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THE IMPACT OF TEACHER TRAINING ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE: PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

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ESPECIALIZACIÓN EN ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA, MODALIDAD EN LÍNEA

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Specialization in English Language Learning and Teaching (EEAILE)

The impact of teacher training on teaching performance:

Putting theory into practice with high school students

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Introduction

This paper is intended to present a progressive account of the process of constructing a teaching sequence that integrates all the contents that were covered throughout the *Especialización en Enseñanza de Inglés* course. The first part will lay out the author's teaching philosophy which will offer a picture of the principles that were the result of the merging of the work that was carried out in the course and the author's past ELT training and his experience in the area.

The second part describes the instruction sequence in two lesson plans that cover all activities and tasks as well as the materials and tools to be used. Some concepts related to language teaching approaches and methodologies will be defined and the rationale behind them and behind the type of teaching techniques and tasks that derive from them will be explained. There is also a comprehensive account of the assessment techniques to be applied for the four language skills, grammar and intercultural competence, which were covered along the two sessions of instruction.

The third part covers the application of the teaching sequence and an analysis of the results. A reflection will be made on the resulting experience of the application of the learning activities and tasks that were carried out during the two sessions of instruction and observations will be made with the aim of perfecting and enhancing one's teaching practice. The last part is a look back into the experience of having participated in the course and how it made an impact in the development of this final project.

Chapter 1. Teaching philosophy and theory

1.1 A personal teaching philosophy

The following is a succinct description the teaching philosophy of the author of this paper, which has been shaped along a career 17 years of teaching experience, and more recently, has benefited from and expanded as a result of the instruction received throughout this specialization.

1.2 Teaching is a life-long learning to teach process

Further proof of this is the fact that there was a first contact with a considerable number of views, aspects and techniques of language teaching and learning, such as Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model and experiential learning. Missing out teacher training experiences like this specialization only means many of these approaches would not have found their way into one's own practice, which in turn would make it more outdated, less effective towards new social and technological contexts and, in the worst case scenario, obsolete.

1.3 Learners are at the center of the teaching-learning process

This is where the author's teaching philosophy sees little change, but it is rather better founded. There are a number of approaches that converge in one's general philosophy of teaching, but when it comes to the understanding the identity and the role of the student some Natural Approach features surface, such as its emphasis on respect for learners as people, respect for learners' knowledge and independence, and on the fact that, apart from the cognitive nature of learning, there is an affective component (Hall 2011: 89-90). Learners are far from being just passive receivers of information and knowledge is not implanted into their brains. On the contrary, every individual actively engages in the process of learning and integrates knowledge purposefully into their realization of the self, to give shape to their values and beliefs, and to their stance to life as part of a community. This attests to the presence of the learner-center approach, which plays down "the all-knowing, authoritative role of the teacher and [gives] opportunities to students to participate in a classroom without fear of being scolded or belittled by the teacher" (Brown 2015 : 45)

1.4 The teacher is a facilitator of learning

For the teacher, being a facilitator of learning requires that they be trained professionals, experts in the subject matter, but also humanists who understand the many layers that make up a human being. Facilitating learning translates into a careful selection of methods, techniques and materials that best accommodate the wide range of preferences of students as well as assuming different teaching roles to foster students' motivation and self-confidence.
The purpose of language is for individuals to communicate competently in an intercultural setting

1.5 The purpose of language is for individuals to communicate competently in an intercultural setting

The complex human language system is proven to be a universal inbound cognitive capacity that feeds on input to develop (Harmer 2015: 42). This input comes in the form of language that, in and of itself, is "an explicit part of culture and it is also the medium for the transmission of culture" (Logan 2007: 245). Therefore, while the human being develops language, he is acquiring a codified set of knowledge, beliefs, traditions and values pertaining to the particular social group into which he is being integrated, and this in turn enables him to communicate ever more accurately with other members of that given social group in an increasing number of situations made up of variables that tend to evolve even as each speech exchange progresses (Hymes 1974 in Fasold & Connor-Linton 2006: 173).

It stands to reason that this communicative competence is expected to expand to enable equally successful and respectful exchanges with individuals of different cultures by means of a *lingua franca*, since, as Durham states (1991 in Logan 2007: 243), culture tends to be transmitted "within and between populations". Language learners then become cultural agents (Surkamp & Viebrock 2018: 163) that develop an intercultural communicative competence to aptly communicate beyond the reach of their own culture.

1.6 All approaches are conducive to language learning; none is in itself the best one

Although this statement may sound contradictory to the author's preference of humanistic and social approaches to teaching, it is plainly clear that all methods developed throughout the history of language teaching had in mind the betterment of human beings, each within the reach of their preferred philosophy. It is a fact that in one's teaching there is the ever-present

Communicative Approach because it emphasizes the involvement of the different skills of language for communication (Richards & Schmidt 2010: 98-99), and where in order to prompt communication, the teacher strives to provide students with meaningful and quasi-authentic context-based learning experiences. Yet a very important part of the author's philosophy is learning new methods and techniques while at the same time identifying when a traditional approach makes sense and its application favors learning. All this considered, regarding language learning, a case is made for a preference for the Eclectic Approach which The British council describes (The British Council: n.d.) as "a teacher's use of techniques and activities from a range of language teaching approaches and methodologies".

Chapter 2. Methodology and practice

2.1 Lesson planning: Context and objectives

The following are two lesson plans to be covered in two sessions of approximately two hours each. The lesson will be taught to six students of 15 to 17 years old who have just finished the fourth grade (first year) at *Escuela Nacional Preparatoria* 7. The two lessons will cover a selection of contents from Units 1 and 2 of the English V program and will serve as an introduction to the next school year. The units to be covered are basically a review of the Simple Present and the Simple Past tenses.

The objectives set for these sessions are as follows:

Lesson 1

Objective 1: Focus on reading

- Given a text about how Japanese secondary school works, students will be able to explain five incorrect statements, in their own words and with no mistakes.

Objective 2: Focus on writing

- Given a text about how Japanese secondary school works, students will be able to construct a similar text about Mexican secondary schools, with few spelling or word choice mistakes.

Lesson 2

Objective 1: Focus on listening

- Given a set of pictures, students will be able to reconstruct, in written form, information from an audio about education in ancient Greece.

Objective 2: Focus on speaking (pronunciation)

- Given a set of 15 regular verbs, the student will be able to pronounce correctly the three different sounds the *-ed* ending takes in the simple past form of regular verbs.

As required for this project, both sessions were recorded and the link to the file can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 Instruction modality and methodology for assessment

The approach to teach the two sessions that make up this project, that is four hours of instruction, is by means of setting the topic of school systems around the world, meaning this resulting instruction will be thematically organized, which according to Singer (1990 in Richards & Renandya 2002: 108), "is easier to remember and learn". Incidentally, this choice brings the lessons closer to the concepts of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Content-Based Instruction (CBI), and more specifically to the type whose focus is on language and where content is a means to facilitate language learning (Celce-Murcia *et al*. 2013: 51).

Throughout the two lessons, both language and content schema are presented through different channels and the tasks require that students use all four language skills. This makes for an integrated-skills approach, which is also consistent with CLIL and CBI methodologies (Oxford 2001: 9).

The structure of both lessons follows a pattern where a set of pre-tasks lead to a main task. The purpose of the pre-tasks for these lessons is, as Nunan (2003: 11) explains, "to create interest, help build students' schema in relation to the topic, introduce key vocabulary, revise a grammatical point, etc." The seven mains tasks in the two lessons are thought as assessment tasks, one per each language skill, two for grammar and one for intercultural competence.

Lessons are designed so comprehension always precedes production. In the first lesson, the main reading (assessment) task comes before the main writing task and in the second lesson, listening comes before speaking. Nunan (2015: 77-78) acknowledges this way of

grouping and sequencing instruction by mode (aural-visual) as an alternative to the traditional receptive-productive dichotomy and offers the following schematics to represent this:

	Productive	Receptive
Visual	Writing	Reading
Aural	Speaking	Listening

The grammar to be covered is a review of the form and functions of the simple present and simple past tenses, and it is necessary for accuracy purposes during each main task in each lesson. Grammar is presented as a result of the work the teacher has set up for students, thus it comes after work on visual and aural texts for comprehension and controlled production. Harmer (2015: 239) states that "grammar teaching may grow directly from the tasks the students are performing or have just performed as part of a focus-on-form approach", and Brown (2015: 469) identifies this inductive approach to grammar as a distinctive feature of task-based approaches. Therefore, the grammar instruction of these lessons is influenced by Task-Based principles.

As stated before, the content students will be exposed to revolves around the topic of schools and education, but as students are expected to further develop their language skills after these sessions, these contents are a step ahead of their current level of mastery. Teacher talk will primarily be in English, to add to the integration of this zone of proximal development (Gibbons, 2014: 24-25). Yet, in order to make this content (input) comprehensible, as Krashen suggests (Celce-Murcia *et al*. 2013: 38), it has to be contextualized. For that purpose, these are some of the teaching techniques and strategies that are to be followed, apart from building schemata, as suggested by Gibbons (2014: 25):

- Using practical demonstration
- Using familiar language
- Using the mother tongue
- Building talk on something the learners have experienced
- Using visual aids to illustrate complex ideas
- Linking the subject to what students already know
- Expressing the same idea in more than one way

2.3 Intercultural competence

Founding the two lessons on the topic of school and education in different countries serves two purposes. The first purpose is to help students activate previous knowledge and generate and strengthen schemata, which is expected to allow them to perform better during tasks. The second purpose is to pave the way for discussion and assessment of intercultural competence. For introducing and teaching culture, the technique of comparison was selected, which according to Reid (2015: 941), is one of the most used techniques. Having students read and hear about the features of education in different cultures is expected to provide opportunities for students to work on the two first dimensions of Byram's model of intercultural competence (Marques-Schaeffer *et al*. 2018: 149): fostering awareness of learners' own culture and knowledge about other cultures, and fostering the interpretation of other cultures.

2.4 Assessment: Overview

All assessment carried out during the two two-hour sessions that make up this project are formative. Surkamp & Viebrock (2018: 253) argue that most classroom-based assessment is formative and propose these characteristics:

- Formative assessment's aim is forming learners' competences
- It feeds back into teaching and learning
- It is informal
- It is ongoing
- It is embedded in classroom tasks

There was no place for summative assessment (evaluation) since the length of instruction and the scope was discrete, and the nature of the project that implies addressing all skills and the intercultural competences in a limited number of sessions would not make it possible for the teacher to provide students with a string of tasks that would justify evaluation.

It was decided that the most appropriate time for assessing productive skills was the last part of each session, since the practice of grammar, vocabulary and the receptive skills would provide enough schemata and linguistic knowledge for students to apply during assessment.

For all skills and dimensions of language that were assessed during the four-hour instruction, feedback was done by means of oral and written comments and it mostly provided

praise for the students' work and comments on their performance, along with suggestions for correction and improvement.

2.4.1 Assessment of grammar in sessions 1 and 2

During the two sessions, the grammar that was covered consisted of a review of the simple present and simple past tenses. As students had been taught both tenses extensively in the school year (which had already ended by the time this project was carried out), it was decided that the assessment of grammar in the two lessons would focus on knowledge of the most prominent morphosyntactic features of both tenses, since empirical observation indicates that students that graduate from fourth grade and pass through fifth and sixth year of high school have trouble recalling this specific area of grammatical knowledge concerning these two tenses.

This is important to tackle given that, according to Purpura (2004: 94), morphosyntax provides meaning to inflections such as aspect and time, from derivations such as negation and agency, and meaning from syntax. Moreover, it also helps to encode pragmatic meanings. Therefore, plenty of meaning is obtained through the processing of morphosyntactic elements in texts, and lacking in this skill would affect comprehension in the coming activities that require the processing of written and oral texts.

For the first grammar task used for assessment, students were asked to use the appropriate form of the verbs in the simple present (conjugation or negative form) to complete a gapped interactive text. The tool used for the assessment of these morphosyntactic features was designed with an online Computer-Assisted Language Testing (CALT) tool named *LearningApps* (Appendix 2). CALT is defined by Noijons (1994 in Pathan 2012: 31) as "an integrated procedure in which language performance is elicited and assessed with the help of a computer".

Assessment was provided by the application itself which marked correct responses in green and incorrect responses in red (Appendix 3). A second moment of assessment consisted of the teacher asking direct questions to students so they explained the mistakes in terms of the grammar rules they failed to apply. For this second assessment, the teacher provided students with verbal feedback focusing on praising the learners for their correct answers and encouraging them to practice more to correct their mistakes.

For the assessment of the morphosyntax of the simple past, an interactive chart designed with Google Docs was shared with students for sentence transformation where they

had to change affirmative sentences into negative sentences and questions (Appendix 4). On-the-run assessment was used during students' performance on this task. This type of assessment is described by McKay (2006: 157) as taking place "as teaching and learning proceeds" and in which the teacher intervenes by "questioning, seeking clarification and pushing some language learners forward in their understanding and language learning". This meant that students were observed, assessed and given feedback as they carried out the task.

2.4.2 Assessment of reading

All along session one, students were presented with contextualized content, a group of words and grammar samples that were expected to help them build knowledge that in turn would allow the learners to perform well during the assessment of the reading skill. All these contents were introduced through a number of activities that required that students reflect on information they read and listened to, the aim of which was to strengthen their schemata on the subject the lesson was based on, as well as their linguistic competence, so that the student could focus on meaning.

The assessment tool selected for reading was short-answer questions. Nuttall (1996: 188) identifies these as "questions of literal comprehension", and while they can simply be answered by referring to exact words or phrases from the text, a variation was used for this assessment. Instead of questions, students are introduced to a series of false statements that have to be corrected. And instead of students writing a short answer, they are expected to verbally explain their answers.

Students were given the option to answer the questions in L1 or L2.

The instructions are meant for students to follow the process below.

Pre-reading

- Students read to get acquainted with the text *Typical school life in Japan* (Appendix 5).
- Students discuss meaning with their classmates.

While reading

- Students read and understand the false statements.
- Students scan for the specific information that proves the statements are false.

After-reading

- Students explain why each statement is false by referring to the actual information from the text.

The nature of the previous process requires that the students activate certain skills to deal with it, but one specific macroskill can account for the all the work involved. From the set of reading macroskills Brown proposes (2003: 188), macroskill number 14 is described as the capacity to "develop and use a battery of reading strategies, such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from context, and activating schemata for the interpretation of texts."

The process' expected outcome is that students show comprehension by explaining their conclusions which they are able to found on and cite from the text (Appendix 6).

2.4.3 Assessment of writing

Assessment of writing came after the main reading activity of the session and it was connected to it. Weigle (2002: 94-95) mentions reading passages as one of the main prompts for written tasks, and she makes the case by saying that a reading text provides:

> …common basis of information for all test takers to draw upon so that they are not hindered by trying to come up with what to say. Providing even a short reading on a topic may serve to activate the writer's background knowledge and schemata and make it easier for them to find something to say.

In fact, for the task at hand, the reading text was a template on which students had to write information to make it match a different reality. It worked as a completion task in the sense Brown describes (1993: 223), and where learners read prompts such as name, address or phone number in order to write the corresponding information. In this assessment task, students were given a table with two columns; on the left column there was a transcription of the text from the reading assessment and the column on the right was empty. Students followed these instructions:

- Read the text 'Typical school life in Japan' to identify and highlight information that does not correspond to the typical life in Mexico.

- Transcribe (copy-paste) all information that you do not need to modify into the column on the right.
- Complete the resulting text on the right, writing the information that corresponds to the typical school life in Mexico according to your experience.

In this task, the prompts given were pieces of information that were the same for both the Japanese and the Mexican context. Once students found information that did not correspond to the Mexican experience, they were prompted to write the correct information. This type of task demands that students activate writing microskills 3 and 4 which Brown (*Ibid*: 221) defines like this:

- Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.
- Use acceptable grammatical systems, patterns and rules.

As such, assessment focused on accuracy, meaning the information provided by students had to be spelled correctly and be grammatically consistent. Feedback was provided in two moments. The first feedback was delivered after the first paragraph was completed, the second one was provided after students submitted their final version. Feedback consisted of giving praise for correct answers and the invitation of students to observe their mistakes and correct them (Appendix 7).

2.4.4 Assessment of intercultural competence

The intercultural subject was introduced from the very beginning of the first session and it was assessed at the end of it, though the subject was addressed during the second session. Assessment of intercultural competence is difficult and cannot be measured easily due to the nature of constructs such as attitudes, values and stereotypes, which cannot be expected to be adjusted or changed in two sessions of two hours each (Surkamp & Viebrock 2018: 165), where focus switches to other competences, mainly linguistic and pragmatic ones.

However, an attempt was made for intercultural assessment to focus on the cognitive and affective levels of the intercultural competence, according to Byram's model (Marques-Schäfer *et al* 2018: 149), that is, students were expected to show

- that they are able to learn new information about other cultures (*savoir comprendre*), and
- their attitudes toward other cultures (*savoir être*)

In order to assess these, open questions were asked as a technique for students to show evidence of their beliefs, values or preconceived ideas.

For the two dimensions above, the base questions and the follow-up questions were devised as follows:

- For the *savoir comprendre* dimension, a simplified version of the question *What are the salient features of education in Finland, the USA and Japan?* was asked.
- For the *savoir être* dimension, the questions posed revolved around this question: *What elements of education in Mexico make our school system stand out?*

Students were asked to answer the questions in Spanish. The use of L1 for discussion of the intercultural topic of school systems around the world responds to the need to guide students to a non-stereotypical interpretation of other cultural behaviors where students' proficiency in the L2 doesn't allow for a sustained and meaningful exchange of ideas (Pan & Pan 2011: 93) .

Feedback consisted of the teacher praising students' correct answers to the first question and acknowledging students' reflection on their own education system (Appendix 8).

2.4.5 Assessment of listening

For the assessment of the listening skill in this session students had to fill in a chart with information from the text. The expected outcome from students is that they show comprehension by choosing a visual representation of their understanding and selecting a visual representation of their reasoning.

The type of listening the student is expected to perform is selective listening, which is described as one where the learner "listens to a limited quantity of aural input and must discern within it some specific information" (Brown 1993: 126). The assessment technique chosen was information transfer, which requires that "aural information must be transferred to a visual representation" (*Ibid*: 127). An important characteristic of this task is that it presents picture-cued items, which according to Brown (*Ibid*: 127), works as a reliable rubric to assess comprehension.

However, the students also needed to explain the rationale behind their selection, which makes the task twofold, so students are expected to:

- Discriminate and choose three images, from a selection of five, that represent specific information from the text
- Explain their selection by recalling and writing the information from the text for each picture

Feedback was provided through written comments on the final product (Appendix 9).

2.4.6 Assessment of speaking

The speaking part of session two focused on a segmental feature of spoken language, namely the pronunciation of the *-ed* ending for regular verbs conjugated in the past tense. The aim of instruction was discrete but at the same time it targeted one of the most difficult elements basic students struggle with when working with the past simple tense.

Celce-Murcia (1996: 8) states that "intelligible pronunciation is one of the necessary components of oral communication". Problems with the pronunciation of some segmental phonemes can cause misunderstandings. Regarding the pronunciation of the past simple form of regular verbs, failing to pronounce *-ed* correctly may lead listeners to understand information in the simple present, especially when there is not much context. According to Celce-Murcia (*Ibid*: 131) such "incidents involving mispronunciation of a segmental sound usually lead to minor repairable misunderstandings".

Therefore, assessment focused on speaking microskill 1 according to Brown (1996: 142) which reads:

- Produce differences among English phonemes and allophonic variants.

After reviewing the pronunciation rules for the *-ed* ending of regular verbs in the past simple tense, students were asked to record themselves reading a list of sentences related to education in ancient Greece. All sentences contained a regular verb conjugated in the simple past and students were told to pay special attention and be aware of them when pronouncing the whole sentences.

The suggested tool that was used for recording was the online application *Vocaroo*, though students were given the option to use their cellphone or other devices. The recording was to be uploaded to a students' folder to be assessed (Appendix 10). Feedback was provided as a recorded message where the teacher praised students' work and, if necessary, modeled

the correct pronunciation and suggested that students make another recording, if they wanted (Appendix 11).

2.5 Lesson plan 1

This is the lesson plan for the first session.

Activity 1 - Listening	
Time **10 minutes** **Materials** audio **Strategy** group work	T will spell five different school subjects. Ss will write them down and the teacher will tell students to define the semantic field wherein the words belong. ***history*, *chemistry*, *geography*, *science*, *ethical education*** T will challenge Ss with three more words, this time Ss will not write them down but picture them in their minds as they listen to every letter. After the first vocabulary is presented, T shows five pictures that represent school subjects and asks Ss to say the subjects they represent. T will ask for more subjects from their secondary or high school lessons, they can name them in Spanish or English. T will show students the subjects that make up the secondary and high school curriculum. T will lead students into pronouncing every subject correctly.

Activity 2 - Follow-up discussion	

Time **10 minutes** **Materials** audio **Strategy** group work	T explains to Ss the two types of instruction, face-to-face and distance learning (Appendix 12), and then asks questions for them to give their opinions. The questions are in English but Ss can answer in Spanish. *What are the advantages?* *Which one do you prefer?* *Is it easy to take all your school subjects on distance learning?*

Activity 3 - Listening follow-up	
Time **5 minutes** **Materials** audio	T will ask Ss to listen to two recordings of two students talking about their favorite subjects. Ss have to pay attention and raise their hands to say the subjects each speaker mentions. **Student 1: science, English and P.E.** **Student 2: math, science and computing**

Strategy group work	

Activity 4 - Writing	
Time **10 minutes** **Materials** notebooks **Strategy** group work	T asks Ss to write their two favorite subjects in their notebooks. T asks Ss to share their favorite subjects. T asks students to think of and write **two things they do in a class of any of their two favorite subjects**. The teacher will show some examples and prompt phrases for students to follow. *In theater class, we learn how to speak to an audience.* *In theater class, the teacher presents techniques to control your breath.* *In theater class, you practice to learn and remember lines.* Then the teacher will give students **3 minutes** to write their sentences.

Activity 5 - Grammar review (simple present)

Time **15 minutes** **Materials** notebooks **Strategy** group work	T asks Ss to share their favorite subject (the one they chose for their sentences) and one sentence that describes what they do in their favorite subject class. Once they finish, T asks students to underline the verb they used in each sentence**.** T will ask Ss to share some of their sentences on the chat and he will copy some of them into the presentation to explain the use and the structure of the simple present.

Activity 5 - Grammar exercise	
Time **10 minutes** **Materials** notebooks texts	T asks students to complete the information about education in different countries in three gapped texts. Students will use the verbs in brackets in affirmative and negative forms. T will ask Ss to read the texts along with their answers and he will make comments and corrections when needed. T will ask Ss questions for them to share what they understood from the texts. Ss can answer in Spanish. Gapped text 1 *Many of the best universities **are** in the United States. The USA **has** the first, second, third and fourth best universities and it **has** 15 of the 20 best universities in the world. However, all these top*

bilingual dictionaries (if necessary) **Strategy** group work	*universities **aren't** public and students **pay** around 100,000 dollars (more than 2 million pesos) for a full university course.* Gapped text 2 *Finland **doesn't have** private schools. The Finnish government **funds** all schools and universities so they **are** public and free. Despite that, Finland **has** one of the best education systems around the world. Furthermore, pre-primary, primary, secondary and high school students **don't pay** for food because schools **give** them free meals and snacks.*

Activity 6 - Reading assessment	
Time **15 minutes** **Materials** notebooks texts bilingual dictionaries (if necessary)	T tells students they are going to learn about another school system. Ss are given a link to the text "School life in Japan" (Appendix 5). T gives Ss four minutes to read the text. T makes teams for students to exchange information of what they understand from the text. T gives students three minutes to talk about the contents of the text. T asks students to discuss the text following the order of the paragraphs. When Ss finish their exchange, T shows S five incorrect statements about the reading and gives them five minutes to work individually to identify the incorrect data and to provide data from the text that proves the statements are incorrect. T sends every S to a break room and moves from one break room to another to monitor. 1. *Secondary students in Japan spend around 6 hours at school every day.* 2. *In Japanese secondary schools, students take lessons in different classrooms.*

Strategy teams in breakout rooms	3. *At the end of each lesson, Japanese secondary students take five minutes to have a snack.* 4. *In secondary school, Japanese students eat their lunch at the school lunch room.* 5. *When students finish their lessons, they leave the classroom and go home.* Then T makes Ss work in pairs to discuss their answers and correct them if necessary. Back in the main room, T asks Ss for volunteers to share their answers and makes other students participate to correct wrong answers. The teacher closes the reading part by asking Ss the following questions: *Was the text difficult to understand?* *Were you able to answer all questions correctly?* *Do you think you did well in the activity?*

Activity 7 – Writing assessment	
Time **20 minutes**	T leads Ss to discuss the differences between what they read about Japanese secondary school and Mexican secondary school and tells them that they are going to change the original text about Japan so it fits Mexican secondary schools. T shows the first paragraph as an example and then explains to students how they can use what they read as a basis for what they want to write.

Materials notebooks link to Google Doc **Strategy** pairwork	*Mexican secondary students study typical subjects – maths, English, history, biology, chemistry, PE. A student normally studies about twelve subjects. Students start their first class at eight for morning lessons and at one thirty for afternoon lessons.* T shares a link to a Google Doc, where students will make the adaptation of the text. T will divide the work so pairs of students work on different paragraphs for about 10 minutes. T will send every pair of Ss to different break rooms for them to work together. T will monitor Ss and will give advice when necessary. When Ss finish, T gives every group two minutes to explain their modifications. T ask Ss if they have any comments. After Ss show their modifications T tells them they will have to make modify paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 individually for homework. T will use the final modification as assessment. T finishes the activity by reminding students that much of what they learn to write is what they read, and to use reading as a strategy to learn writing. T ask Ss to value the fact that they learned new things about other cultures by using English.

Activity 8 - Intercultural reflection	
Time **5 minutes**	T closes the session by asking Ss to volunteer and say what they remember about schools in the USA, Finland and Japan. Ss can explain themselves in Spanish. T will give Ss three minutes to reflect on the following questions and write their answers on their notebooks.

Materials notebooks link to Google Doc **Strategy** group work	1. *What do you like about the three school systems seen in class?* 2. *What don't you like about them?* 3. *Can you think of a good characteristic of school in Mexico that you would like to share with other countries?* T will Ss students to share with the class their answers. T will ask Ss to comment on their classmate's answers. T will make sure Ss exchange their opinions respectfully. T will ask Ss to take a picture of their written answers and upload it onto their folder.

2.6 Lesson plan 2

This is the lesson plan for the second session.

Activity 1 - Recall information about last session	
Time **5minutes** **Materials** none **Strategy**	T asks Ss what they remember about last session using questions like these: *What was the last lesson about?* *What did you learn?* *Do you remember something particular that you didn't know before?*

group work	

Activity 2 - Vocabulary presentation	
Time **5 minutes** **Materials** notebooks **Strategy** group work	T introduces the word *facilities* to Ss and tells them to pay attention to the slide he is presenting. Ss read the names of different facilities and T asks them if they understand the words. T explains those words they don't understand. ***school facilities*** ***lunch room*** ***sports field*** ***gym*** ***library*** ***classroom*** ***games room*** ***bedroom*** ***kitchen*** ***bathroom*** ***shower***

Activity 3 - Listening

Time **10 minutes** **Materials** audio **Strategy** group work	T asks Ss to decide if all the facilities in the list are real *school facilities*. He asks the following questions: *Does your secondary school have these facilities?* *Are all these facilities really part of a school?* T asks for comments, then he tells Ss they will listen to a girl describing her school (Appendix 13). T asks Ss to listen once and pay attention to what the girl is talking about. Then T plays the audio again and asks Ss to name the picture on the screen the girl is talking about (Appendix 14). For each answer, T will asks Ss to explain their choice. T asks the following questions: *These are pictures of Alice's boarding school.* *Did you pay attention?* *This is the room where she sleeps.* *Does she sleep alone?* *Do you remember?* T explains what a boarding school is and asks Ss if they think there are boarding schools in Mexico.

Activity 4 - Grammar review	
	T leads Ss to imagine how they think schools were in the past for their parents and grandparents. He asks questions like:

Time **15 minutes** **Materials** notebooks **Strategy** group work	*Do you talk with your parents and grandparents about their schools and their school life?* Ss can answer in Spanish. T plays sentences and then asks Ss to decide if the information is about the present or the past. After each sentence, T asks Ss to explain their decision. 1. *Many schoolhouses had only one classroom. Students of all ages learned together.* 2. *Most school buildings have many classrooms. Students in each class are about the same age.* 3. *Students listened carefully to a phonograph. That is a machine that plays recordings.* 4. *Students use computers during lessons. They wear headphones to listen and learn.* 5. *Students raised their hands to answer questions. The teacher called on students to respond.* 6. *Students still raise their hands to answer questions. That is one way school has not changed.* Once all the sentences are played. T shows the whole table to Ss and then reviews the simple past with Ss. T explains the use and structure of the simple past.

Activity 5 - Grammar practice (regular verbs conjugation)	
	T explains the difficulties of the simple past that are mostly in remembering how to conjugate irregular and regular verbs. T

Time **10 minutes** **Materials** notebooks **Strategy** group work	then tells Ss that they need to know how to conjugate regular verbs, so he gives a conjugation rule to each S to read. T gives 2 minutes for Ss to read and then he asks each one to explain the rule. T presents Ss with a list of regular verbs and asks Ss to organize them in groups according to the rules they presented and that are shown on the screen. Teacher corrects mistakes and makes sure everyone understands the rules. T tells Ss that for irregular verbs it's a little more difficult because they have to be memorized and shares with them a list of irregular verbs for them to practice.

Activity 5 - Grammar practice	
Time **10 minutes** **Materials** notebooks bilingual dictionaries (if necessary)	T asks Ss to use the information on how to make sentences in past simple and how to conjugate the regular and irregular verbs to correct sentences about Irish schools in the past by changing them into affirmative and negative sentences. T helps Ss correct their mistakes. 1. *Classes were small in Irish schools*. (negative) 2. *Parents didn't pay for their children's education*. (affirmative) 3. *Boys and girls went to the same school.* (negative) 4. *Boys and girls studied the same subjects.* (negative) 5. *Teachers didn't hit students to correct their mistakes.* (affirmative) 6. *Latin and Greek weren't important subjects.* (affirmative) When they finish, T asks Ss to change all sentences into Yes/No questions and to write the corresponding short answers in front

Strategy group work	of each one. Ss will use the sentences they corrected in the second to last exercise. T checks for mistakes. T checks for questions about the structure of the simple past and clarifies when necessary.

Activity 6 - Pre-listening	
Time **10 minutes** **Materials** notebooks audio verb lists bilingual dictionaries (if necessary) **Strategy** group work	T plays a dictation exercise to students where they will listen to a list of 10 verbs in infinitive form. Ss take notes and then T shows the verbs on a slide along with it . T asks Ss to say how they know whether they are regular or irregular verbs. Ss may remember what they did in the previous activity, then T tells Ss they can consult the list of irregular verbs he shared with them. T asks Ss to conjugate the verbs accordingly and then he checks their meaning with Ss. *be, stay, help, have, start, study, use, learn, say, memorize, go, call, wrestle, fight, prepare* T tells Ss they are going to listen to an audio about ancient Greece (Appendix 15) and tells them to pay attention to each paragraph. T will play and then Ss will mark every verb from the list with the number of the paragraph where the verb is used (1, 2 and 3). T checks for the answers.

Activity 7 - Listening assessment	
Time **10 minutes** **Materials** notebooks audio link to presentation **Strategy** pairwork	T tells Ss they will listen to the audio again and explains the procedure for the listening activity. ● T will give Ss a link to a Drive presentation where they will access an assortment of pictures related to the listening “Education in ancient Greece” (Appendix 6). ● Ss will listen to the audio and then will drag the pictures under the correct label (boys, girls) according to what they understand. ● Ss will have to select only three pictures that better represent what they understand. ● Then Ss will write information about education for girls and boys in ancient Greece according to what they heard in the audio. Ss will use the pictures they chose as prompts for their sentences. Their sentences can be in English or Spanish. ● T will show an example. T checks for mistakes and leads Ss to correct them. T makes comments about school in the past and the present and then moves to the last part of the lesson.

Activity 8 - Pronunciation practice	
Time	T presents a list of regular verbs to Ss and explains the pronunciation of the -ed ending (/t/, /d/ and /id/). /t/ /d/ /id/

8 minutes	ask	smile	collect
	shop	join	decide
Materials	pass	rain	insist
notebooks	fix	carry	include
	watch	order	predict
Strategy	T models pronunciation and then asks Ss to practice with the group of verbs		
breakout rooms on Zoom	T separates each S into a breakout room to practice their pronunciation. Teacher monitors and helps each S.		

Activity 9 - Pronunciation assessment	
Time **8 minutes** **Materials** notebooks Vocaroo (app or site)	When the students have finished, T will share a group of sentences taken from the previous listening and will ask Ss to practice the pronunciation focusing on the regular verbs. T asks Ss to identify the pronunciation of –ed for the verbs in the sentences. 1. *Boys stayed at home when they were young.* 2. *Boys helped their parents work.* 3. *At age six or seven, boys started school.* 4. *Boys studied philosophy.* 5. *Girls stayed at home.* 6. *Girls learned from their mothers.* 7. *In Sparta, girls trained to join the army.*

Strategy group work	8. *In Sparta, girls learned to fight.* Ss will practice reading the sentences out loud and T will help with corrections. When time is over T will show Ss how to record themselves using the Vocaroo app / site. Ss will try individually a first recording to check they understand how to record themselves and how to save or share their recordings. When they finish, Ss will share their recording into their Drive folder with the name *My first recording*. T explains to Ss their homework: 1. Ss will listen to the original recording about school in ancient Greece. 2. Ss will listen to their first recording to check for mistakes and to see where they need to improve. 3. Ss practice reading the sentences and then record a final audio with their best pronunciation. 4. Ss save their corrected recording into their Drive folder with the name *My final recording*. 5. Teacher will send each student an audio with feedback on their recordings and advice on how to improve them.

Activity 10 - Closure	
Time **8 minutes**	T finishes the lesson by doing a recap of what they did during the two sessions.

Materials notebooks **Strategy** group work	T invites Ss to ask any questions or make comments about the two sessions. T thanks Ss for their participation and reminds them their next session is next Thursday

Chapter 3. Experience report

In general terms, the lessons progressed smoothly. As explained in the first section of this paper, six students accepted the invitation to this course (which was devised and carried out after the school year had finished), yet only three of the showed up for the two sessions. While activities were designed so as to have pairwork at some point during lessons, the limited number of students only required minor reconfigurations of tasks, though it did reduce the possibility of having students cooperating and peer-assessing.

Students did not respond too well to long stretches of English and when prompted to participate they took their time, but it can be assumed that, even though they were reminded they could ask for repetition or clarification at all times, they didn't feel confident enough so as to interrupt the lesson. This can also be due to the conditions under which the experience developed, meaning participants had already finished the school year, they had never worked with this particular teacher nor with these particular classmates, and there having been only two sessions, there was not enough time to establish an atmosphere more conducive to cooperation and participation.

This makes for a criticism of group management, since although it was clear from the beginning who the participants would be, the planning did not include activities to break the ice and establish rapport with students. In any case, rephrasing and switching to Spanish as last resorts worked fine: students' engaged better and their contributions were sufficiently honest and on point. Nonetheless, it was unavoidable that lessons extended some extra minutes, which is however a common occurrence that has been observed for online lessons.

Notwithstanding these issues, the use of slides for integrating the presentation of visual and aural content and aids as well as to organize the sequence of teaching techniques and learning tasks was of the utmost value. Other applications used during the tasks, such as Google Drive and LearningApps, were also of much help and made it possible that activities students usually do on face-to-face lessons could be replicated with similar results.

It transpired that students showed a different balance in the mastery of the skills to the one expected. Students responded very well to listening and reading and were able to grasp much of the information they were presented with, plus they were able to carry out the assessment tasks with good results. Conversely, students could have benefited more from a focus on productive skills, yet the need to cover the four skills during similar stretches of time as laid out in the framework for this project constituted a time constraint that had to be taken into account from the very beginning.

In hindsight, discussions on the cultural topic selected for these instructional sequences provided the best chances for students to speak their mind, provide evidence of intake and output, as the evidence shows that the students were able to successfully work with the activities given, and in spite of their rather limited mastery of the language, their comprehension made up for whatever lack of vocabulary or grammar they might have. They were able to internalize the content and then use it to answer the activities, while making a comparison between their own culture and that of other countries in the process, albeit in their mother tongue.

Chapter 4 Conclusions

This specialization course provided new insights into the fundamentals of language teaching. The has been an exploration of the philosophical and psychological breakthroughs along history that eventually were expanded so as to cover the nature of the learning process as a feature unique to the human mind, and from there to the construction of teaching approaches that responded to the historical circumstances of the human being.

The course took the participants through an introduction, followed by in-depth considerations, of the study of language, of communication and of their components, and many of the most relevant methodologies for teaching languages have been presented along with their most recognizable features and techniques as well as samples of their application.

The project presented in this paper gives an account of the use of a selection of principles, approaches, methodologies and techniques that were covered both to design and apply an instructional sequence with high school students. The results of such application were analyzed and discussed and a reflection was offered as to how the participation in this course helped in shaping teaching and how successful the outcomes were.

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Appendices

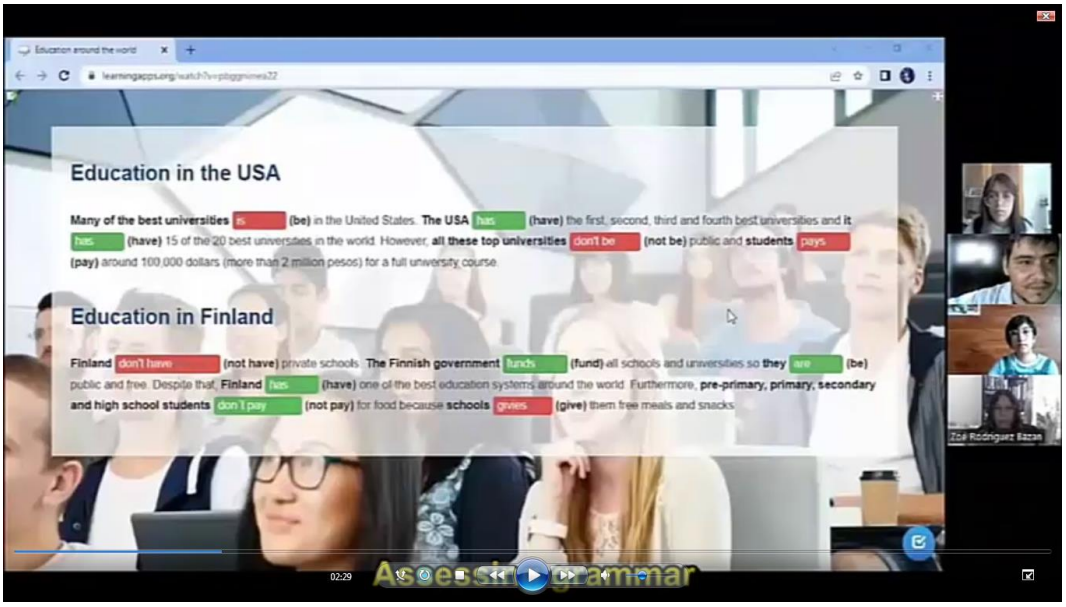
Appendix 1. Recording of the sessions

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RdFtYJNDnLS1tWgQQ38a9KbS-N1w9fXg/view?usp=sharing

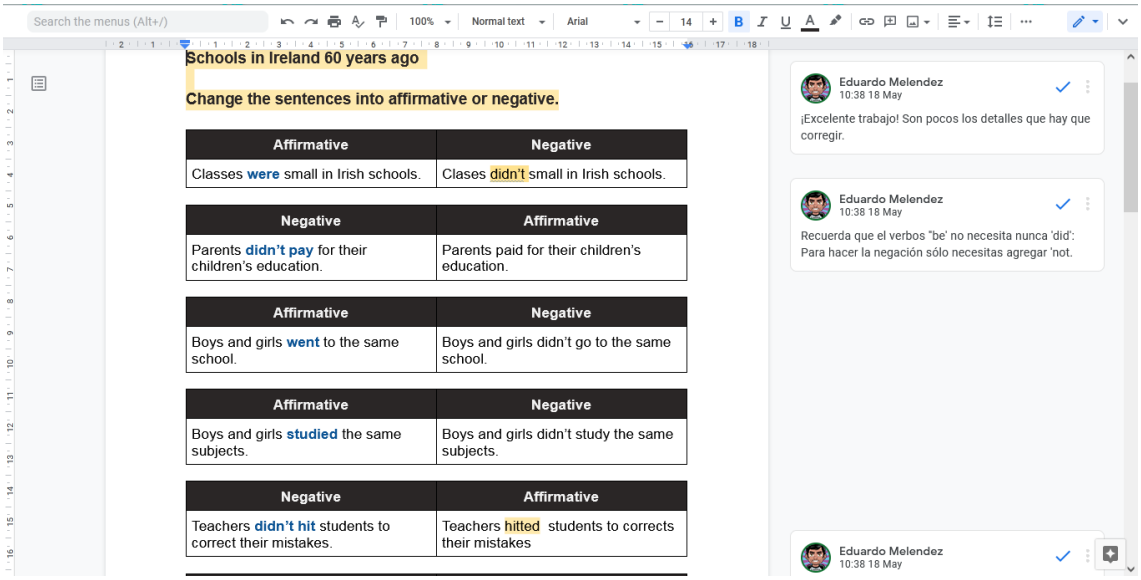
Appendix 2. This LearningApps activity was designed by the teacher and can be found on

https://learningapps.org/watch?v=pbggnimea22

Appendix 3. Screen capture of the assessment of grammar. The oral feedback can be watched on the attached video from minute 2:28.



Appendix 4 Assessment tool. Sample answered by student. Teacher feedback can be seen on the right.



Schools in Ireland 60 years ago

Change the sentences into affirmative or negative.

Affirmative	Negative
Classes **were** small in Irish schools.	Clases didn't small in Irish schools.

Negative	Affirmative
Parents **didn't pay** for their children's education.	Parents paid for their children's education.

Affirmative	Negative
Boys and girls **went** to the same school.	Boys and girls didn't go to the same school.

Affirmative	Negative
Boys and girls **studied** the same subjects.	Boys and girls didn't study the same subjects.

Negative	Affirmative
Teachers **didn't hit** students to correct their mistakes.	Teachers hitted students to corrects their mistakes

Eduardo Melendez
10:38 18 May
¡Excelente trabajo! Son pocos los detalles que hay que corregir.

Eduardo Melendez
10:38 18 May
Recuerda que el verbos "be' no necesita nunca 'did': Para hacer la negación sólo necesitas agregar 'not.

Eduardo Melendez
10:38 18 May

Appendix 5. Text *Typical school life in Japan*

Typical school life in Japan

1 Japanese secondary students study typical subjects – maths, English, history, biology, chemistry, PE. A student normally studies ten to fourteen subjects. Students start their first class at half past eight. There are about 30 students in each class.

2 The students are in the same classroom all day. The teacher goes from one classroom to another at the start and end of the class, not the students.

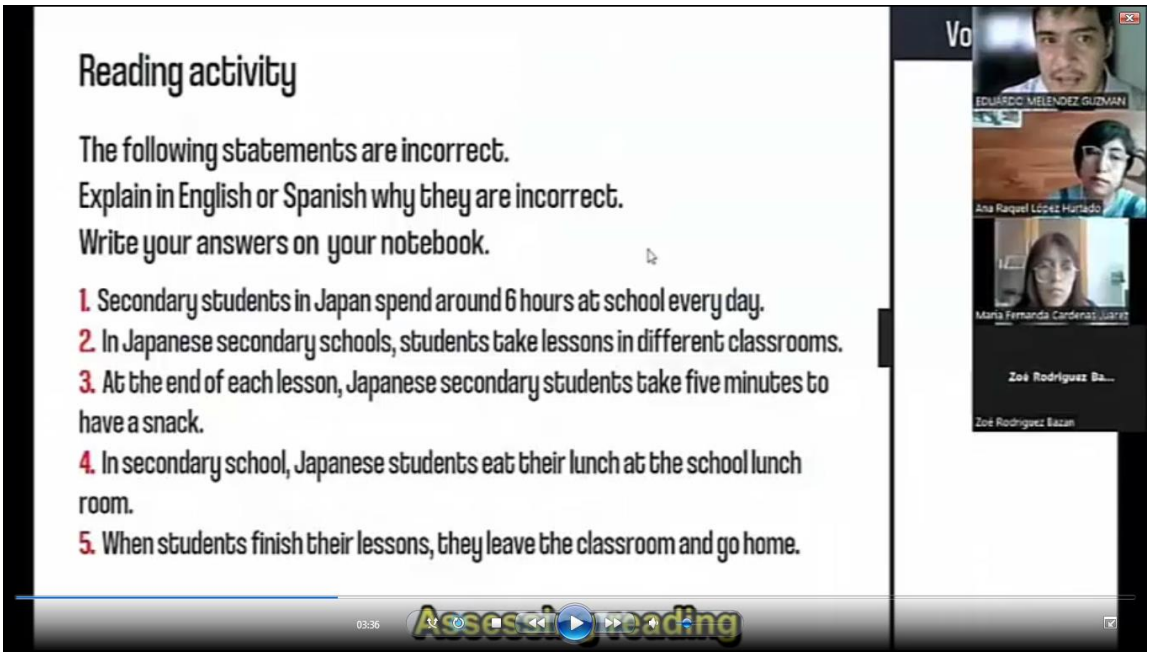
3 At the start and end of the class, the students stand for the teacher. When the teacher goes, the students talk with their friends for ten minutes and take their books out of their desks for the next class.

4 The students have lunch in their classroom. They have a cold lunch, made at home by their parents, or they have a hot lunch made at school. Lunch is 45 minutes and there is no other break, except the ten minutes at the end of the class.

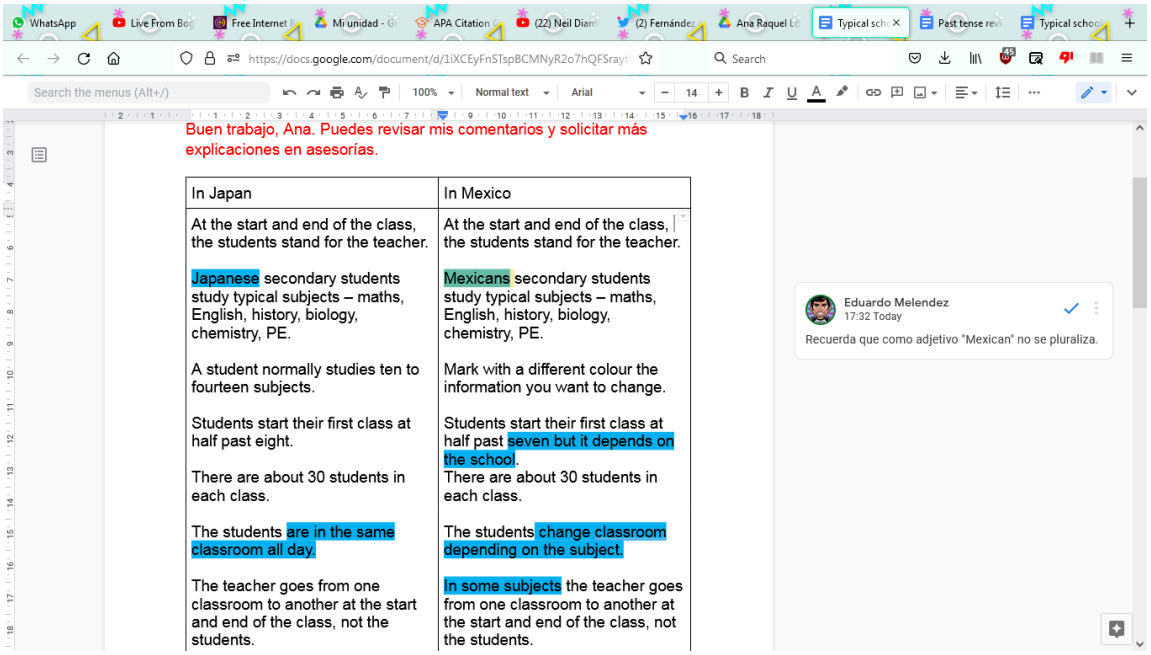
5 Japanese students finish classes at quarter to four. But when they finish, they clean the desks, the windows and, the board. After they finish class, the students go to after-school clubs.

Text taken from *Gateway A2 Student's Book*, p. 15.

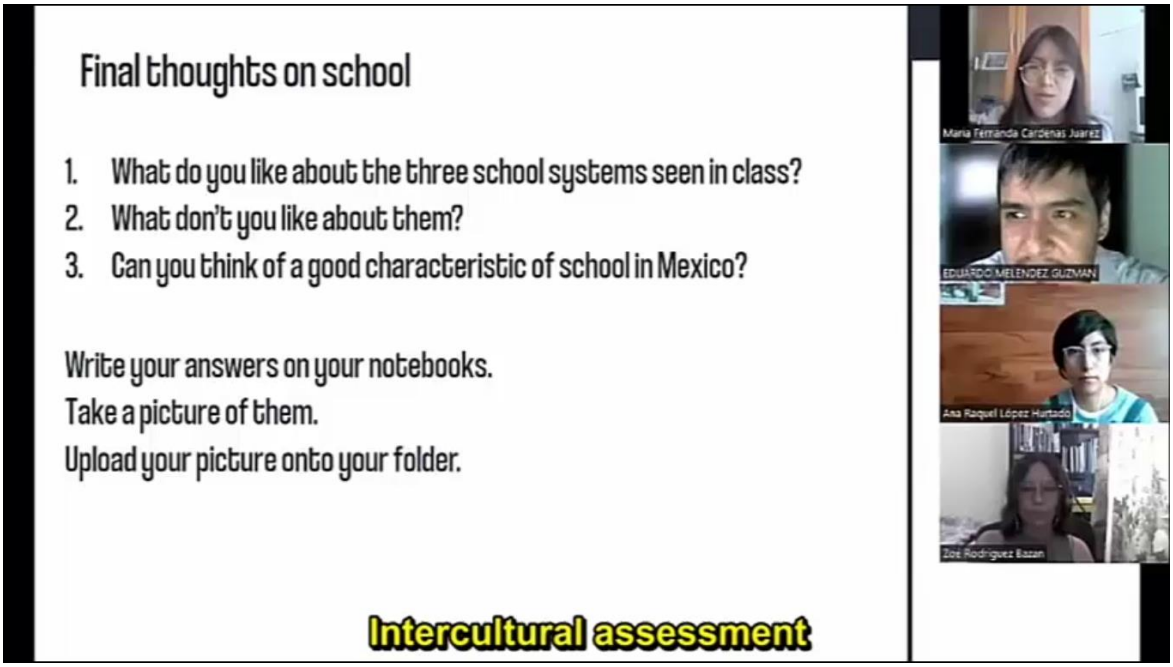
Appendix 6. Assessment for the reading task can be watched on the recording of the session, from minute 3:35



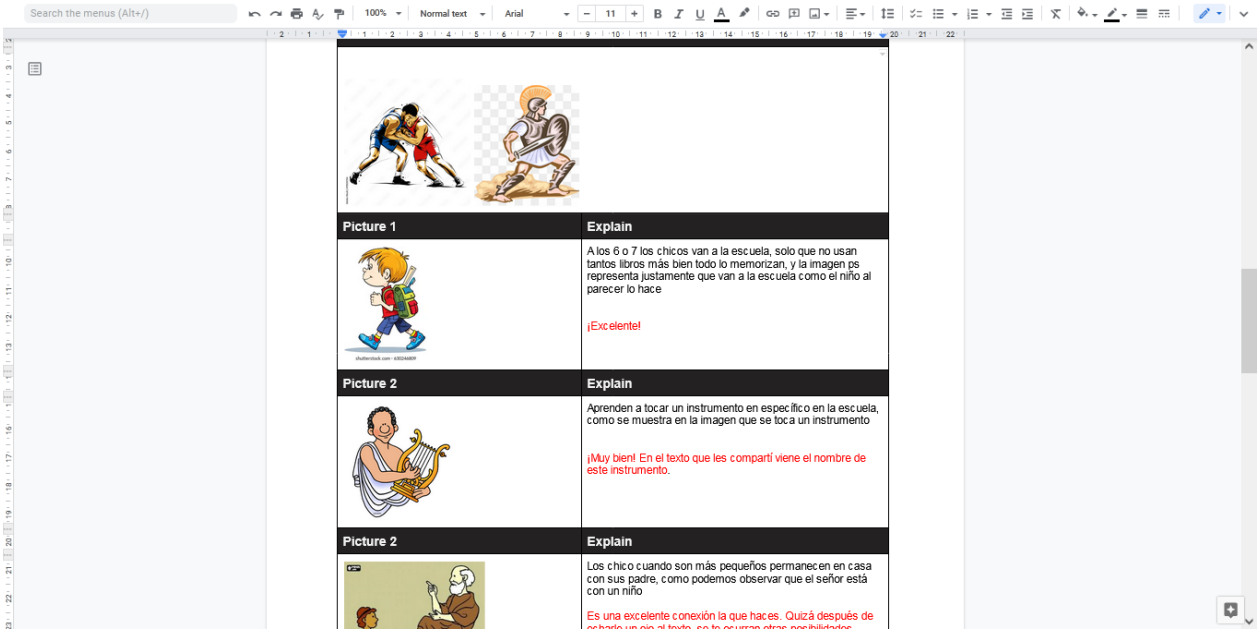
Appendix 7. Screenshot of assessment for the written task.



Appendix 8. Assessment of intercultural competence can be watched on the recording of the session from minute 5:38.



Appendix 9. Assessment tool for listening comprehension and feedback samples.



Picture 1	Explain
	A los 6 o 7 los chicos van a la escuela, solo que no usan tantos libros más bien todo lo memorizan, y la imagen ps representa justamente que van a la escuela como el niño al parecer lo hace ¡Excelente!
Picture 2	**Explain**
	Aprenden a tocar un instrumento en específico en la escuela, como se muestra en la imagen que se toca un instrumento ¡Muy bien! En el texto que les compartí viene el nombre de este instrumento.
Picture 2	**Explain**
	Los chico cuando son más pequeños permanecen en casa con sus padre, como podemos observar que el señor está con un niño Es una excelente conexión la que haces. Quizá después de

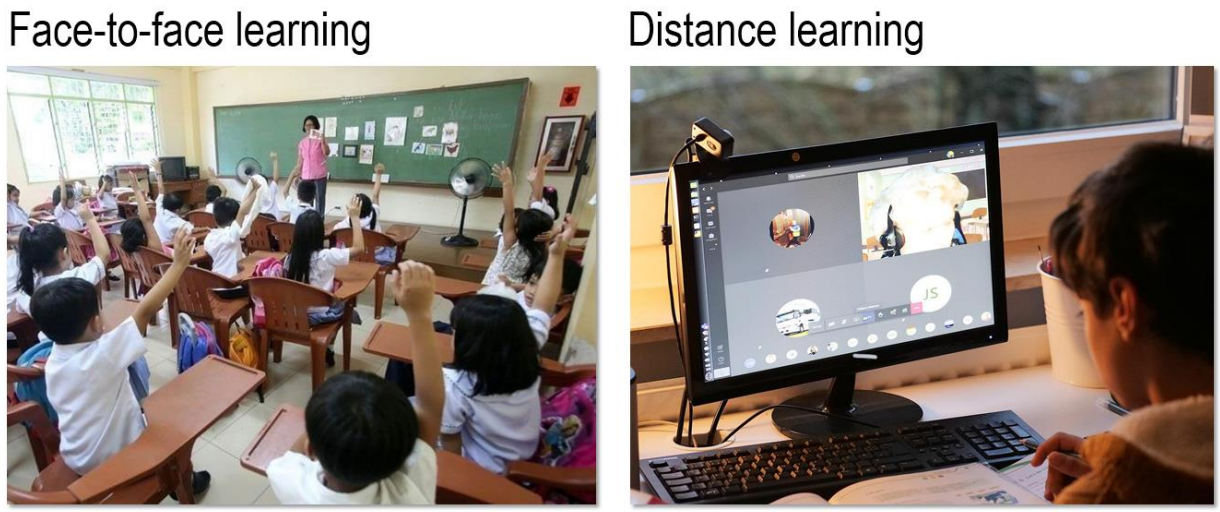
Appendix 10. This is a link to a sample recording by one student.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Sk5N7m_81MXTx--cd0dzCKO2UC3m-Ls0/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 11. This is a link to a sample of oral feedback.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kaI3swcQpx6a31FtbrjAddJbLjlkpsFa/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 12: Face-to-face vs distance learning



Images taken from Pixabay (royalty-free pictures).

Appendix 13: Transcript

Hello, and welcome to my school! It's called Hartland School, and it has about 600 / six hundred students. Let me show you where I sleep first. I share this room with three other girls. We have to keep it really tidy, but we can put posters and photos of our family on the walls, so it feels a bit like home. This is the library, where we do our homework. We have to do homework here every night, between 6:00 and 8:00 o'clock. We have to work really hard at this school. We even have lessons on Saturday mornings! There are tests and exams all the time, but we have fun, too. This is our games room. It's the best place in the school! We can't use it during the day, but we can come here at weekends, and in the evenings to watch TV or play on the computer. And here's the dining room. Breakfast is at 8 o'clock, and lunch is at 1 o'clock. We have to arrive on time, or we don't get any food, and we have to help with the cleaning after meals. Some of us clean the floors and others take the dishes to the kitchen. And now, if we go outside, this is the sports field. This term, we're doing hockey, and next term we're going to do tennis. Some people hate sports, but everyone has to do it. Well, that's my school! Hope you like it!

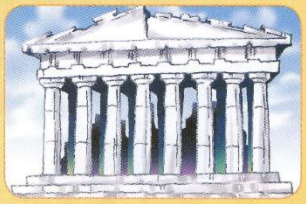
Listening material taken from *Prepare! Student's Book Level 2*, p. 115.

Appendix 14: Pictures

Appendix 15: Transcript

Education in Ancient Greece

The ancient Greeks were great builders and thinkers. Their ideas still influence us today, especially in the arts, science, literature and philosophy. But school for boys and girls in ancient Greece was very different than today.



School for Boys

Boys in ancient Greece stayed at home when they were young. They helped their parents work and had hobbies like fishing and sailing. At age six or seven, most of them started to go to school. They studied philosophy and how to play the lyre (a kind of musical instrument). They also studied other subjects, but they did not use many books. Most of what they learned was said out loud and memorized.

School for Girls

In most places in ancient Greece, girls did not go to school. They stayed at home and learned from their mothers. Girls were not allowed to go outside the house much. However, things were different for girls in a part of Greece called Sparta. Girls there went to military school where they learned how to wrestle and fight! This was to prepare them for joining the army. Girls in Sparta were allowed to go outside the house a lot more.

Text taken from *Boost 2 Reading*, p. 40

Appendix 16: Girls and Boys in Ancient Greece table

Instructions
Listen to the audio
Choose three pictures that represent the information in the audio.
Drag each picture into a cell and explain the information it represents.

Part 1	
Picture 1	**Explain**
Picture 2	**Explain**
Picture 2	**Explain**

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