punishment was employed.

Nevertheless, this method was criticized for its poor theoretical foundations whereas in Europe it enjoyed popularity. At the beginning of the twentieth century language teaching returned to the Grammar Translation Method, which emphasized the development of the reading skills in foreign language learning. However, by the middle of the century, the Direct Method was renewed into the most important language teaching revolutions in the modern era, the structural-based methods. These methods offered two variants, namely, the **Audiolingual Method** and the **Audiovisual Method**.

Concerning the former of the structural-based methods, the **Audiolingual Method** is based on Skinner’s Behaviourist theory and claims that language learning is achieved through positive or negative feedback. This method is identical to the direct method in the belief that learners should learn the language directly without taking into account their L1. Moreover, this method puts emphasis on the acquisition of patterns and structures of the language. According to Machado, Ramos, & Ramos (2016) this method focused on the oral language and a perfect pronunciation since language is speech and not writing.

According to Sánchez (2009: 77 and 78), language learning activities in this method should take into account repetition and memorization of dialogs and structures. Therefore, the vocabulary is learned in context and a great interest is given to pronunciation. Moreover, the use of language labs, tapes, and visual aids is important. For that reason, an active role of both the teacher and the learner is significant for the classroom development.

Dealing with the second variant, the **Audiovisual Method** was developed by a group of researchers (the CREDIF) since they found the Audiolingual Method incomplete and inconsistent. The most significant characteristic of this method is that learners should acquire the global sense of a text which was presented through visual aids. Besides, repetition and pronunciation are still remarkable features of this method. As Carroll pointed out (1966) learners may first listen to the teacher and then repeat the same structure or dialog as necessary. Moreover, the use of audio-visual materials supports learners’ process of learning.

For a large number of reasons, both methods have enjoyed many years of reputation and actually these days, some adaptations of structural-based methods are found in recent methodologies. However, these methods started to be replaced by others due to their failure of not focusing on the human being.

2.1.2. *Humanistic Approaches*

In the 1970s, teachers and linguists would emphasize the essentiality of human values, the worth of the individual and the creative nature of people. Therefore, the Chomskyan linguistic revolution turned teachers and linguistics away from the Audiolingual method that focused on structure towards a new effective era, in which classrooms are focused on learner-centered approaches. One of the most characteristic methods was **Community Language Learning**. The distinctive feature of this method is the social dynamics created in the way languages are taught. It is based on counselling techniques which reduce anxiety and the personal and language problems, students face in learning foreign languages. Charles Curran (1972) was inspired by Carl Rogers' view of education and he stated that students in a classroom should be seen as a group and not as a class since the group needs some counselling and therapy. In this method, some conditions are needed for creating an appropriate learning environment:

- a) The teacher is seen as a true counsellor.
- b) Students should perform in an interpersonal relationship.
- c) The teacher collaborates with the students to encourage learning by respecting and valuing each other, to reduce anxiety and to create a supportive community.
- d) The teacher does not impose limits and boundaries.
- e) The teacher sets importance on the learners' needs.

This method not only engages the whole student, including their feelings and emotions, but also behavioural skills.

The two other methods that are normally considered as part of the humanistic approaches to language learning are Suggestopedia and The Silent Way. These two methods, however, were not so affective and focused on more cognitive arguments. On the one hand, **Suggestopedia** was based on the power of suggestion in learning. Hence, a positive suggestion stimulates learning and makes students more receptive. According to Lozanov (1979), in this method, memorization would be faster than in conventional learning methods. Moreover, right conditions for learning are essential in this method since the brain processes a reasonable amount of material in a perfect learning environment. Therefore, Lozanov (1979) claimed that a relaxed state is the best option for learning and the use of music not only promotes positive suggestion but also creates this relaxed state in the student. Moreover, a good relationship between students and the teacher and a relaxing and comfortable environment promotes memorization. On the other hand, **The Silent Way** was founded by

Gattegno and it focuses on the idea that language learning can be enhanced by discovering (instead of teaching), problem-solving in the L2 and using physical tools. Therefore, the teacher should remain as silent as possible in order to let the students learn the language and grammar rules by their own. Gattegno (1972) claimed that students should learn inductively and develop autonomy, responsibility and independence in language learning. However, both methods received a lot of criticism since students required more guidance and support during language learning and these methods started to be replaced by others due to their failure to teach real language.

2.1.3. From the 1980's to the present

The Communicative Approach and Task based Learning have grown in popularity in the last decades, since both reach more effective lessons. This section presents an overview of both approaches.

According to the Council of Europe (2018), the **Communicative Approach** has the main objective of training the learner for real communication. This didactic model uses texts, recordings and materials extracted from real communicative situations to foster reality during the teaching-learning process. Besides, the activities focus on everyday situations in which the language, both written and oral, is the means to achieve a specific end. Richards and Rodgers (2001) consider that language teaching has the main objective of promoting the development of the *communicative competence*. This is a term that was coined by Hymes (1972) in order to make a distinction between his communicative perspective of the language and Chomsky's theory of competence. Hymes (1972) understood that the linguistic competence was only one part of a more general competence which incorporates culture and communication.

Another theory that has influenced the development of the communicative approach is Halliday's functional account of language use, in which "Linguistics ... is concerned... with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus" (1970: 140-165).

Widdowson (1978) also made an important contribution to the theoretical basis of the Communicative Approach, trying to explain the relationship between linguistic systems and the communicative value of the text and the discourse. He coined the term *communicative act*, which underlies the ability to use the language for different purposes.

Finally, Canale and Swain (1980: 1-47) defined the four competence areas: linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic. Afterwards, Van Ek (1988) brought into consideration the sociocultural and social competence as equivalent to the sociolinguistic competence.

The Common European Framework of Reference for languages (2018) added another competence, *mediation*, which is the ability to communicate and relate successfully in communicative exchanges which take place in the multilingual and multicultural society. According to the Cervantes Virtual Centre, to guarantee a real communication situation, the tasks should take into account the following three principles:

1. It is essential to promote specific classroom activities which focus on the use of the target language for real goals.
2. The verbal and non-verbal reactions of the teacher should indicate to what extent learners have reached the objective, but it should be acknowledged that learners tend to use the language in a creative way and, consequently, it is normal that they make errors. Therefore, a persistent correction is not necessary and could even be detrimental.
3. Effective language teaching responds to the learners' needs and interests.

Special attention should be paid to projects, role plays, surveys and other activities and tasks appropriate to the learners' interests. The games, in addition to developing the communicative competence, affect motivation in a positive way. From these ideas also follows the renewed emphasis on using the target language as the normal medium of classroom communication. Moreover, this approach promotes individual, pair and group activities to initiate reflection and discussion in the language learning process itself and it also encourages self-assessment. This approach is clearly a contribution to producing more independent and self-motivated learners.

Authenticity is the corner-stone for the communicative approach and it promotes the use of materials originally produced for native speakers such as for example magazines, newspapers, media programmes or recordings of spontaneous conversation.

Last but not least, the Communicative Approach is a powerful, effective and actual approach that encourages group work and cooperative learning; moreover, it promotes fluency and accuracy and it focuses on the real life. It is not a fixed package since it presents a lot of fluid and changing ideas.

The Task-based Learning approach creates motivational learning experiences since it engages the attention of the students and gains motivation and more interest in following the

subject. The learner's role is the main objective and therefore it is a learner-centred teaching approach (Willis, 1996). Besides, it promotes working in groups and students get involved in relevant activities in which they become more interactive. One of its main features is the use of real life material, which is essential to recreate real life situations both inside and outside the classroom. There have been many ways of defining and describing the term "task", but Skehan's (1998) definition seems to represent well the most important aspects that characterize this type of activity. According to this author, a "task" is an activity in which:

1. conveying meaning is fundamental;
2. students must solve a communication problem;
3. the communication problems resemble those found in the real world;
4. the completion of the task acquires primary importance;
5. the evaluation of the activity is performed with regard to the outcome.

Some language theorists (e.g. Estaire & Zanon, 1994, Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996; or Ellis 2006) foreground that there exist three principal steps to carry out a task. The first one is the *pre-task* in which the teacher presents the topic and provides some information about the content and objectives. Then the *during task* which is the main task for learners. The final moment would be the *post-task*, since it involves the learners' analysis and opinions about the performance of task outcomes.

In Task-based learning, a task involves any of the speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. Willis (1996) compares the task with a language problem since both should be solved in relation to real-world situations. During these tasks, the teachers perform not only as advisers in giving feedback and solutions but also as monitors observing learners' performance (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2003).

In this approach the teacher creates different learning opportunities for learners through authentic, meaningful and interesting activities (Ellis, 2003). The main aim is that students have different exposure to the language. However, some learners feel more comfortable with more traditional approaches since they feel insecure taking charge of their own learning.

Last but not least, most of these approaches are used in language teaching and distance education language curriculums. Moreover, most teachers do not only follow one method since every student learns in a different way and, therefore, teachers should identify how, when and what students learn best and adapt their teaching style to the students. In the next parts distance education is described in a deeper way.

2.2. Distance Education

In the past, distance education was an alternative method for students unable to attend classes. However, the health pandemic changed education and distance education programs have started to play a crucial role in teaching due to the restrictions of face to-face learning. This section is going to approach a description of the meaning and historical context of distance education. It is also going to give an account of the different forms of distance education and its estimated effectiveness.

2.2.1. The meaning of Distance learning

Luffman (1998) stated that Distance learning, also known as Homeschooling or Home Education, occurs when learners receive in their education at home rather than attending different types of school. Parents, tutors or online teachers take the responsibility of the learners' education and may develop their own curriculum guidelines. Collom and Mitchell (2005: p. 274) state that "Home schooling is both a means of educating children according to parental standards and an alternative social movement embracing a unique set of cultural norms and values". The beginning of the practice of homeschooling could be found in ancient times. However, the modern homeschool movement began in the 1970s (Kleist-Tesch, 1998). The term Homeschooling is used in America whereas Home Education is more used in the United Kingdom. The former implies the word *school* and the word *home*. Many people prefer to use the latter since school and learning are not necessarily equivalents (Abbott, 2010, p. 25). Besides, the practice of homeschooling is not legal in all countries. For example, Germany has outlawed it entirely. In other countries it is not socially acceptable, whereas it is not restricted by law. Countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States are countries where homeschooling is most prevalent.

In the nineteenth century, the first type of formal distance education or distance learning emerged in the form of the written word and the first modern distance educator was Issac Pitman who taught by short hand correspondence from the English City of Bath in 1840 (Demiray and Isman, 1999).

Today, the World Wide Web is becoming more exploited than ever in education. According to Olson and Wisner (2002), a new form of distance education appeared. This kind of teaching describes any learning that occurs without the students being physically present in the classroom or school. Moreover, distance education can be performed completely from a distance or in combination with the traditional classroom. Years ago, students communicated

with their teachers via mail. Nowadays, distance education has moved online and uses network technologies.

This leads us to a distinction of both terms, namely the difference between homeschooling and distance education. The former occurs when a parent provides the entire education for the child whereas the latter occurs with a qualified teacher who uses an education platform to teach. Sánchez states (1997: 11) that distance education occurs in the students' home and lessons could be carried out through textbooks or the computer. Normally both forms are combined. Lessons should be somewhat self-paced, absolutely online and the teacher teaches through an online platform. Therefore, students involved in this type of learning are not called homeschoolers since they study in a public school. Nowadays, more and more families prefer to belong to a public school with virtual classes instead being part of the home school community. The reason is that they need the accreditation provided by a state-run school or its regulatory oversight.

2.2.2. Historical development of Homeschooling and Distance Education in Spain.

In Spain, homeschooling was regulated by the Moyano law (1857), which encouraged parents to provide elementary instruction for their children, either through attending a public school or learning at home (Moyano, 1857, p. art. 7).

At present, in Spain this kind of education is not legal since the constitutional mandate says that schooling is compulsory, which means that children have to go to school until they are 16 years old. Besides, it also depends on the Autonomous Community in which learners live, for example it is easier to carry out homeschooling in Madrid, Catalonia and Euskadi, than in other Communities. However, homeschooling has been gaining relative and modest strength during the recent years. According to Lacort (2018), Spain has gone from not having documented cases or platforms that operate for Homeschool recognition to working from home in some special cases, while associations of families are fighting to be able to practice homeschooling with legal guarantees.

Concerning distance education, the national education law, in its article number 109, expresses that distance education can only be practiced in a rural environment or with students who are 18 years old.

Due to the last international expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic, this last educational option was abruptly and forcedly imposed in early March in Spain, when schools were closed to curb the pandemic. However, much of what students experienced at home did

not represent real distance education, in which teachers are trained to teach remotely and online. Besides, this unplanned and rapid move to distance education will emerge with significant benefits. In distance education teachers could employ diverse methodologies for education their students and they also could use different types of distance education to help their students.

2.2.3. Types of distance education

Distance education is not as simple as setting activities for homework or telling students which YouTube videos to watch. It is important to use technology to make students think and apply their thoughts in a meaningful and engaging way. Moreover, in distance education, the development of certain skills is essential not only for teachers and students but also for the school families.

Distance education has a shared history with correspondence learning and electronic learning. In correspondence learning, students obtain their study materials, such as for example study guides, textbooks, activities or assignments, via postal mail. Throughout the process of studying and working with these materials, students can contact the teacher or instructor through sending an e-mail or instant message or by postal mail or telephone. In electronic learning, also known as e-learning, students can access their study material on a computer. Therefore, computer-based applications, CDs, or DVDs can be applied to carry out e-learning courses. Finally, the type of distance education being focused in this dissertation is online learning, a similar way of electronic learning, however students need to have access to the internet. Goodwin and Meares (2001) state that online learning is not only more effective than the other types of distance learning, but also more interactive. In this type, students should download the study material from a platform, submit the assignments in the same platform, write online assessments and participate in virtual classes.

The latest growth in technology has led to a proliferation of diverse **types of distance learning**, which include the following:

- Video conferencing is a useful way for teachers to interact directly with their students in online lessons which could be a class-like scenario, a one-to-one session or a multiple students' scenario.
- Synchronous learning takes place when the whole group of students learn together at the same time. In this case a video or teleconferencing connects students with the teacher.

- Asynchronous learning occurs when students are given activities with deadlines so that self-study is necessary.
- Open-schedule online courses are a type of asynchronous course; however, there aren't any deadlines. It is perfect for learners with other needs on their time, such as stay-at-home parents or professionals.
- Hybrid learning is a class of synchronous learning where students are learning the same lesson in real-time; however, some of the students are learning remotely while others are physically present.

Nowadays, a huge variety of **teaching tools** have been created with the purpose of improving the teaching process, giving autonomy to students, encouraging collaboration, and facilitating communication between students and teachers. These tools are used in the digital classroom and they include audio, video, or digital text. Each teacher should use his or her preferred tool. The following teaching tools are well-known and receive consistently good reviews.

- Google Classroom is an online platform that enables teachers to create learning and practice tasks, as well as assignments, in a paperless manner and to distribute them to the students. The students work on the activities from a computer (either as homework or in assigned working hours during the school day). The communication between the teacher and the students takes place electronically and problems or queries can be solved in a forum opened to the whole class or via sending a message to the teacher.
- Zoom Video Webinar is a well suited tool for group training or meetings. It allows communicating via video conferencing and participants can ask questions and present content without any problems. The teacher can share content like PDFs or slides and can use a whiteboard, draw things out or share a screen with a Google Document. It is also possible to create breakout rooms to divide the class in different groups and carry out different activities.
- Google Meet is a video-conferencing tool and the teacher can remotely teach lessons to students in real time. Moreover, this tool has the added advantage that it is possible to record the students' and the teacher's presentations and both can share the contents of their screen.
- Edmodo is a learning platform that combines social learning and classroom learning. The teacher can upload messages, questions, tasks, tests and

assignments. Moreover, the users can communicate with posts and comment on other users' posts.

- Google Forms is a good tool to collect data from students since teachers could view responses which are submitted by their students. It could also be used to create forms, surveys and quizzes, to insert videos and pictures into survey questions, to create multiple choice grids and to share the forms with other people. Therefore, it is a perfect tool for assessments.
- Youtube can be used for educational purposes since it makes the created media outcomes visible. It is a stimulating and helpful teaching and learning tool which has a positive impact on students.
- Edpuzzle helps teachers to transform a video into a lesson. Teachers could add commentaries and comprehension questions to the video.
- Dropbox is an appropriate and effective tool to share and edit documents together, take notes, organize files, prepare for exams or presentations and communicate with other users.
- Kahoot is an educational tool that is based on quizzes and games. The teacher can create questionnaires, surveys or discussions in order to complement lessons. Students answer the materials while they have fun and learn. Therefore, this tool encourages learning through games, constructs an active and social environment and increases students' motivation.

In the didactic unit proposal, different types of distance learning will take place: video conferencing, synchronous learning and asynchronous learning. In order to carry out the lessons six online tools have been chosen: Google Classroom, Zoom Video, Youtube, Kahoot and Tic Toc. Google Classroom has been chosen instead of other learning platforms since it is simple to use, there are a lot of applications that work with this tool and it encourages collaboration among teachers and students. The tool chosen for videoconferencing has been Zoom because it is technically perfect and has more functionality.

As said before, the health pandemic forced schools to close temporarily and make a transition from face-to-face learning to distance learning. In this last case, it is crucial to combine effective learning with fun through the use of technology since studies have shown that children use their senses to learn. However, is distance education an effective method for students?

2.2.4. Effectiveness of Distance Education

A newborn is able to learn by himself due to the means of innate instincts and the constant stimulus received from the environment. Likewise, our students can achieve great results by learning by themselves. They only need to be motivated in order to actually get the work done. In certain cases, like in the health pandemic, however, distance education is not just required but the best possible option. Therefore, nowadays the advantages of distance education have the chance to shine.

Mohsennia (2010) points out that most people agree that distance education is better than attending the school for several reasons such as lack of violence, individualized education, a better social development, flexibility of schedule, more effective learning and adaptation of learners' needs and interests.

Nevertheless, not everything is advantages. Children who attend a distance education program may not have the possibility to interact with other children. This point is the most glaring drawback of distance education. According to Damon, Lerner and Renninger (2007), socializing and forming bonds with children is necessary for children's development of social skills and their developmental health. However, some overwhelming tools have appeared that allow live instruction and establish face-to-face contact with teachers and students. They connect in a very authentic way, which often results in a good rapport and understanding.

Cavanaugh et al. (2004) compared classroom-based teaching with programs based on distance learning or education and the study revealed that distance learning did not underperform or outperform traditional classes; therefore, both options had the same effectiveness. Moreover, this analysis indicated that distance learning may have identical effects on students' achievement when compared to classroom performance. However, another study conducted by Lim et al. (2008) detected that the achievement is notably higher in distance learning students than in students learning in a traditional instruction.

Rivera and Rice (2002) included some guidelines to reach successful distance education:

- a) Conduct a few face-to-face meetings in the case of synchronous teaching;
- b) The instructor and students should speak slowly in synchronous online courses;
- c) Design group activities in order to encourage interactions in synchronous meetings;
- e) At the end of a class or meeting, students or the instructor should sum up the class discussions.

Moreover, for effective distance education, trained teachers are essential. White and Weight (2000) argued that successful distance learning requires some teacher's qualifications that involve the teacher's ability to develop an authentic and effective distance education environment, the perfect organisation of the lessons and the knowledge of the content area. Wolf (2006) stated that the whole nature of distance education demands students' reflection on their own learning and teachers' reflection on their teaching. Therefore, self-evaluation and self-assessment abilities are crucial for distance learning. Likewise, Carter (1995) remarked the importance of teachers' training. He pointed out that the success of this kind of programs will be limited when the training programs and lessons are not well organized and planned.

Wolf (2006) acknowledged that without the following elements a success in distance education is not possible:

a) It is important that students have some computer knowledge and experience using the Internet and other virtual applications.

b) Students should know which material to choose since they can find a lot of unnecessary things on the Internet.

c) Critical thinking is necessary in order to create and apply new knowledge. Students become actively responsible for their own education by thinking critically.

d) Motivation is the most important element when learning online. Teachers are those who should motivate students adapting their teaching to their needs and interests.

e) Constant feedback is essential since students can assess their progress and develop their self-improvement. It also increases knowledge retention, promotes self-reflection and encourages constructive discussion with teachers.

Concerning this suggestions on distance education, the didactic unit proposal takes into account all of these recommendations in order to achieve successful teaching and learning.

2.3. Didactic Foundations

In this section, we are going to focus on the most characteristic foundations of the proposed didactic unit, which are the chosen model, the role of students, resources and, in addition, the proposed evaluation.

These are difficult times for schools, teachers and students. Staying home does not mean relaxation since families expect instruction and lessons to take place even from the distance. The teacher's homework becomes even more difficult since preparing a lesson to do

later in class is very different from organizing an online lesson, preparing it, recording it, teaching it live or sharing activities.

The methodology employed throughout the didactic unit proposal is a combination of different language teaching methods. Therefore, traditional and modern methods are used in order to foster the four linguistic skills in English: reading, writing, speaking and listening. For example, the influence of the Audiolingual method could be noticed in some activities since they are focused on form. In fact, there are some oral drills in order to ensure accuracy of grammar structures, pronunciation and vocabulary. On the other hand, our didactic unit has also been influenced by the importance given to the affective factors by humanistic approaches such as Community Language Learning. In this regard, we have tried to design activities that are learner-focused but not very anxiety-inducing. Coping with language anxiety is especially useful for listening and speaking activities. The teaching process has been designed in order to provide security to the learner and a good understanding between the teacher and learners is bound to reduce anxiety. Finally, the Communicative Approach is used to provide the students with some opportunities for real and meaningful communication.

The model that we are going to use for the didactic intervention is based on Constructivism. According to Delval (1997), Kant, Marx or Darwin are significant when speaking about Constructivism as an epistemological current. In our case, we are going to talk about *constructivism* as our chosen didactic model for teaching English as second language. Granell and Salvador (1994) highlight that the process of interaction between students, teachers and content is necessary in order to build up knowledge.

Within this context, we will focus on achieving meaningful learning through distance education. According to Oliver (2000), the constructivist learning theory underpins different student-centred teaching techniques and methods which contrast with the traditional ones, where teachers transmit passively the knowledge to students. Therefore, in the didactic unit proposal

Regarding to the learning environments, Honebein (1996) summarizes some pedagogical goals:

- 1) To help the knowledge construction process with previous experience and knowledge. Therefore, students decide their learning process.
- 2) To provide alternative solutions to multiple perspectives.
- 3) To promote learning in realistic contexts by using authentic tasks.
- 4) To boost a voice and control in the learning process. Therefore, it is necessary to promote student-centred learning.

5) To encourage collaborative learning (social experience) like group work and pair work.

6) To boost the use of ICTs (video, audio text, etc.)

7) To encourage attention of the knowledge construction process (metacognition and reflection).

The main feature of constructivism is that all new knowledge comes from another previous one (Granell and Salvador, 1994). In other words, the previous ideas of students have special importance when it comes to manufacturing new knowledge and they are a tool to improve the learning process itself. Therefore, the previous knowledge of the students will have a fundamental role in the Didactic Unit proposal, being the first sessions the object of study. Moreover, the activities cause significant learning. Students should actively participate in them, use their preconceptions to form an opinion and face the problem. The teacher guides the process and he or she designs the appropriate problems to develop student thinking and learning (Ortega 2007).

Concerning foreign languages, they arouse a progressive interest in our society, motivated by the socio-economic changes and by the great technological progress produced in the last decades. In fact, technology improves language learning since it facilitates teachers to adapt classroom activities.

For that reason, students must be prepared to live in a plurilingual and multicultural world more and more open to international relations of all kinds in which the knowledge of foreign languages allows to value our own language better.

The European Council, in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages suggests an approach centred in action. It defines the different levels of development of communicative competence in a specific language, depending on the students' capacity to carry out some communicative tasks, which demand the realization of actions with a concrete communicative purpose in a specific sphere. In addition, it is assumed that every speaker possesses a certain degree of communicative competence whose components are common to all languages. In order to do that and bearing in mind the principle of integrated skills, the planning of the didactic activities will intend to achieve the following aims:

- Foster reflexive and critical attitudes towards languages
- Start from the same concept of learning objectives, with the correspondent curricular adaptations in every language.

- Use a practical and eclectic methodology catering for the needs of all students.

These activities will all include affective aspects, since a positive attitude towards the process of learning will be necessary. As we all know, language learning is a lifelong task so, our role as English teachers will necessarily turn around two aspects; to motivate our students and to reinforce their own skills and confidence when facing a new language so that they can benefit from this experience for the rest of their lives.

In the present Didactic Unit, we will use a multiplicity of resources, depending on the activities and strategies that we carry out in the lessons, focusing on ICTs as an alternative to the resources of the most traditional methodologies. The different ICT tools not only improve student learning, but also facilitates the teaching process (Pontes, 2005).

Positive feedback is necessary since it is an external help that shows if teachers and students are going in the right direction, if they can improve what they are doing and how they are doing it.

As far as the evaluation is concerned, it is true that the exam has become a simple tool, which limits itself to evaluating whether the answer is correct or not, and that leaves several important things along the way, such as creativity, the quality of thought, etc. (Méndez 2010). Therefore, the exam cannot become the only evaluation tool of this unit, and the variety and plurality of tools must be encouraged during the process.

A last important aspect to consider is when the evaluation should be carried out. Taking into account that the selected methodological model is Constructivism and the importance that we are going to give to the student's previous knowledge, making initial and final diagnoses (Jorba and Sanmartí, 1996) is vital for the development of the teaching-learning process, and the evaluation must be carried out continuously throughout the learning process. This and all the previous aspects will be reflected by the design of the Didactic Unit here proposed.

3. DIDACTIC UNIT

As we said before, the interference of the COVID-19 crisis in education has changed education systems and teachers had to adapt their classes and teach their students from home. This present didactic unit is an initial proposal to embrace students' needs in this specific situation and to appeal to the students' motivation.

3.1. Introduction

This didactic unit is aimed at developing English as a foreign language in a communicative approach and putting emphasis on the learner-centred teaching methods. Students will collaborate to show their new world and how their lives have changed in the health pandemic. The content presented in this didactic unit "Welcome to our new world", is very relevant for children who will learn, familiarize and integrate their new way of life in a health pandemic. Moreover, the didactic unit is inside an organized learning management system -google classroom-in order to define efficient virtual lessons. There is also a forum where students can find for example information to each activity, vocabulary explanation or feedback of the sessions and activities. In my opinion, students should not be alone in the learning process and it is necessary to have structured EFL online classes with constant feedback. In this way motivation and attention is encouraged.

This didactic unit proposal has a double objective: the consolidation and enrichment of student's communicative competence in the L2 and the development of the student's awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. It therefore aims to promote a holistic development of the learner.

The present didactic unit has six sessions of 55 minutes and it is important to highlight that this sequencing will be flexible, that is, the timing of this unit is approximate and can vary according to circumstances such as needs of our students or other circumstances.

3.2. Contextualization

As far as this didactic unit design is concerned, it should be noted that it is aimed at students at 2nd Year of ESO; a group of 28 young boys and girls whose ages range from 13 to 14 years old; a difficult age in which motivation will play a major role. At this stage, students have already accomplished their first year of secondary school and they face a new academic year in which English turns into one of the most challenging subjects for them. During this second year, students will flesh out past contents that they are already familiar with and they will also deal with new ones. At this point, a positive attitude towards the subject will be paramount; only through hard work and interest in the subject will they succeed in their task. Furthermore, the reward for such an effort will be priceless: they will set the basis of their linguistic knowledge in English, which will be further developed at least until the 4th year of

ESO. Therefore, the more linguistic knowledge our students acquire, the more fluent they will become in English in the long term.

For the elaboration of this didactic unit the current legislation has been taken into account, namely, the Common European Framework, the Organic Law of Education (LOMCE) and Decree 1105/2014, being the latter the document where contents, goals, assessment criteria and some other considerations on the role of English as a subject are established.

Likewise, in the organisation of this didactic unit, the school environment has been considered as well, due to its direct connection with the school institution and results. The school taken into account in this didactic unit is an urban state school whose equipment, materials and environment are sufficient in order to carry out the teaching and learning activity. Its educational offer ranges from the age of 12 to that of 18 and, hence, it covers various education stages: Secondary Education and Baccalaureate. Moreover, students have the necessary resources to be able to work from home.

Due to the health pandemic, this didactic unit will be implemented in the third term. Each unit takes approximately two weeks of work. However, this layout must be flexible depending on the level and dedication of the students, since everything is conducted online and students have to be very self-motivated. This didactic unit "Welcome to our new world" has six sessions. Each lesson plan covers different points such as vocabulary, grammar or writing, trying to explain various points through games and real life to learn and motivate students differently.

3.3. Objectives

Programming implies aiming and therefore it requires the achievement of some goals or objectives. The objectives, alongside the contents, address the question of what to teach. In this section, a more accurate approach on the matter will be provided:

3.3.1. General objectives

The Organic Law (by means of DECREE 1105/2014) states the general objectives for the first cycle of Compulsory Secondary Education on which every didactic department will base the contents planned for this level. They will be common for every stage subject.

According to this, Compulsory Secondary Education will contribute to develop in the students the capacities that will allow them to:

- a) Know, assume responsibly their duties and exercise their rights in the respect to other people, practise the tolerance, cooperation and solidarity among people, dialogue with people considering the human rights as common values of a plural, open and democratic society.
- b) Acquire, develop and foster habits of discipline, study and individual and group work as a necessary condition for the efficient realization of the process of learning and as a tool of personal development.
- c) Value and respect the difference between the sexes and the equality of rights and opportunities for everyone. Reject discrimination against people based on sex or any other personal or social condition or circumstance. Reject stereotypes that discriminate men and women, as well as any other manifestation of violence against women.
- d) Strengthen their affective capacities in all the fields of personality and in their relations with other people; reject violence, prejudices and sexist behaviours and solve the conflicts peacefully.
- e) Develop basic skills in the use of information sources in order to acquire new knowledge. Acquire a basic preparation in the field of technologies, especially information and communication ones.
- f) Conceive scientific knowledge as an integrated learning which is divided into different disciplines, and know and apply the methods for the identification of problems to the different fields of knowledge and experience.
- g) Develop entrepreneurship and self – confidence, participation, critical sense, personal initiative and capacity for learning to learn, plan, take decisions, assume responsibilities and value the effort with the aim of overcoming difficulties.
- h) Understand and express correctly texts and complex messages, orally and in a written way in Spanish and value the communicative possibilities of the language. Introduce the students in the literatures of this language.
- i) Understand and express themselves in one or more foreign languages in an appropriate way.
- j) Know, value and respect the fundamental aspects of one’s own culture and history and other people’s culture and history, as well as, respect the cultural and linguistic heritage.
- k) Know and accept the operations of the human body and accept the differences. Know and appreciate the benefits of having good hygiene habits and physical exercise and adequate food habits. Value critically the social habits related to health, responsible consumption, care of human beings and the environment, contributing to its conservation and improvement.
- l) Value and participate in artistic creation and understand the language of different artistic manifestations using different ways of expression and representation.

In general, the planning of the didactic unit contributes to the accomplishment of all the stage objectives, although it is obviously more directly related to objective “i”: “Understand and express in one or more foreign languages in an appropriate way”. The English subject in general, and our own didactic unit in particular, are meant to make an important contribution to this objective since students will develop this competence in the oral discourse by means of listening and speaking activities like the ones carried out throughout

the didactic unit. They will interpret different types of discourse in contexts with different functions and they will be able to utter simple oral speeches. Likewise, they will be able to produce written texts, using the conventions and the appropriate language in each situation. Furthermore, the acknowledgement and progressive learning of the foreign language system of rules will improve the acquisition of this objective. Besides, the English subject contributes also to the accomplishment of the other stage objectives since this didactic unit provides students with the necessary tools to initiate their own process of learning, to favour students' autonomy and to develop critical thinking and to value respect towards other students. Moreover, languages are used by speakers not only to communicate but also as a means of cultural transmission, favouring consequently the acknowledgement and acceptance of cultural differences. This approach has also been taken into account in the design of the didactic unit here proposed and a culture spot section with curiosities about Ireland has been included in the didactic unit. In addition, the Information and Communication Technologies offer simple and immediate access to a flow of information which grows every day and where the knowledge of a foreign language facilitates the access to essential information which can be found in that language. In the design of the didactic unit here proposed, the fostering of students' acquisition of new knowledge in the use of information sources will necessarily involve some activities directly connected to new technologies.

According to Decree ECD/489/2016, the objective of learning a foreign language in the stage of Compulsory Secondary Education is the acquisition -on the part of the students- of discourse skills that may happen in different spheres: in personal relations, which includes family relations and habitual social practices; in education, related to everyday actions and situations at school; in the academic field, related to the contents of the area and other curricular subjects; in the public sphere, which includes all the elements related to social everyday interaction; in the media and so on and so forth.

Within Compulsory Secondary Education, the learning process of the foreign language, continues and increases the development of the communicative competence which started to be acquired in the previous stage with the purpose of consolidating the students' productive skills and their ability to interact and be understood in some situations. According to Decree ECD/489/2016, some of them are: offering and asking for explanations in an informal debate, expressing in a comprehensive way the idea one wants people to understand, using simple language to express ones' idea, understanding the main ideas of texts in standard language. In the same way, when finishing the stage, they will be able to face, in a flexible way, everyday written and oral communication problems such as participating in everyday

conversations, complaining, relating experiences or plans, explaining something or asking for clarifications.

The teaching of a **foreign language** at this stage will have as a main objective the development of the following **capacities**:

- Obj.IN.1. To identify the general idea and specific information in oral texts.
- Obj.IN.2. To express and interact orally in order to communicate in different situations, such as role-playing, problem-solving and negotiating during exercises.
- Obj.IN.3. To identify the general idea and specific information, such as implied meanings, in written texts of different genres.
- Obj.IN.4. To be able to write simple essays, e-mails, leaflets, letters, cinema/TV subtitles, comic captions, classified ads and interviews using appropriate vocabulary and cohesion devices.
- Obj.IN.5. To comprehend oral and written texts, speak and write in a proper way in the foreign language.
- Obj.IN.6. To use in a reflexive and correct way the basic elements of language - phonetics, lexis, structures and functions – in different contexts of communication.
- Obj.IN.7. To develop autonomous in learning, reflect on one's own learning process and transfer the knowledge and communicative strategies acquired in the mother tongue to the knowledge of the foreign language.
- Obj.IN.8. To develop autonomous and cooperative learning strategies either in individual or group work using all the accessible tools (especially ICTs).
- Obj.IN.9. To use the foreign language as means of communication and help foster understanding with people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds.
- Obj.IN.10. To develop and display a receptive and self-confident attitude towards their own capacity in the learning and using of the foreign language.

3.3.2. Specific objectives

Having in mind the previous general FL objectives, and the specific themes and activities developed in our didactic unit, we can formulate the specific objectives of the didactic unit here proposed. By the end of the didactic unit students will be able:

- a) To understand general information from oral texts about COVID-19, sports and food, including video calls and audio-visual products, and to be able to participate in simulated communicative situations.
- b) To express and interact orally about COVID-19, everyday situations, sports and food using common discourse makers and being aware of non-verbal communicative devices, turn-taking and politeness.
- c) Read and understand autonomously different types of written texts with the objective of getting general and specific information about daily life situations during the

COVID-19 pandemics and TV series, using readings as a source of pleasure, personal enrichment and knowledge of other cultures.

d) Write efficiently a simple text about one's own favourite TV series using adequate coherence and cohesion procedures.

e) Use in a reflexive and correct way the vocabulary about daily routines, food and sports and the present simple and present continuous structures.

f) Develop autonomy in learning and reflect on one's own learning process.

g) Use the learning strategies and the didactic resources at one's disposal (dictionaries, guidebooks, multimedia materials), including ICT, in order to obtain, select and present oral and written information autonomously.

3.4. Contents

The Objectives - stated above - will be achieved by means of some Contents, which answer the question of what to teach. According to the current legislation, a classification has been made for the second year of Compulsory Secondary Education.

Blocks of contents:

Contents will be introduced according to three forthcoming axes or blocks:

Block 1, Listening and Speaking, and block 2, Reading and Writing, are concerned with the linguistic capacity. They both include the procedures, understood as operations which allow relating concepts acquired with their realisation in communicative activities. Dealing with the former, at this stage special importance is given to listening practise as setting the basis for the oral production. And, concerning the second block, it must be noted that careful attention will be given to written texts as models of textual composition.

The starting point of block 3, Knowledge of language, will be the situations of use which favour the acquisition of the rules of language and that allow the students to learn the basic elements of the foreign language such as lexis or phonetics.

And last but not least, block 4, Socio-cultural aspects and intercultural awareness, will contribute to the knowledge of traditions and particular features of the countries where the foreign language is spoken. This block is concerned with the promotion of cultural tolerance and fostering the interest in different social and cultural realities.

Taking into account the themes and activities developed in our teaching proposal, the specific contents covered in our didactic unit are the following:

BLOCK 1: LISTENING AND SPEAKING

- Listening to a speech and understand information about a sports' instructor.
- Listening to a video about Making Cupcakes and understand basic information.
- Expressing students' own opinion about their daily routines during the health pandemic and Spanish and Irish issues.
- Talk about daily routine in the health pandemic.
- Producing intelligible oral text with logical and adequate structure.
- Talking about one's abilities.
- Talking about a recipe.
- Development of communicative strategies and self-confidence.
- Putting into practice habitual communicative strategies.
- Producing short, efficient oral texts and provide adequate answers.

BLOCK 2: READING AND WRITING

- Reading and extract information from the text *My life in a pandemic*.
- Writing about one's favourite Netflix series.
- Use of comprehension strategies.
- Developing written expression.
- Understanding general information from a reading comprehension text with general vocabulary.
- Understand specific information from written texts in digital format, identifying the structure of certain written texts.

BLOCK 3: LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

A) LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE

Language functions and their linguistic exponents:

1. Present Simple vs. Present Continuous
2. Using basic structures and functions related to predicable everyday situations.
3. Question formation
4. Expressing obligations and routines:
Verbal forms: can and must.

5. Use and meaning of modal verbs to express ability.

6. Temporal expressions: at the moment, today, etc.

Lexis

- Thematic areas for lexis choice: food, sports, leisure and daily life.
- Increase of basic strategies to organise, acquire, remember and use lexis

Phonetics

- Intonation in questions.
- Getting familiar with the / ð/ sound.

B) REFLECTION ON LEARNING

- Increase of basic strategies to organise, acquire, remember and use lexis.
- Ability to use ICT to find information.
- Reflection upon the use and meaning of grammatical forms adequate to different communicative intentions.
- Active participation in one's self-assessment procedure and self-assessment strategies.
- Interest in getting profit of the learning opportunities.

BLOCK 4: SOCIOCULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL ASPECTS

- Development of intercultural skills.
- Identification and respect towards cultural aspects and traditions of the country or countries where the foreign language is spoken, avoiding stereotypes.
- Use of appropriate linguistic formulae of politeness.
- Value the importance of foreign languages in international relations.

For the development of the stated contents, students' previous knowledge in combination with new knowledge will be taken into account.

3.5. Methodology

The different teaching methodologies are intended to foster students' capacity to learn on their own, to work in pairs and employ adequate research methods. In this didactic unit, we

will follow the pedagogical principles underlying the core curriculum and deploy the specific teaching methods that are most appropriate for the contents specified above.

3.5.1. General and specific methodology

The **general methodology** of the didactic unit will be **learner-centred** and based upon the **communicative approach**. A key factor is to define the learners' and the teacher's roles and the degree of interaction between them. These issues will be approached from a learner-centred perspective. Dealing with the former, the role of the English teacher will be to be in control of the lesson, fostering participation and co-operation and, above all, fighting monotony. On the other hand, students will be expected to have a positive attitude towards the subject and to appreciate and value the importance of English as a foreign language and as a means of cultural transmission.

Along with the communicative approach and in order to cater for all types of learning processes, other specific methodologies will be adopted at some stages as well. Among them, we may highlight the forthcoming methodologies: the **audio visual methodology**, aimed at catering to those students who possess a more visual memory (i.e. when presenting vocabulary or warm-up activities) and the **grammar translation** method by means of which weak students will feel more confident (i.e. in some grammar activities). At this point, it must be clarified that only the basics about this latter methodology will be taken into account, leaving aside the most radical version of it.

It seems obvious that if we want our students to talk in English, we should stimulate them and give them the opportunity to speak. In order to this, students will not be constantly corrected by the teacher, but rather they will receive feedback on their overall performance at the end of it. This specific methodology aims at achieving a successful learning. Consequently, motivation has been one of the main elements to take into account in the design of this didactic unit together with the role of both the teacher and students.

3.5.2. Motivation

Very often, Spanish teachers feel that many students do not feel motivated enough to study and this is something that frequently torments us. Nevertheless, we should not forget that English as a subject in itself is also capable of motivating our students since, in general, students recognize that it has an instrumental value in present day society. Therefore, an **active role of the student** in the learning process along with the **role of the teacher as**

helper and the use of an appropriate methodology will be essential. In order to foster students' motivation inside the English classroom as well.

Concerning motivation, the core thematic point of the didactic unit which has been taken into account in its elaboration is daily life in the health pandemic. As we all know, new methodology trends suggest a new view of English language, therefore it has turned into an aspect of paramount importance to teach our students *what they can do with English* rather than *learning English*. In order to meet this new need, my students will be facing in this didactic unit aspects directly connected to their daily life. This approach will be really positive for my students since it has a double function. On the one hand, it has a pedagogic and didactic function behind; on the other hand students will be provided with the opportunity to establish a connection between this subject and the real world, arising their interest in the real content of the subject.

In this didactic unit, the lack of face-to-face contact makes it difficult for the teacher to find out at what point the students start to get bored. Therefore, it is necessary to create a community so that students can join a forum and exchange friendly words, try to solve their problems or post their progress.

Furthermore, as it has been previously mentioned, the integration of New Technologies in the English class is also a good way to motivate our students; not only does it provide the teacher with some audio-visual support but it also fosters students' digital competence.

In conclusion, the main aim of my methodology is that students develop a positive attitude towards the process of learning English from a different perspective. Once having clarified the previous points, it is important to remark other characteristics of this didactic unit.

3.5.3. Didactic resources and grouping criteria

It goes without saying that a considerable part of intrinsic motivation will depend on the teacher who will be responsible for material selection and the subject management. For the present didactic unit an appropriate selection of materials has been carried out. As a matter of fact, the forthcoming aspects have been born in mind: the level of the students, the specific function of material resources, the variables time/space/number of students and the way in which they promote the scheduled learning process (complementation, reinforcement, support and so forth). In conclusion, the material selected is aimed at:

- Fostering the development of different contents and new ways of using them in real life.

- Motivating students and contribute positively on their psycho-evolutive and cognitive features.

This suggested material will be reinforced by means of bringing realia to the English classroom such as: adverts, recipes or even more dynamic ones such as series, films or short videos. This realia will create meaningful and authentic situations and providing students with the opportunity to work with real language.

As we all know, in e-learning there are no pre-established timetables or classes that must be attended. Therefore, students must control their own learning process and foster their autonomous learning. In this didactic unit, autonomy is directly related to the ability to act independently since students should establish their own learning pace. This means that students have to play an active role and self-regulate their learning process.

Concerning the e-learning platform, students should read the instructions and complete the tasks. Besides, students can view the deadlines of the activities and carry them out. Moreover, the teacher can see who has finished and completed the activities and give constructive feedback. In this way students receive support to successfully continue learning the subject.

As we all know, in a mixed level class students perform different processes of language acquisition, so I will have to be sensitive with **error correction** paying careful attention to all of my students' and above all to those with special educational needs.

Taking into account that the didactic unit will take place online, students will be working from home, so most of the time they work alone. However, I will arrange video calls with the whole group or pairs depending on the type of task. For instance warm up activities will be worked with the whole class whereas short speaking activities will be worked in pairs. And also during speaking sessions, they will be arranged in groups of three or the whole class which they will be considerably free to form. However, I will try to put strong and weak students together so that they can benefit one from another. Finally, I will organize individual sessions or create an space in the platform to help students with the tasks or solve some doubts.

3.5.3. Teaching-learning activities

Bearing in mind that we are very likely to be working with *mixed-ability classes*, the methodology to follow will be based on offering my students the most varied and flexible possible tasks.

In this sense three types of activities will be developed:

- **A warm - up activity** which serves as motivation for the students and also to introduce the topic.
- **Controlled practice activities**, which allow an output on the part of the students but in a controlled way. Some grammar practice activities or grammar drills are examples of them.
- **Free practice activities**, which allow students to express themselves freely. Most of these practise activities will be guided and a model will always be provided in order to anticipate potential problems.

Apart from the previous considerations, The Common European Framework recommends the use of **integrating the skills**. Therefore, the contents included are aimed at achieving a balance of the four skills.

Students should use communicative strategies in a systematic and natural way, making effective the communicative acts carried out through the communicative skills. The developed skills would be: **productive** (speaking and writing) and **receptive** (listening and reading and also non-verbal code interpretation) and they will be based on interaction.

3.6. Procedures

SESSION 1 (See Appendix 1)		
Activity 1.1. Warm-up: complete the sentences with your first impression.		
Objectives: c, d, f, g	Contents: vocabulary about daily life, use of comprehension strategies and present simple.	
Timing: 15'	Skills: remembering // writing and reading	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students write sentences (<u>individually</u>) and share them in the forum with the rest of the students (<u>the whole class</u>).		
Activity 1.2. Pre-reading activity: How many daily routines do you know? Make a list in infinitive form.		
Objectives: d, g	Contents: Developing written expression and use of vocabulary associated to daily routines.	
Timing: 5'	Skills: identifying // writing	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom

Interaction pattern: students complete their list (<u>individually</u>) and upload it to the platform.		
Activity 1.3. While-reading activity: Read the text “My life in a pandemic” and answer the while-reading questions.		
Objectives: c	Contents: putting into practice habitual communicative strategies, understanding general information from reading comprehension of general vocabulary.	
Timing: 20’	Skills: identifying // reading	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students should read and understand the text (<u>individually</u>).		
Activity 1.4. Post-reading activity: First answer the questions and then think about the last questions.		
Objectives: d, g	Contents: Developing written expression, use of comprehension strategies and Reading and extract information from the text <i>My life in a pandemic</i> .	
Timing: 15’	Skills: identifying // writing	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students complete the questions (<u>individually</u>), upload them to the platform.		

SESSION 2 (See Appendix 2)		
Activity 2.1. Vocabulary: Match the words to the pictures.		
Objectives: c, f	Contents: increase of basic strategies to organise, acquire, remember and use lexis, vocabulary about daily routine and present simple.	
Timing: 5’	Skills: introducing // writing and reading	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students match the new vocabulary to the pictures (<u>individually</u>) and check it once completing the activity in the forum.		
Activity 2.2. Sports in quarantine. Watch the video of a sports’ instructor.		

Objectives: c	Contents: Listening to a speech and understand information about a Sports' instructor and use of comprehension strategies.	
Timing: 10'	Skills: listening and writing.	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students listen to the sport's instructor, watch the development of the class and answer the questions. Vocabulary problems can be solved in the forum.		
Activity 2.3. It's your time: You have become a sport freak in quarantine.		
Objectives: b, e, f, g	Contents: Producing intelligible oral text with logical and adequate structure, talking about one's abilities, development of communicative strategies and self-confidence, and the use and meaning of modal verbs to express ability.	
Timing: 10'	Skills: speaking	Materials: computer, internet and handy
Interaction pattern: students make a tic toc video (max. 2 minutes) doing some kind of sports at home and explain what they are doing (<u>individually</u>). Another option is to make a video with different pictures and put your voice on it. The video above is a guide on how a class could be carried out. Students can play football, dance, do yoga or zumba, etc. Finally, they upload it to the platform.		
Activity 2.4. Grammar: Present simple vs. present continuous.		
Objectives: c, f	Contents: Using basic structures and functions related to predicable everyday situations: Present simple and continuous with their temporal expressions.	
Timing: 30'	Skills: identifying // reading and writing	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: Students read the explanation about the grammar point (<u>individually</u>). Then they listen to sentences written in present simple or present continuous and circle the correct form of the tense in each sentence (<u>individually</u>). Finally, students put into correct order the tenses and write sentences using the appropriate tense (<u>individually</u>). Students upload both activities to the platform.		

SESSION 3 (See Appendix 3)		
Activity 3.1. Warm-up: Look at the following map of Europe. Can you find Ireland?		
Objectives: f	Contents: Development of intercultural skills and identification and respect towards this cultural aspects.	
Timing: 5'	Skills: introducing // reading	Materials: computer, internet, google classroom and zoom
Interaction pattern: students mark at the map where Ireland is (<u>individually</u>) and then talk about it in Zoom (<u>group work</u>).		
Activity 3.2. Culture spot.		
Objectives: b, e, f, g	Contents: Development of intercultural skills and identification and respect towards cultural aspects, development of communicative strategies and self-confidence, ability to use ICT to find information.	
Timing: 15'	Skills: speaking	Materials: computer, internet and zoom
Interaction pattern: Teacher creates Breakout rooms and students get in <u>groups of three</u> in order to speak about the sentences and questions of the culture spot (<u>group work</u>) and, finally, write in the chat the results (<u>individually</u>).		
Activity 3.3. Phonetics.		
Objectives: a, e	Contents: Getting familiar with the / ð/ sound.	
Timing: 5'	Skills: listening	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students listen to the pronunciation of these words and underline the sound (<u>individually</u>). Problems can be solved in the forum.		
Activity 3.4. A yummy meal.		
Objectives: a, b, e, g	Contents: Using basic functions and structures related to predicable everyday situations: Present simple and continuous with their temporal expressions, talking about a recipe, development of communicative strategies and self-confidence.	
Timing: 30'	Skills: speaking	Materials: computer, internet and handy

Interaction pattern: Students watch the video of Jamie Oliver making cupcakes (individually) and then record such a similar video of baking or cooking a yummy meal (individually). Finally, students upload it to the platform.

SESSION 4 (See Appendix 4)		
Activity 4.1. Meet the class		
Objectives: a, b, e, f	Contents: Putting into practice habitual communicative strategies, producing short, efficient oral texts and provide adequate answers.	
Timing: 15'	Skills: introducing // speaking	Materials: computer, internet and zoom
Interaction pattern: students and the teacher meet through Zoom and <u>the whole class</u> speak about problems, difficulties or other subject issues. The teacher has a PP with vocabulary from activities of this unit and grammar explanation in order to help students with difficulties. In the last minutes some students should summarize the discourse.		
Activity 4.2. Students' daily life in a pandemic		
Objectives: a, b, e, f	Contents: Talk about daily routine in the health pandemic, producing intelligible oral text with logical and adequate structure, talking about one's abilities.	
Timing: 15'	Skills: speaking	Materials: computer, internet and zoom
Interaction pattern: students and the teacher meet through Zoom, then, the first student forms a sentence about his or her daily life in a pandemic and the next student speaks about the action and then forms another sentence about his or her daily life in a pandemic. The next student repeats the same pattern without repeating the same daily life activity (<u>the whole class</u>).		
Activity 4.3. Grammar: Questions.		
Objectives: c, f	Contents: Using basic structures and functions related to predicable everyday situations: Present simple and continuous with their temporal expressions.	

Timing: 20'	Skills: identifying // reading and writing	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: Students read the explanation about the grammar point (<u>individually</u>). Then students match to each picture an answer (a-d) and provide questions for these answers (<u>individually</u>). Students provide questions and answers for the other three pictures (<u>individually</u>). Finally, students form questions choosing the issue from the box and answer them with their own information (<u>individually</u>). Students upload both activities to the platform.		
Activity 4.4. Phonetics: Question intonation		
Objectives: c, f	Contents: Acknowledgement and production of basic patterns of question intonation.	
Timing: 5'	Skills: identifying // listening and writing	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students look at the intonation squares and listen to the sound.		

SESSION 5 (See Appendix 5)		
Activity 5.1. Warm-up: Popular TV series		
Objectives: c	Contents: Understand specific information from written texts in digital format, identifying the structure of certain written texts.	
Timing: 20'	Skills: introducing // reading	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students read three texts about popular TV series, and then they match the description/title to each text (<u>individually</u>). The results could be found on the platform.		
Activity 5.2. Writing: My favourite Netflix series		
Objectives: c, d, e, f, g	Contents: Writing about one's favourite Netflix series, use of comprehension strategies.	
Timing: 35'	Skills: writing	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom

Interaction pattern: students write about their favourite Netflix series (individually) taking into account the previous activity. Students could choose other series programs if they do not have access to Netflix. Students upload it to the platform.

SESSION 6 (See Appendix 6)		
Activity 6.1. Unit test		
Objectives: h	Contents: Increase of basic strategies to organise, acquire, remember and use lexis and reflection upon the use and meaning of grammatical forms adequate to different communicative intentions.	
Timing: 35'	Skills: reading, writing	Materials: computer, internet, google classroom and kahoot
Interaction pattern: students complete (<u>individually</u>) the unit test with the kahoot tool and send the points obtained to the teacher. Students can get the test in a word document if they have some connection difficulties.		
Activity 6.2. Self-assessment		
Objectives: f	Contents: active participation in one's self-assessment procedure and self-assessment strategies and interest for getting profit of the learning opportunities.	
Timing: 20'	Skills: reading, writing	Materials: computer, internet and google classroom
Interaction pattern: students fill out the self-assessment paper about this unit.		

3.7. Evaluation

The assessment involves the necessity to measure whether the learning objectives have been achieved or not during the whole academic course. Therefore, it has to be based on specific objectives and what is to be evaluated using relevant assessment procedures; an aim which will involve diagnosis, monitoring progress and reflection on teaching styles and methods. We must take into account what (the didactic objectives of the units), when (at the

beginning, during the process and at the end) and how (through the observation, participation, activities and so on) to evaluate the teaching-learning process.

The evaluation must be individual, continuous and progressive. We will take into account the possible diversity found in the English subject and the students' needs. Each student will be evaluated from the very beginning of the didactic unit, to the end of it in a progressive way by means of the daily observation, the teacher checking their daily work, their participation and many other tools that will help the teacher in this essential process.

When evaluating, it is necessary to carry out several steps: continuous or formative assessment, and self-assessment. I will assess the students' progress at the end of every unit, in other words, I will carry out a formative evaluation. Within this process of evaluation, I will also take into account some other aspects such as homework, projects and attitude. We could also consider their progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing. By means of tests, I will assess the progress from one unit to the next one and their attitude towards the English language (summative evaluation). Self-assessment is a good manner to get the students aware of their own progress and of their own lacks or necessities too. By doing a self-assessment, they will be able to develop autonomy and responsibility over their own learning process. For that reason, at the end of every unit there is a self-assessment sheet that students should complete in order to check what they have learnt.

To pass the subject, students will be required to obtain a 50% of the global mark. For this didactic unit, the evaluation criteria are the following:

- Activities 60%,
- Unit test 30%
- Self-assessment 10%.

4. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the education systems all over the world and distance education has been the best option to continue with education and learning. We could appreciate that distance education presents some difficulties; however, in times of a health pandemic it is a useful approach that may improve the education system. Furthermore, this unprecedented pandemic has forced teachers to become familiar with the use of technology tools that they had never used before, and it seems that after the pandemic, technology is

going to acquire a much more important role in education, either as the main vehicle of education or as a complement to face-to-face teaching and learning.

The didactic unit described in this dissertation has been created to promote education and distance learning. We live in a knowledge society and everyone, teachers, parents, tutors and students, must be aware of this reality. It is the obligation and the right of teachers to be trained in the use of ICTs and to use them and encourage students to use them regularly, such as for example the educational platform proposed to be used in this didactic unit to support students' learning.

In the proposed didactic unit we have worked on motivation, trying to make the contents and activities attractive for them, since students are working from home and they have a lot of distraction there. Most of the activities have been designed considering the affective aspects of the learner, for example some of them have been adapted to the reality lived by students and to their daily life during the pandemic, trying to develop attitudes of reflection on this international crisis.

The design of the activities of this didactic unit has been influenced by the most representative methods of language teaching, in addition to the Communicative Approach. The communicative approach has been used to provide students with opportunities to communicate and report on their findings. This helps them monitor their learning, develop their English skills and get feedback from their teacher and other classroom mates.

There have been a big number of methods and approaches in language teaching, as we have tried to reflect in the second chapter of this dissertation. This could encourage us to ask ourselves the question of “what is the best method for an EFL distance class?” However, there is not one single best method and all of them seem to have contributed something to the field of L2 teaching. After having considered the benefits of the Communicate Approach in the theoretical review performed on methods of language teaching, it seems crucial to be able to integrate this methodology in distance education nowadays. Although this would have been impossible in the past, the state of development of ICT nowadays has demonstrated that distance education is not incompatible with the implementation of communicate language teaching, since internet apps such as Zoom, Skype, Google Classroom or Google Meet make synchronous communication possible and available for L2 learners at any scheduled time.

Although one of our main goals in foreign language lessons is to encourage students to communicate orally in the L2, we must also consider some other aspects such as discourse tools and textual typologies (among others) and put into practice the four skills (Reading,

Writing, Listening and Speaking) so that the final result is a balanced class. By promoting these skills, we are fostering our students' learning to learn competence, and their appreciation of language learning as a life-long endeavour, since everything they learn in our class could have a future use in other non-linguistic subjects that they might need to study in English in the future. A communicative lesson in distance learning nowadays can and must provide the necessary tools that can help the learners to acquire the complete and balanced communicative competence that they most probably are going to need as citizens of a global world.

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6. APPENDICES

6.1. Appendix 1: Session 1 of the Didactic Unit Proposal



WARM-UP (15')

1. Complete the sentences with your first impression and then share it in the forum.

Example: I cannot physically see my grandparents and I miss them a lot.

- a) I cannot go to school and I ...
- b) I cannot kiss or hug your friends or family members and I ...
- c) I have to stay at home and I ...
- d) I want to go on holidays but ...
- e) ...
- f) ...

♠ Pre-reading activities (5')

1. How many daily routines do you know? Make a list.



✓	_____
✓	_____
✓	_____
✓	_____
✓	_____

♠ While-reading activities (20')

2. Read the following text “My life in a pandemic”.
(adapted from: www.islcollective.com)



You can ask for and find vocabulary help in the forum.

Hi guys !My name is Steve, I am thirteen and I live in the suburbs of London in a small terraced house with my parents, Garrett and Kate and my two sisters. Ann is seven and my other little sister, Sue, is two. Mum stopped sending us to school a few days ago and the government decided to close all schools in the UK last Friday. But why? Well, like millions of people in the world, we should stay at home to help stop the transmission of the virus: the Covid -19 which attacks people’s lungs, also called Corona virus because it looks like a crown. It all started in a city in China, Wuhan, in December 2019 from some bats on a

market. Then, they decided a total confinement there, but people continued travelling and the virus affected the entire world. At first, we were asked to wash our hands regularly, to cough in our elbows and respect distances between people, but people didn't really realize the decisions, so in Europe the situation got terrible. First in Italy the government decided a confinement, and then in Spain, France etc. So now we must all stay at home, teachers send us work thanks to the internet, when it works !!!! Then we play games (video games or board games), we read, we watch Netflix or listen to music. I also do some sports to keep my body fit because my Mum cooks and bakes the whole day. Mum is working from home, but Dad has to go to work. He is a doctor in the Royal Brompton Hospital in London! He is getting very worried because he sees more and more ill people, and this illness is very dangerous for elderly and fragile ones. I am happy because we have a little garden, because staying all day at home can be horrible, especially when my little sister Sue starts crying. I can't imagine how people live in small flats in big buildings. But as Dad says, this is what we all have to do if we want to stop the transmission of that virus and save as many lives as possible. So take care of yourselves, family and friends!! And don't forget to thank doctors and nurses for all their work!!!!

3. Answer the questions during the reading.

1. What is the boy's name?
2. Who are the members of his family?
3. Where do they live?
4. Where is he staying now and why?

♠ Post-reading activities (15')

4. Answer the questions, and then think about the last two questions.

1. Where and when did the pandemic start?
2. Name three European countries affected?
3. What did people have to do at first?
4. What does the boy do at home?
5. How is the whole family feeling and why?
6. Do you feel the same as Steve?
7. In what ways can you help doctors and nurses to save lives?

6.2. Appendix 2: Session 2 of the Didactic Unit Proposal



VOCABULARY: Daily life (5')

1. Here you have 8 daily life situations. Find them and match them with the pictures.

watchingTVreadingabookhavingashowergetuphavinglunchcleanmyteethgotobedhavebreakfast

- Put in order the daily routines that you find. Can you add three more routines that you do every day? Express all actions in present simple.



1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

A)

B)

C)



LISTENING (25')

1. Watch the video of a sports' instructor. First, try to understand it and answer the questions. Finally, take it as a guide for the next activity.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8cexmYOknI>

1. Do you find the exercises difficult or easy? Why?
2. What do you think about the alternative exercise?
3. What do you think about the time to carry out each exercise? Is it too short or too long?
4. How many exercises are new for you?
5. How do you find the format of the video?

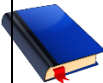
2. It's your turn: You are an instructor or a sport freak and you should make a tiktok video (max. 2 minutes) doing some kind of sports at home and explain what you are doing.

Another option: You can also make a picture video and put your voice on it.



GRAMMAR I (10')

Present Simple vs. Present Continuous

PRESENT SIMPLE vs. PRESENT CONTINUOUS	
✓ Habitual actions or actions repeated regularly  Example. I play tennis <u>every day</u>.	✓ Actions taking place at the moment. Example. I play tennis <u>every day</u> but <u>today</u> I am reading a book. 
PS time expressions	PC time expressions
➤ Every day → I go to school every day. ➤ Twice a week → I dance twice a week.	➤ Now → I am studying now. ➤ At the moment → I am studying at the moment. ➤ Today → Today I'm studying.
➤ And: every day, once a week, and twice a year.	➤ And: this morning/afternoon, this Evening/month, this week/month year.



LET'S PRACTISE! (15')

1. Listen and circle Present Simple or Present continuous.



Example. Chad watches / *is watching* TV every night, but tonight he is reading / *reads* a novel.

- a. Gabriella and Troy *study* / *are studying* English every day, but today they *are playing* / *play* computer games.
- b. Mr Bolton *is going* / *goes* to the gym every morning, but this morning he *does* / *is doing* shopping.
- c. Sharpay usually *studies* / *is studying* at home but today she *is studying* / *studies* in the library.
- d. Troy often *is taking* / *takes* the bus to school, but this afternoon he *is walking* / *walks*.
- e. Gabriella's father *is writing* / *writes* emails every day, but this week he *doesn't use* / *isn't using* the Internet.

2. Write the words in the correct order and make sentences.

Example. Are / in the kitchen / playing / the cats.

The cats are playing in the kitchen.

- a. I / every day / the bed / make.

- b. Watering / the plants / now / aren't / we.

- c. A book / is / reading / Paul.

- d. Have / at two o'clock / my sister and I / lunch.

6.3. Appendix 3: Session 3 of the Didactic Unit Proposal



WARM-UP (5')

1. Look at the following map of Europe. Can you find Ireland? We speak about it with the class in Zoom.



CULTURE SPOT (15')

Do you know that ...?

- ✓ *There is one hour less in Ireland compared to Spain*
- ✓ *Irish people speak Gaelige and English*
- ✓ *People drive on the left in Ireland*

Questions:

1. What is Ireland's typical music?
2. What is the weather like in Ireland?
3. Who is the most famous writer?
4. How much population is infected with COVID-19?

1. We are in Zoom and we build small groups of three and speak about the sentences and questions of the culture spot. What about Spain? Compare both countries. Please write on the chat the results.



PHONETICS (5')

Listen to the following words in google translate and underline the / ð / sound.

daughter

grandmother

teacher

father

grandfather

clever

➤ Now, listen and repeat.



RECORD A VIDEO:

FOOD IN BRITAIN

BEFORE YOU RECORD THE VIDEO (5')

1. Watch the video of Jamie Oliver making cupcakes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcOAv7T_dnM

AFTER YOU WATCH (25')

1. Record a similar video of baking or cooking a yummy meal.



6.4. Appendix 4: Session 4 of the Didactic Unit Proposal



WARM-UP (15')

1. Meet the class through Zoom and speak about problems, difficulties, doubts or other subject issues.

SPEAKING (15')



1. Form one sentence about your daily life in this health pandemic and the next classmate reacts to your statement and then he or she forms another sentence.

Example: At 7:30 I lie down on my yoga mat.



GRAMMAR II (10')

Questions

Who does John love? John loves Mary.	Who loves John? Sally loves John.
↓	↓
Object Question	Subject Question
• Auxiliary verb?	• Auxiliary verb?
YES	NO
• Word order?	• Word order?
Question word (Who)	<u>POSITIVE SENTENCE</u>
Auxiliary (does)	Question word (Who)
Subject (John)	Verb (loves)
Verb (love) ?	Object (John)

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

INTERROGATIVE FORM

Example:

Am I reading?
Are you reading?
Is he/she/it reading?

Are we reading?
Are you reading?
Are they reading?





LET'S PRACTISE! (10')

1. Read the information and match it to the pictures. Provide questions for the answers in a, b, c, d. There are 3 extra pictures. Then, provide questions and answers for the other 3 pictures.

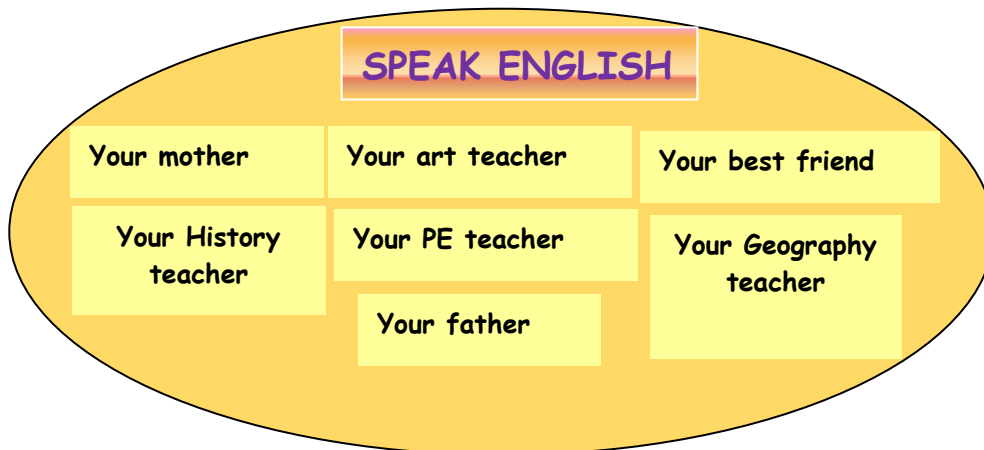
Ex: Is she wearing a red hat? No, she is wearing a black hat. **Picture 6**



- a. _____? No, he is playing football.
- b. _____? No, she is listening to music.
- c. _____? No, he is reading a book.
- d. _____? No, he is wearing a grey jacket.

2. Form questions with these words and answer them with your opinion.

Example: Are your mother cooking the dinner? Yes, she is making a pizza.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.



PHONETICS (5')

Question intonation

(source: <https://christinarebuffet.com/blog/intonation-exercises-english-1/>)

- Look at the explanation and listen to the pronunciation of the questions in google translate. Repeat the questions.

Rising intonation (for Yes/No questions)

In these sentences, the intonation **rises** at the end of the sentence. In other words, the last syllable sounds **higher**, and a bit louder. It shows that you're asking a question!

For example:

- “Can they finish the project in time?”
- “Is there a secret?”

Use the examples in the video lesson to practice your intonation with Yes/No question, by repeating after me!

The extra mile: in phonetics (and in music) a sound that's higher in pitch is also called **sharper**.

Rising and falling (for Wh- questions)

Here the intonation **rises** on the most important word in the sentence, and then **falls** at the end of the question.

For example:

- “*What* do you want?”
- “*Where* do you want to go?”
- “*Who* do I want to be in the world?”

6.5. Appendix 5: Session 5 of the Didactic Unit Proposal



WARM-UP (20')

1. Read the statements and match the description to them.

POPULAR TV SERIES

(adapted from: www.islcollective.com)

A.	‘Stranger Things’ is a story about a young boy who disappears, so his mother, a police chief and the boy’s friends want to find him. They meet a girl with strange powers who helps them to fight with a monster and you can be sure that it’s just the beginning of a bit scary film for teenagers.
B.	‘Sherlock’ is a TV series based on a story written by a Scottish writer, Arthur Conan Doyle and published for the first time in 1887. The main character, Sherlock Holmes is a British detective who lives in London at 221B Baker Street. He works with his best friend, doctor John Watson who helps him to find the criminals.
C.	‘The Vampire Diaries’ tells a story of the vampire brothers who try to have normal lives. They are very old but they look young so they must often change places to live. One of the brothers falls in love with a girl from school but she doesn’t know that her boyfriend and her best friend aren’t typical teenagers.

This TV series

6.1.	is a love story.	
6.2.	is based on a book.	
6.3.	is a horror story.	



WRITING (35')

Write about your favourite Netflix series taking as a guide the descriptive texts of the previous activity. Of course you could choose other series programs if you do not have access to Netflix.

6.6. Appendix 6: Session 6 of the Didactic Unit Proposal



TEST

1. Open Kahoot and sign up the access number that I share with you in the forum. The questions are about vocabulary and grammar points of this unit.

Vocabulary

Complete the sentences about daily life activities. Use the correct verbs.

1. I _____ after the lunch. It's usually French and maths.

- a) get dressed b) do homework c) go to work

2. They _____ in the school canteen at 13.00. Often I have pasta.

- a) have lunch b) have breakfast c) have dinner

3. We _____ after doing homework. We love The Simpsons.

- a) have a bath b) do homework c) watch TV

4. Sue _____ at 10.30 p.m. and sleeps for eight hours.

- a) wakes up b) sleeps c) goes to bed

5. David _____ at 7.30 a.m. and has a shower.

- a) wakes up b) sleeps c) goes to bed

6. They _____ at 7.30 p.m. Pizza is their favourite.

- a) have lunch b) have breakfast c) have dinner

7. I _____ by bus and say 'Bye!' to my mum.

- a) go to school b) go to the supermarket c) go to work

8. We _____ at 7.30 a.m. and we usually eat cereals and a toast.

- a) have lunch b) have breakfast c) have dinner

Watch Mr. Bean's video and mark what he is doing.

- a) He wakes up.
- b) He leaves the house.
- c) He has a shower.
- d) He brushes his teeth.
- e) He gets dressed.
- f) He has breakfast.

Grammar

Complete the sentences. Use the present simple form.

1. Susan _____ tennis on Fridays.
a) play b) plays c) do not play

2. Luke _____ his homework in his bedroom.
a) does b) do c) makes

3. Helen and Ian often _____ TV on Sundays.
a) watches b) watch c) watchs

4. I _____ late on Sundays.
a) wake up b) wakes up c) up wake

5. We _____ home after breakfast.
a) leaves b) leave c) does not leave

6. Pete _____ to bed at 11.15.
a) go b) gos c) goes

7. Jenny _____ chocolate.
a) eats b) eat c) do not eat

8. You _____ in Paris (France).

- a) live b) lives c) livs

Complete the sentences. Use the present simple or present continuous.

1. What is that noise? Somebody _____ the piano.

- a) is playing b) plays

2. We _____ to the cinema this Friday.

- a) are going b) go

3. We _____ on holiday every winter.

- a) are going b) go

4. The days _____ longer in summer.

- a) are b) are being

5. She often _____ to herself.

- a) is speaking b) speaks

6. She _____ a shower at the moment.

- a) is having b) has

7. Right now, she _____ down the hill.

- a) live b) lives

8. Oak trees _____ very slowly.

- a) grow b) are growing

Make questions using these words with the Present Continuous.

1. your father / work / now?

- a) are your father working now? b) is your father working now?

2. your teacher / wear / jeans?

- a) is your teacher wearing jeans? b) is your teacher wear jeans?

3. you / read / a book?

a) you are reading a book? b) are you reading a book?

4. your brother / study / now?

a) is your brother studying now? b) is your brother studiing ow?

5. you / dance / at the moment?

a) are you dancing at the moment? b) is you dancing at the moment?

Unscramble the questions.

1. do / Where / you / live?

a) Where do you live? b) Where you do live?

2. When / your / birthday/ is?

a) When your birthday is? b) When is your birthday?

3. got / you / have / What / your pencil case / in?

a) What have you got in your pencil case? b) What you have got in your pencil case?

4. How / you / often / tennis / do / play?

a) How do you often play tennis? b) How often do you play tennis?

5. your/name/What/is?

a) What your name is? b) What is your name?

6. do/friend/your/Where/live?

a) Where does your friend live? b) Where do your friend live?

2. Fill out the self-assessment.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

ACTIVITY		
I can understand English speakers talking about food and sports.		
I can read a text about daily life.		
I can distinguish and use the present simple and present continuous.		
I can use words about sports and daily routines.		
I can recognise the / ð / sound in words.		
I can recognise and produce the question intonation.		
I can speak about a normal week in my life during the COVID-19 pandemic.		
I can work in group with my friends in class		
I can work individually		

Vocabulary: I learnt _____ (number) new words in English in this unit.

1.	2.	3.	4.
5.	6.	7.	8.

Give yourself a score out of 10

10 = highest

0 = lowest

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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