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CHALLENGING CONTEXTS: NOT AN OBSTACLE BUT A REALITY TO BE CONSIDERED

TRABAJO RECEPCIONAL

QUE PARA OBTENER EL DIPLOMA DE

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

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FINAL PROJECT

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PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY

"Teachers need to examine and reflect on the kind of students they have and the social inequalities that might exist... no matter where the students come from and what their background may be, they are capable of learning as much as anyone else."[1]

Previous to the explanation of my philosophy and the theories that influence my practice, it seems necessary to tell how I became a teacher in the first place and my formative background which together with what I have learned, have shaped the teacher that I am today.

Before working formally as a teacher, I had some experience sharing knowledge and helping other people learn. Since I was a teenager I liked to help my younger cousins and neighbors when they had trouble learning at school whether in English or in other subjects. I guess I've always loved learning and sharing Knowledge.

My life as a formal teacher began in 2011, after being assistant professor for two years in the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (where I got my bachelor's degree in Estudios Latinoamericanos), I got the opportunity to have my own classes in another public university, the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia. I was teaching subjects related to Philosophy and I continued doing it until a few months ago when I began to study this specialty.

Because I wanted a change and I needed to improve my working conditions and my job stability, almost 7 years ago I did the process to enter the Secretaría de Educación Pública. I began as a History teacher and in the last years I have taught Español, Asignatura Estatal and Formación Cívica y Ética, also I've been the Reading Promoter for almost three years. I started teaching English because the former English teacher retired and the school needed someone to cover for her; the principal was aware that I know English and I had taught some particular English lessons on my own for beginners, so he gave me the opportunity to formally teach at the secondary and I´ve been formally an English teacher for the last four years.

However, my relationship with English began when I first studied it during high school in an institution that used the audiolingual method. I continued studying for two years during college in the CELE- UNAM (Centro de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras) where they teach using the

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[1] Byram quoted in EEAILE, 2022, *Lesson3*.
http://eeaile.upnvirtual.edu.mx/mod/book/view.php?id=4259

communicative approach. In 2007 I had the amazing opportunity to work in a summer camp in the USA with other foreign girls and I realized then that there are many ways of talking and expressing the language and that I still have so much to learn. Since then I've been an autodidact learner. Nevertheless, I never got formal training on language teaching, so I am in this specialization to acquire systematic learning and proven methods to become the best English teacher I can be and therefore help my students to learn more and better.

1.01 My teaching philosophy

Considering that the contributions I've made were enriched and created in the last three modules of this specialty, I can summarize my beliefs and philosophy as a teacher in general and as an English teacher in particular, as follow:

About teaching

Learning is an endless process. Education is present during our entire life; formal education is present only during some periods. Formal education is a privilege and an opportunity, it should be a right to everyone.

The teacher is also a learner who needs to acquire new knowledge according to the society dynamic.

Schools are a space of change and improvement of society. By teaching we are building part of the future of our society. It is one of the most important jobs one can have, it is the opportunity to change lives for the best or for the worst.

Being a teacher is a magnificent opportunity to be listened to and imitated, it means you have to be very responsible not only for being prepared to teach a subject but to teach a way to understand and live life.

The way one teaches must be based on the needs, characteristics and context of the students. Tasks, materials and assessment must be given according to the possibilities, needs and interest of the learners.

To have a successful learning process, learners need to be active, they have to build their knowledge. We as teachers must make them engage in their learning process.

Collaborative work, working with peers and pertinent and continuous feedback are essential parts of the learning and teaching process.

Creating a comfortable environment is necessary to achieve knowledge. Motivation is almost the most important key not only for learners, but also for the teacher.

Online resources and technology must be an ally in our classes, however, they must be selected according to the context and goals of the class.

The teacher is a facilitator who needs to create an environment of curiosity and to promote respect for human dignity and equality of human rights, evaluating meaningful information.

Evaluation and assessment need to be used as tools to improve our practices.

About teaching language

Teaching language cannot be reduced to teaching linguistic competences or communicative competences, instead it is about teaching how to interact appropriately using a foreign language, being open to new values and beliefs, seeing the world from the perspective of other people with different cultural backgrounds.

Language is about communication, then one of the main roles of the teacher is to be a facilitator and create plenty of opportunities to communicate.

We must include in our lessons the ability to interact appropriately with people, to build relationships on equal conditions, without prejudices, and respond positively to other people's values, beliefs and attitudes: "teaching should promote: a position which acknowledges respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction." (EEAILE, 2022, Lesson 1)

We must begin in our classrooms the engagement and collaboration in a global society, the appropriate interaction to build intercultural relationships and the development of acceptance of

the diversity around the world and within our classrooms and schools: "one of the functions of the language classroom is to help students overcome some stereotypes (positive or negative) about the target culture, as well as to understand aspects about their own culture." (EEAILE, 2022, Lesson 3)

 "Teachers need to examine and reflect on the kind of students they have and the social inequalities that might exist, so as to understand the sociocultural diversity in which they are immersed… one of the major responsibilities and roles teachers have is the need to be prepared for issues regarding dominant groups and oppressed groups. The teacher's attitude toward the sociocultural factor is related to an understanding that, no matter where the students come from and what their background may be, they are capable of learning as much as anyone else." (EEAILE, 2022, Lesson3)

1.02 Theory underlying the teaching practice and identity

Along this specialty several theories have influenced my practice, the most important are the Communicative approach, the Krashen's hypothesis, Vygotsky's Zone of proximal development and particularly Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence. Next there is a brief description of these theories:

Communicative approach

The communicative approach states that we don't use language in an abstract environment, we use it within a context and use it with a purpose. This perspective does not ignore the importance of the formal aspects of language (such as phonetics, linguistic structures or grammar), but analyzes this aspect in the use people do of it, that is, even when there is a language system, people can manipulate this system for their interests and needs.

Teaching only isolated vocabulary, prefab utterances or focusing only on grammatical structures, means a lack of understanding of the arbitrary nature of language; this term, created by Sassure, establishes that there isn't a direct relationship between sounds, words or sentences in a language, and reality itself. That means that the language we use to communicate is part of a social and cultural convention and it can change and evolve according to the needs of the society that uses it. Considering the arbitrary nature of language, we can understand the language variation, it means social and regional differences within a language.

Then, teaching English implies considering context and purpose in real or possible interactions, in other words, we must think about what we do with the language: we communicate, but also think and reflect. In other words, this approach means teaching learners to communicate effectively in possible real life situations.

Teaching through this perspective is so useful and efficient that has been adopted by the Public Secretary of Education in Mexico, as it is explained in the most recent English program for secondary school:

> Se trata de aprender inglés usando el inglés (aprender haciendo) en interacciones comunicativas reales o próximas a la realidad, en las que los estudiantes participen como usuarios de esta lengua y se interesen por aprender cómo se lleva a cabo la comunicación al interactuar con otros. (SEP, 2017, p. 170)

In addition, the Communicative approach promotes autonomy in the learners and that is very important because the Secondary School is the moment where students become more independent and form their own study habits. I also consider very important the perspective about errors as part of the learning process and about the benefits of the positive feedback.

Zone of Proximal Development

A very important contribution from Sociocultural Theory, this concept, created by Vygotsky, emerges from the idea that a learner's stage of development (current language level) cannot be established by only looking at what a student can do alone, instead we should look at the Zone of Proximal Development which as quotes from Vygotsky is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." (EEAILE, 2021, lesson 7). Appendix A illustration shows the main aspects of this concept.
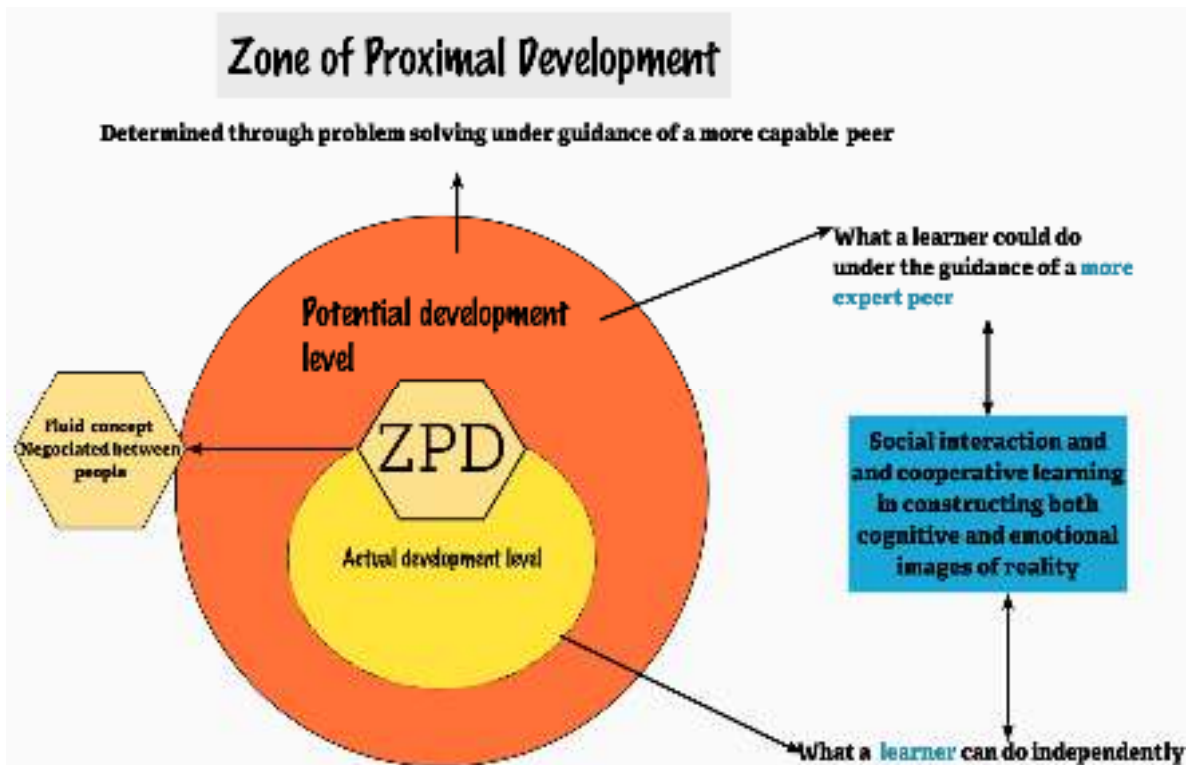
Cerón, Claudia (2021). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

Krashen's hypothesis

An important contribution to the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories[2] is the Monitor Model, introduced by Stephen Krashen in the 1970s. This model sees language as information processing which takes place at the cognitive level. The Monitor Model includes five hypotheses that will be presented next:

a) Acquisition/Learning Dichotomy

This hypothesis states that there are two forms of developing the knowledge of a L2: acquisition and learning. In the acquisition process, learners get knowledge in a subconscious and incidental way, it happens when learners are exposed to the L2. The learning process, on the other hand, is conscious and intentional.

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[2] Appendix B presents a diagram for a broader perspective of SLA theories.

The following chart presents the main differences between acquisition and learning:

ACQUISITION	LEARNING
Subconscious and incidental process	Conscious and intentional process
Learners pick up language implicitly by being exposed to it	Language development is an explicit process
Learners are more concerned with conveying or understanding meaning	Learners are focusing on grammatical form
Only language that is acquired can become performance	Language that is learned can only be held up as a monitor or inspector to evaluate production
Fluency in L2 is developed through acquisition	Proficiency in the use of form, figures and rules requires awareness of them.
It is produced without reflection about language.	It is a product of reflection about language as in Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis or Long's Interaction Hypothesis .
Occurs in a natural order, independently of deliberate teaching.	Teachers and learners cannot change the natural sequence, but they can focus on specific grammatical aspects.

b) The Monitor Hypothesis

The knowledge that learners already have serves them as a monitor of their own production, it is to say, learners use it to verify the grammaticality of their productions. However, this verification need certain conditions to be possible:

1. Focus on form. Learners need to be paying attention to the form. During the verification, the form is more important than the meaning.
2. Knowledge of the rule. In order to verify, students must know the grammatical rules for that specific productions.
3. Time. Learners need some time to reflect on the rules and to apply them to their productions.

c) The Natural Order Hypothesis

Learners acquire the L2 knowledge in a fixed and predictable order called the "natural order", they first learn simpler structures and later more complex structures, they need to know the simpler ones in order to be able to learn the complex ones.

d) The Input Hypothesis

Krashen defined the current level of development of students as (i). To get learners to move from that knowledge (i) to a more complex one, they need to be exposed to written or spoken comprehensible input, which means, input just beyond their current level (i+1). In other words, learners need materials challenging enough to motivate them to learn new information, but neither too easy nor too demanding.

e) The Affective Filter Hypothesis

L2 acquisition is a complex process where in addition to processing language structures, various factors influence the learning process either in a positive or negative form, some of the factors are motivation, attitude, confidence, and anxiety. Krashen called the influence of these factors the affective filter, the more comfortable and calmed the learners are, the lower the filter is. A lower filter benefits the learning process, in order to lower the filter, teachers must create comfortable language learning contexts.

When the Active filter is High

Opportunities for learning or attaining comprehensible input decrease

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is based on Michael Byram's Model, which proposes that teaching language cannot be reduced to teach linguistic competences (Knowing grammar, rules and vocabulary) and the communication competence (the appropriate use of language in real life situations, including verbal and non-verbal communication), instead it is about teaching how to interact appropriately using a foreign language, being opened to new values and beliefs, seeing the world from the perspective of other people with different cultural backgrounds. Appendix C presents a diagram with the main features of this theory.

One of the first and most important suggestions of Byram's model is the cultural awareness, it is to say, to be conscious that our culture impacts every idea and action we have. It means to denaturalize our points of view, values and beliefs, as quoted in lesson 1 from Byram's, Nichols & Stevens: "it is not the role of the teacher to change learners' values, but to make them explicit and conscious in any evaluative response to others [...] teaching should promote: a position which acknowledges respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction." (EEAILE, 2022, Lesson 1)

This model recognizes that English has become a lingua franca and many English language learners will use it with other English language learners and with people that not necessarily are native speakers of English but they can use this language to communicate. Then, one of the main contribution of this model is the change of goals for the teaching practice, we don't have to focus on achieving the native speaker proficiency neither on us or the learners; instead, we should pursue the ideal of the intercultural speaker, it is a person who is capable of communicating effectively in a range of cross-cultural contexts: "one of the functions of the language classroom is to help students overcome some stereotypes (positive or negative) about the target culture, as well as to understand aspects about their own culture." (EEAILE, 2022, Lesson 3)

The need to include this perspective in teaching practices is increasing every day, because globalization, migration and immigration get us closer to other people and thus to other cultural backgrounds. We need to have the tools to interact in these different contexts and to teach our students basic skills to do it too. We must include in our lessons the ability to interact appropriately with people, to build relationships on equal conditions, without prejudices, and respond positively to other people's values, beliefs and attitudes.

With those suggestions in mind, and after reviewing the theory it is proposed a lesson plan that intends to incorporate these theories and apply them to the practice in the classroom.

2. METHODOLOGY AND PRACTICE

Before explaining the proposal of the lesson plan, it is fundamental to present the characteristics and environment where it was applied because, as mentioned in the philosophy as a teacher and in the theories that fundament the rationale behind my practice, the context is the center and starting point of my practice and of this lesson.

2. 01 Context

I teach in the evening shift of a secondary school called Juan Amos Comenio. It is located in Santa Úrsula Coapa in Coyoacán, CDMX. This zone was classified by Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) as having a high level of marginalization, which means high rates of poverty, violence, crime and addiction problems. On the other hand, this place is full of hard working people. Most of the parents of my students only studied until secondary school and are dedicated to trades or are merchants. These facts have an impact on the learners' expectations and life project.

Looking back at the historical development of this school community, absenteeism, apathy, and lack of motivation are very common. Many of the students that come to my school (the afternoon shift) are students that got a poor performance in the secondary entrance test and they were sent to the afternoon shift because of that. In the past there has been poor performance in norm based tests such as PLANEA or ENLACE.

In terms of infrastructure, classrooms have basic tools such as boards and markers. There is access to a projector and speakers, but it is necessary to ask for them in advance and I bring my own laptop when I want to use authentic materials. The internet connection in the school does not reach the classrooms, so it is necessary to download materials before using them. In addition, among learners there is a lack of access and knowledge about technological devices with educational purposes.

For this project, the group selected is 2° D. At the moment there are 19 learners (10 males and 9 females) between 13 and 15 years old. Their English level is A1, for most of them this is their first contact with English, because even when they are in second grade, last year most of them did not attend virtual classes nor did the activities given by their last teacher or didn't do it constantly.

There are no students identified with learning disabilities, however, it is evident that they have an important deficit in their learning process due -among other reasons- to the time they spent at home without attending school.

Regarding the reading skills in Spanish, during the month of September a diagnostic test was applied in which speed, comprehension and fluency are assessed, on a scale of four levels: 0, 1, 2 and 3 (zero for the lowest level and three for the highest). The general result of this test shows an average of 0.815, which implies a significant reduction with respect to the results obtained in previous years, since this evaluation has been carried out during the last four years and the level had always been above 1.1 in the diagnosis. It is clear that the inconsistency and intermittency of school activities derived from the confinement due to the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the formative and problematic gaps faced by students.

An important data we obtain from this test is the percentage of students who are between level 0 and 1 in the three aspects evaluated, since it indicates how many students require more attention in this area. The result of this cycle also contrasts with the results of the previous ones, since this year the percentages have increased considerably, for second grade this percentage is 70.25%, in 2° D, the average level is 0.95, it means, the entire group is below the average they supposed to be in this grade.

Regarding writing, the overview is similar, learners make a lot of spelling mistakes; they are not familiarized with the use of punctuation marks; many times they do not use orthographic accents; they struggle writing long sentences and "suffer" writing long texts; and they do not manage a broad vocabulary. Even when they have a lot of ideas, it is hard for them to turn these ideas into utterances.

With regard to English lessons it is known that some of the students are just not interested in learning a second language, they don't think it is or will be useful for them, they do not imagine how it can be a part of their future or present. I insist a lot on the fact that they don't know where life will take them and knowing a foreign language is an advantage in every context. To increase their motivation, I usually tell them how certain knowledge (related to the topic of the class) has helped me in my own life and how knowing English is an opportunity to broaden the world vision. Probably the most attractive advantages they can see is that it is very useful to have access to fun activities, from having access to more entertainment options to traveling around the world.

It is necessary to mention that despite the efforts teachers can make to motivate and engage learners in the topics, there are many factors behind students' actions and reactions. At this school, for instance, some students arrive at school (at 2:00 in the afternoon) without eating anything, thus they have no interest in learning, they just have no energy to think. In addition, the adverse factors mentioned such as poverty, near contexts of violence and addictions, are also elements that affect their performance and expectations in life and in the school.

The situation in my school is challenging but I keep myself highly motivated. I don't think in this context as a problem or as an obstacle, I think that those are the conditions I face and I have to consider them in order to give my students the kind of teaching they need, offering them comprehensible input and a free anxiety environment. I focus on the fact that these guys have a lot of dreams, they just have not figured out how education and English can be a part of that, and helping them to incorporate education into their dreams is part of my job.

2.02 Lesson plan

Looking at the learners' diagnostic, it is clear that the contents of the official program are too demanding for these learners and it is necessary to work with very basic input. I decided to work on the family topic because it is meaningful for everyone, and getting their attention helps me to make them active in their process of learning. In addition, it is a good opportunity to chain it with the topics reviewed before: family members and giving information about physical appearance, personality and occupations. Also it is an excellent topic to reflect about interculturality.

It is necessary to mention that due to the conditions (irregular attendance of many students or classes beginning late) and to the observation of the students' performance during the activities, I decided to extend the original period of application of the lesson. It was planned to be developed within three classes but it took five classes instead. Also, some activities proposed were modified in order to give the learners time enough to perform. I rather make changes according to the class needs instead of sticking to the plan but risking to increase the affective filter by overwhelming students or without taking the time to give them feedback or time to practice.

Lesson: Giving information about family members and family diversity

Objectives:

- ♦ To identify the family members and their descriptions (physical appearance, personality and occupations) in a dialogue (developing listening and reading skills)
- ♦ To give and receive information about their own family (Grammar focus: questions and answers / writing and speaking).
- ♦ To reflect about family's diversity (intercultural competence / reading)

Previous knowledge:

Family members

How to describe someone's physical appearance.

How to describe someone's personality.

Occupations

Lesson: *Giving information about family members and family diversity*	
Time: 5 classes of 50 minutes	**Materials:** Projector, laptop and speakers Board Notebooks, pens and color pens Video "Describing my family" Presentation about the diversity of families Reading "Diversity of families"
Class 1. Warmer	The teacher asks learners about the most common family members so students can remember how to name them. Also the teacher reminds the topics seen before: giving information about physical appearance, personality and occupations.

Class 1. Video "Describing your family" Listening and reading practice	The teacher plays **the video "Describing your family",** a seven minutes' video which presents a dialogue between a boy and a girl talking about the boy's family, their appearance, personality and occupations. (The video was downloaded using the tools acquired in Module 2). The video is presented with English subtitles. The gist selective listening format is used with the group: students have to pay attention, **listening and reading** the information, trying to identify the family members, their description and their occupation. Then the teacher asks the group which information they got, just to create a general idea of the information presented. Then the video is presented once again, but this time the teacher pauses when questions are made, and asks the students to take notes (imitative writing copying the questions made in the video), thus learners identify the questions to ask about how they look, how they are and what they do for a living. **Questions:** What does she/he look like? What is she/he like? What is her/his occupation? / What is her/his job? / What does he/she do for a living?
Class 2. Warmer	**Activating schemata** The teacher asks three learners to **read aloud and write** on the board the questions and answers made last class about the family members presented in the video. The participation is voluntary to keep low the affective filter.
Class 2. Selective listening and self-writing activity	The video is played once more, but only presenting two people, making pauses after the presentation of each family member. Students work in pairs (matching more advanced students with the ones that struggle the most). The pairs do a selective **listening** task called making decisions by choosing the correct of the three questions presented in the video for the information given about two family members. They have to answer the questions, **writing** them in their notebooks. They work in pairs to promote collaborative work and to keep the affective filter low. Then, the teacher writes on the board the questions: How is your family, who do you live with? And gives an example of a possible answer: I have a big/small family/ I live with my husband and two pets. This activity is centered in a **self-writing** activity also working in pairs, asking and answering the questions just presented and also each learner had to choose one member of his/her family and answer the three questions presented in the video: What does he/she look like? What does he/she look like? and What is his/her job?

Class 3. Warming	**Activating schemata** The group remembers the questions made last class, the teacher writes them on the board and pronounce them out loud asking the students to repeat, so they practice the pronunciation and be able to practice with their partners.
Class 3. Dialogue. Giving information about family members (listening, speaking and intercultural reflection)	The pairs make corrections after the feedback given to each pair and complete information if necessary. The teacher gives general feedback to the group pointing out the most common mistakes noticed during the supervision of the past activities. After considering the feedback, the pairs practice the dialogues and present them to the teacher. (This can be seen as a consolidation activity)
Class 4. Warming	**Activating schemata** The teacher asks the group: Who are the members of a traditional family? The possible answer is: father, mother and children. Then the teacher asks if the learners' families are formed like that, they only have to **answer orally**. This way the **reflection about their own culture** begins.
Class 4. Diversity of families (listening and reading)	The teacher presents the **Mural about family diversity***, which explains what it is and shows some diverse families, choosing some of the ones she knows learners probably have (according to the information given in the diagnostic of the school). The teacher makes emphasis on the fact that **diversity has always existed**, however traditional families were more visible because some sectors of society (conservative) promoted that family as the ideal one, nevertheless society transformation and social movements have opened the **recognition of diversity and the promotion of their rights**. Learners take notes, making **imitative writing** by copying some information **read** from the presentation. The conclusion of the explanation is that all families, however they are formed, are **equally important and valuable**, love and commitment make a family and **all families deserve respect.** *The mural was created by the teacher online and then it was downloaded because the internet connection is not stable to use online resources in the classroom. The complete image can be seen in Appendix C.
Class 5. Warming	The teacher asks learners to remember the kinds of families reviewed in the presentation of the last class. They name them aloud.

Class 5. Reading family diversity (consolidation activity)	The teacher gives each student a reading that contains six different family descriptions and six pictures and titles, they have to read individually and match the columns. Then, again they work collaboratively, this time in trios, comparing their answers, discussing and creating a consensual team conclusion. Here is used the integrative assessment of the PBA that requires discussing a story in a peer group after reading it independently. The teacher goes to each team and gives feedback. Finally, the correct answers are reviewed as a group. The reading used is in Appendix D.
Coming up activities	Each student represents his kind of family, **writing** the definition and presenting their family members. This activity **reinforces the presence of diversity and its acceptance** promoted from the ICC.
	Anticipated problems: Some words may be new or the aural input could be too challenging. **Anticipated solutions:** Paying the video three times, giving learners several opportunities to get the information, also making pauses allowing students to take notes so they can write down the main ideas. Adding colored pictures to facilitate the comprehension of the comprehensible input and to promote the interest and engagement with the topics. Working in pairs to create collaborative answers taking advantage of team members' strengths. In case of unknown words, students can use their dictionary.

2.02 Lesson Assessment

A fundamental part of the teaching practice is the evaluation, that includes assessment and testing. These elements are part of our daily practice and both are used to provide information about the learning process and performance of learners. It is necessary to interpret that information in order to make decisions about content and methodology, to improve the teaching and the learning processes. Regarding this matter Brown and Hughes offer a broad perspective about assessment and tests, they do not reduce the evaluation to a final grade or note, they propose to use the information gathered from the entire learning process to improve the teaching one, as mentioned in lesson 4 quoting Huges, assessment is used to:

- ♦ To measure language proficiency.
- ♦ To discover how successful students have been in achieving the objectives of a course of study.
- ♦ To diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, to identify what they know and what they don't know.
- ♦ To assist placement of students by identifying the stage or part of a teaching program most appropriate to their ability.

Now it is important to mention the difference between assessing and testing: Assessing is a continuous process which includes different types of tests "is an ongoing pedagogical process that includes a number of evaluative acts on the part of the teacher" (EEAILE, 2022, *Lesson 6*). Testing is the evaluation of particular aspects or abilities in specific periods of time. It means that the tests are particular parts of the general process of assessment.

There are several forms of assessment and testing, however some can be mentioned as significant for this teaching practice. First the formal and the informal. The informal is a process-oriented assessment that includes every comment or direction that are spontaneously given to learners in order to give them feedback about their performance during the classes. The formal assessment, on the other hand, is a systematic and planned instrument to measure the students' achievement; tests are part of the formal assessment techniques.

As part of the informal assessment, lesson 6 presented the Alternative assessment, which is considered relevant because it means to provide planned opportunities for various types of performance and giving appropriate feedback on the students' performance preparing them for their future learning: "provide our students with a fairer chance that takes account of both their personal learning styles and their personal strengths in terms of language skills, and that allows for difficulties to become evident early during the learning process, so that they can be addressed as they occur." (EEAILE, 2022, Lesson 6)

Another distinction important to mention is between formative and summative assessment, because as teachers it is required to evaluate the process of learning but also to grade the improvement. Formative assessment intends to evaluate the process, providing feedback to add to the students' learning experience. The summative assessment occurs at the end of a period of

time (bimonthly, semester, school year, etc.) and its goal is to measure the student's current abilities. (EEAILE, 2022, Lesson 4)

A relevant theory about assessment that has been useful to this teaching practice is the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) proposed by O'Malley and Valdez Pierce's, the goal here is that learners use their knowledge to construct a response orally or in writing or solve a problem using language in realistic situations into practice (EEAILE, lesson 5). It is considered that the integrative assessment is very useful to evaluate reading skills.

Nevertheless, although there are countless assessing tools, the selection of the instruments to assess is related to several factors such as our class goals, the context and the abilities to be measured. In the case of the lesson planned, evaluation is focused on the formative and informal assessment because the lesson was only a part of the course and no summative assessment was made yet.

Considering the use of several integrated activities in the lesson that incorporate two or more macro skills and several micro skills at once, it was decided to use a rubric to evaluate the different aspects involved within the lesson. It is considered that rubrics are very useful to evaluate because they allow to consider quality aspects that can be turned into numeric, in addition, creating rubrics is time consuming but they help save time when evaluating learners. The elements considered in the rubric are created based on the suggested evaluation criteria presented along module 3.

The scales used are from 6 to 10 because it is not possible to give lower notes (according to the SEP agreements for evaluation) and also because these activities are formative and it not intended to discourage students if they make many mistakes, on the contrary, it is considered that if many of them have a poor performance, the teacher needs to reflect on her own one.

Here is the rubric used to evaluate the performance of students in the skills worked along the lesson:

Rubric	10 points	8 points	6 points
Listening	Shows understanding of other speakers, can	Shows some understanding of	Shows poor understanding of

|			
	understand familiar words and simple sentences. Can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	other speakers, can understand some familiar words and simple sentences. Can recognize some familiar words and very basic phrases concerning family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	other speakers, can understand a few familiar words and simple sentences. Can recognize a few familiar words and very basic phrases concerning family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.
Reading	Can read very short, simple texts and find specific, predictable information. Can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning family and immediate concrete surroundings.	Can read very short, simple texts and find some specific, predictable information. Can recognize some familiar words and very basic phrases concerning family and immediate concrete surroundings.	Can read very short, simple texts and find a few specific, predictable information. Can recognize a few familiar words and very basic phrases concerning family and immediate concrete surroundings.
Writing	Can ask and answer simple questions using a series of phrases and sentences to describe family members. Uses spelling and punctuation accurately or with a few mistakes.	Can ask and answer simple questions using some phrases and sentences to describe family members. Uses spelling and punctuation accurately but makes some mistakes.	Can ask and answer simple questions using isolated words or phrases. Uses spelling and punctuation poorly, making many mistakes.
Speaking (Conversation)	Communicate effectively, responding appropriately to interaction. Uses vocabulary and language functions accurately Uses clear and understandable pronunciation and use appropriate stress and intonation patterns.	Communicate responding appropriately to interaction. Uses vocabulary and language functions accurately but makes some mistakes Sometimes uses clear and understandable pronunciation and use appropriate stress and intonation patterns.	Communicate responding to interaction. Uses vocabulary and language functions making many mistakes. Uses unclear pronunciation or does not use appropriate stress and intonation patterns.
Intercultural competence	Shows curiosity towards different cultural backgrounds (participates actively paying attention to the information given) Shows respect to different organizations, attitudes and values and embraces diversity.	Shows curiosity towards different cultural backgrounds (participates sometimes, paying some attention to the information given) Shows respect to different organizations, attitudes and values and embraces diversity, but is disrespectful at some point.	Shows poor curiosity towards different cultural backgrounds (participates and pays attention to the information given only occasionally) Shows poor respect to different organizations, attitudes and values or refuses to accept diversity.

2.03 Evidences

An important element of the evaluation are the products created by the students and the feedback given. Here are some photos that present some evidences of the activities done.

Controlled writing activity
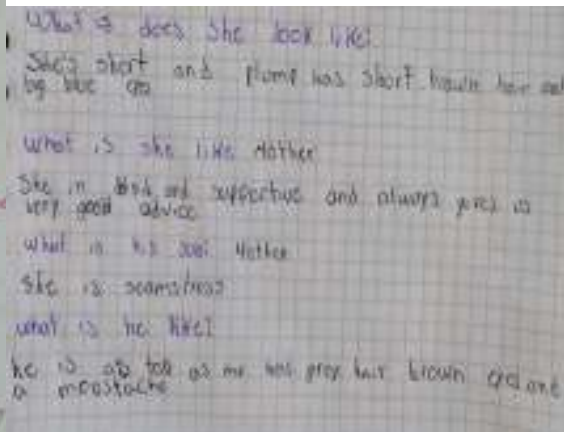
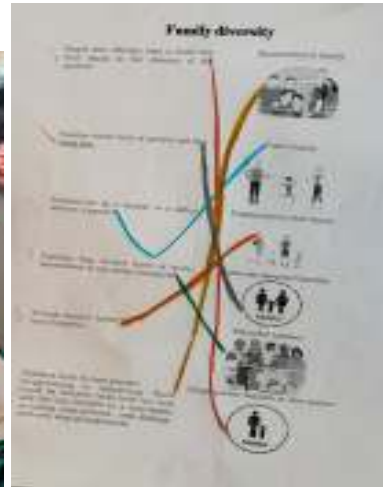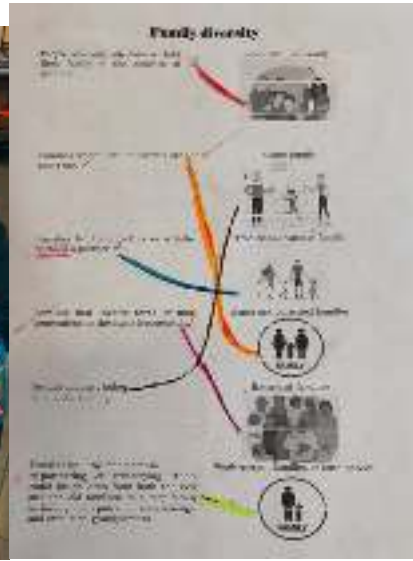## Questions and answers about the own families
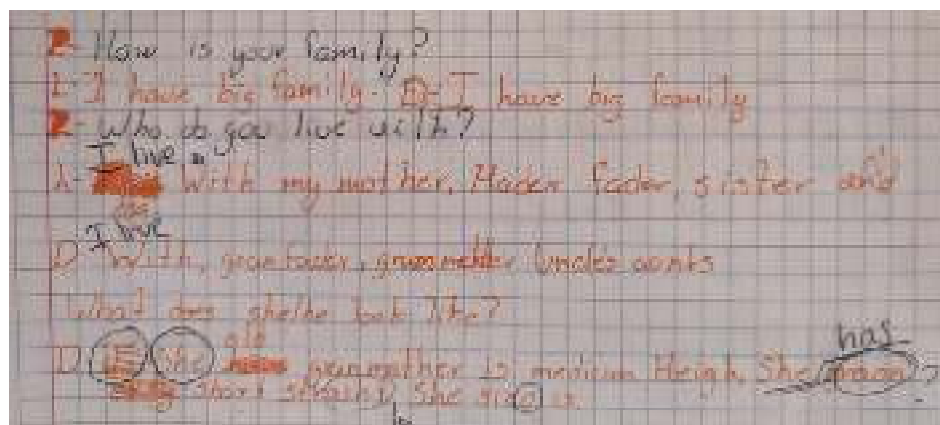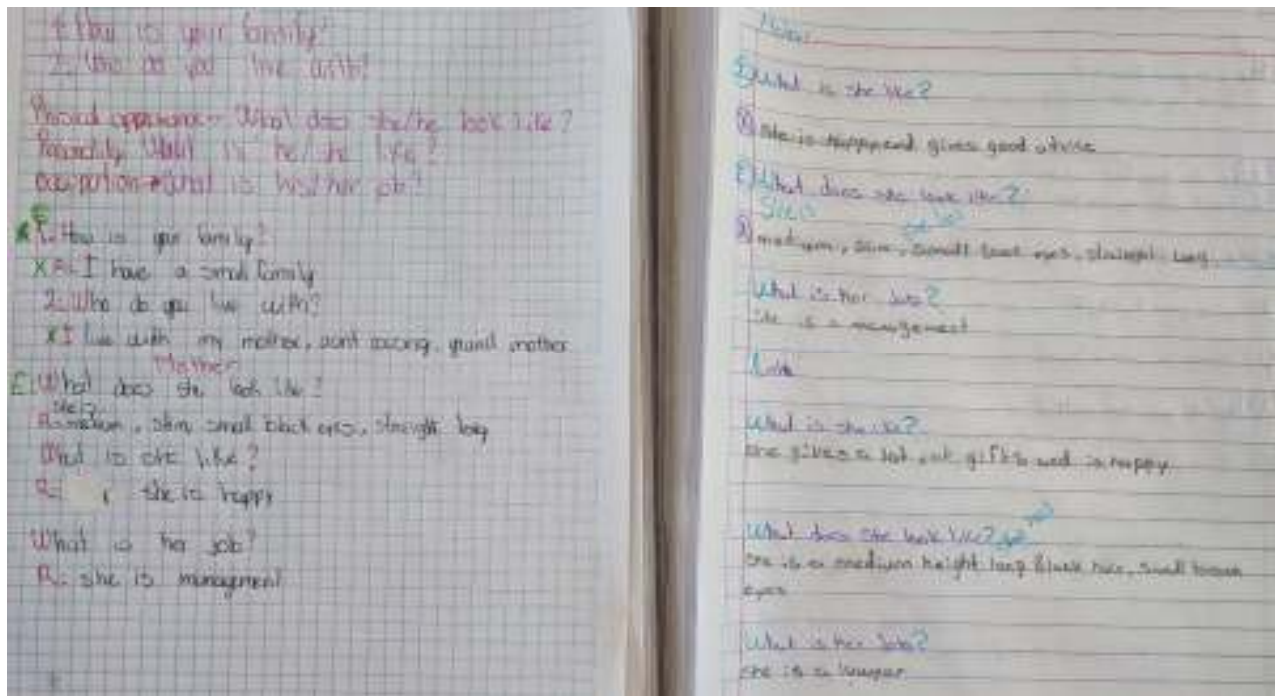
Dialogue

Mural Family diversity's explanation

Reading Family diversity

Rubric

Here is the evidence of the evaluation of students using the proposed rubric. As it can be seen, some students did not participate during the lesson because of sickness or family troubles, however these learners will be evaluated with their previous and posterior work within the class. In addition, as mentioned in the context, some students have irregular attendance and that affected their performance.

	Skill	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	ICC
1	ARREOLA GARCIA ALEXANDER YOREL	8	8	8	6	10
2	AVILA VAZQUEZ JOSE ARMANDO	10	8	10	8	10

3	BARAJAS BARRIOS ELIM ALLANAM	10	10	10	8	10
4	CHAPARRO FLORES EMILIO ADOLFO	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
5	GOLDBERG ROSAS EMILY PAULETTE	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
6	HERNANDEZ CASTILLO JAIR MICHAEL	10	10	8	10	10
7	HERRERA REYES ARLEN ALONDRA	8	10	10	8	10
8	LOPEZ ESTRADA DANELY IVANNA	8	8	8	6	10
9	MARIN RODRIGUEZ EMILIO	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
10	MEDINA LOPEZ PAVEL OSIEL	6	6	6	6	10
11	NIETO GARCIA ANDRICK YACXHEL	8	8	8	6	8
12	PEREZ BRINDIZ LUZ XIMENA	10	10	10	10	10
13	QUINTERO DE LA O CRISTOPHER LEONARDO	10	10	8	10	10
14	RINCON GONZALEZ PERLA TERESA	10	8	10	8	10
15	SALINAS REYNA YUNUEM	10	10	8	8	10
16	SALVADOR HERNANDEZ GERARDO EMMANUEL	10	10	8	10	10
17	SUMANO ESCOBEDO DANIELA MISHEL	10	8	8	8	10
18	VARA RODRIGUEZ ITALIA ANGY	8	10	8	8	10
19	ZUÑIGA MARTINEZ DIEGO	10	8	10	8	10

2.05 Video of the lesson

The video with the development of the activities is available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1osWBSZEOecz0yfG87JDhnPzqcG3Wf-nv/view?usp=sharing

3. EXPERIENCE REPORT

After this lesson I can observe improvement in my students' performance. Now they understand more when I explain in English, they do not feel frightened when they listen to the aural input, they have learned to pay attention and focus on understanding the general meaning and then asking what they do not understand. They can recognize and use more vocabulary and phrases when reading, speaking and writing.

On the other hand, there are still many elements that can be improved. Looking at their performance during this lesson, I consider they struggle the most with the productive skills, still the lack of vocabulary intimidates them, sometimes they feel they do not know enough words to express themselves. Regarding writing, the self-writing activity shown that they have not consolidate the knowledge of patterns, they create phrases as in Spanish so they tend to forget the subject or they write first the noun and after the adjective

When speaking they focus on the pronunciation of the words and forget the stress patterns and also they tend to pronounce as in Spanish. It is necessary to give them more opportunities for communication. In addition, I think it is necessary to increase the aural input and the practice of speaking, because some of them pronounce correctly when they repeat, but when they speak alone or read out loud they pronounce the sounds as in Spanish. They need to be exposed more and more to English so the sounds get familiar for them.

Something else that is relevant is that even when it is promoted to keep the affective filter low, learners feel intimidated when they have to speak in front of me or the entire group and it was more evident when the recording of the dialogues was done. They are still not confident enough to express their ideas in English, however when I ask the entire group I can notice they are improving their speaking skills when they answer out loud but without the entire group's attention.

When reading, they are able to identify keywords and scan the text to get the general ideas. However, they still need to make use of the dictionary to get a better understanding even in short texts. They tend to forget vocabulary already seen because they do not practice or study by themselves outside the classroom and it is necessary to remind them of certain words' meaning. Thus activating schemata every class is fundamental to engage them into the topics.

An element that could be improved is the use of technology or other materials to make my classes more dynamic or even fun so students could feel more attraction for the class and its contents. At this point, the attention is focused on the contents and the teacher's attitude in the secondary schools is almost necessary to be serious because losing the boundaries can be problematic and even dangerous for teachers.

Nevertheless, the lesson is considered successful because learners had the opportunity to use their previous knowledge to build new one; they had the opportunity to communicate, with interactive and non-interactive situations of listening, using the four macro skills working collaboratively and engaging in their process of learning. In addition, they practice Intercultural communication competence by engaging in the reflection about their own cultural aspects and appreciating other kinds of organization.

4. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this specialty I can conclude that theory and methodologies are fundamental tools that need to be chosen and applied to a certain context to have successful teaching and learning processes. However, certain elements are unquestionable, for instance, the communicative approach suggestion of teaching language features within a context and offering constant and positive feedback; also the fact that assessment provides information to value students' performance, but it gives us information to evaluate the teaching process too: it allows us to change, modify, improve o keep elements of our practice.

The goal of the teaching practice is for students to learn to communicate efficiently not perfectly, also, the Intercultural communication competence teach us that learning a language means also to interact appropriately using a foreign language, being opened to new values and beliefs, seeing the world from the perspective of other people with different cultural backgrounds. In order to do that, it is necessary to include the reflection about cultural aspects within our classrooms and as teachers, we need to be models, being living examples of people that builds relationships on equal conditions, without prejudices, and responding positively to other people's values, beliefs and attitudes, beginning with our students' ones.

Another important aspect learned is the importance of activating the schema to prepare students for the activities coming. It lowers the affective filter by reminding them that they already know certain information and thus they are capable of learning more. Activating previous knowledge is as important as chaining topics, it allows students to gradually increase their skills, reinforcing previous topics as they learn new ones.

Keeping the affective filter low is a challenge but it is something that is fundamental to create learning opportunities. Some activities that I learned to keep the filter low are the collaborative work, comprehensible input and meaningful content. When students feel attracted to the topics, they make efforts to do the activities; also they need to feel challenged but not overwhelmed.

After considering the complexity of the four macro skills and implementing them in the classroom, it is evident that they are inseparable. These skills are the basis of learning a second language, however developing them can be very hard, that is why we must consider certain elements to succeed, some of the most important are: having realistic expectations, planning according to our

class context, using diverse kinds of activities and different metacognitive strategies, and include multimedia resources.

The most challenging skills for my learners are the productive ones: writing and speaking, however, it is necessary to practice a lot with reading not only because it is a fundamental skill for life and for learning any language, but because there is an important deficit in this matter that affects their entire learning process in all the subjects.

The Internet has become an ally to search every kind of materials either instructional or authentic ones. Now the challenge is to select from the endless options we can find and to adapt them to our students' needs and class goals. Also, it is important to consider the resources available at our schools and our students' ability to manage technological devices with educational purposes. Learners already live in this technological world, they use some devices better than teachers and they are used to communicating using them, as teachers we should use that in our favor and appeal to their interests to create strategies and activities that are both challenging and motivating.

One of the main problems I face is time management. When I think I have considered time enough to perform an activity, it turns out that previous knowledge was not consolidated, it takes more time than planned activating the schema, explaining the activities or being ready to start working. Sometimes it is due to factors that I cannot control, such as the school organization, or classes starting late. Another element that has been a big challenge this year is irregular attendance. The learners and their families lost the habit of attending school daily, some of them miss a lot of classes because they stay at home or do other activities and their parents or tutors do not send them to the school and when they attend they are "lost". Something else that affects learners' attention and capability to be focused on the class is the fact that some of them arrive at school without eating or without sleeping, they are tired and distracted and I need to pull their energy and attention to the class. Nevertheless, I need to consider these conditions during the teaching process, I need to be really creative to overcome them.

Context of learners is the main key to plan and implement activities, because it gives us the guideline to design and at the same time, it limits or expands our possibilities. In addition to the several factors to consider, we should not forget that the worldwide context since the covid-19 pandemic, has increased the social and economic inequalities, and also has affected the learning

process of learners, especially for those that do not have access to internet and technological devices as most of my learners. This context affects not only their ability to continue their education in their L1, but also their possibility to access a second language. The Covid pandemic changed many things, sometimes for the best (as the need for teachers to learn how to use technology) and sometimes for the worst (as all the families that suffer human and material losses), those consequences added to the circumstances of the community I work with and represent a huge challenge.

Nevertheless, an adverse context cannot be considered an obstacle, instead, it is an opportunity to challenge ourselves, to prepare and to search for new strategies where we can take the conditions in our favor. It is necessary to focus on the elements under the teachers' control, being always willing to improve, learn from the mistakes and especially keeping high motivation not only for students but also for teachers because we are the agents of change in our societies for the best or for the worst. And as Byram says, we can never forget that no matter where the students come from and what their background may be, they are capable of learning as much as anyone else.
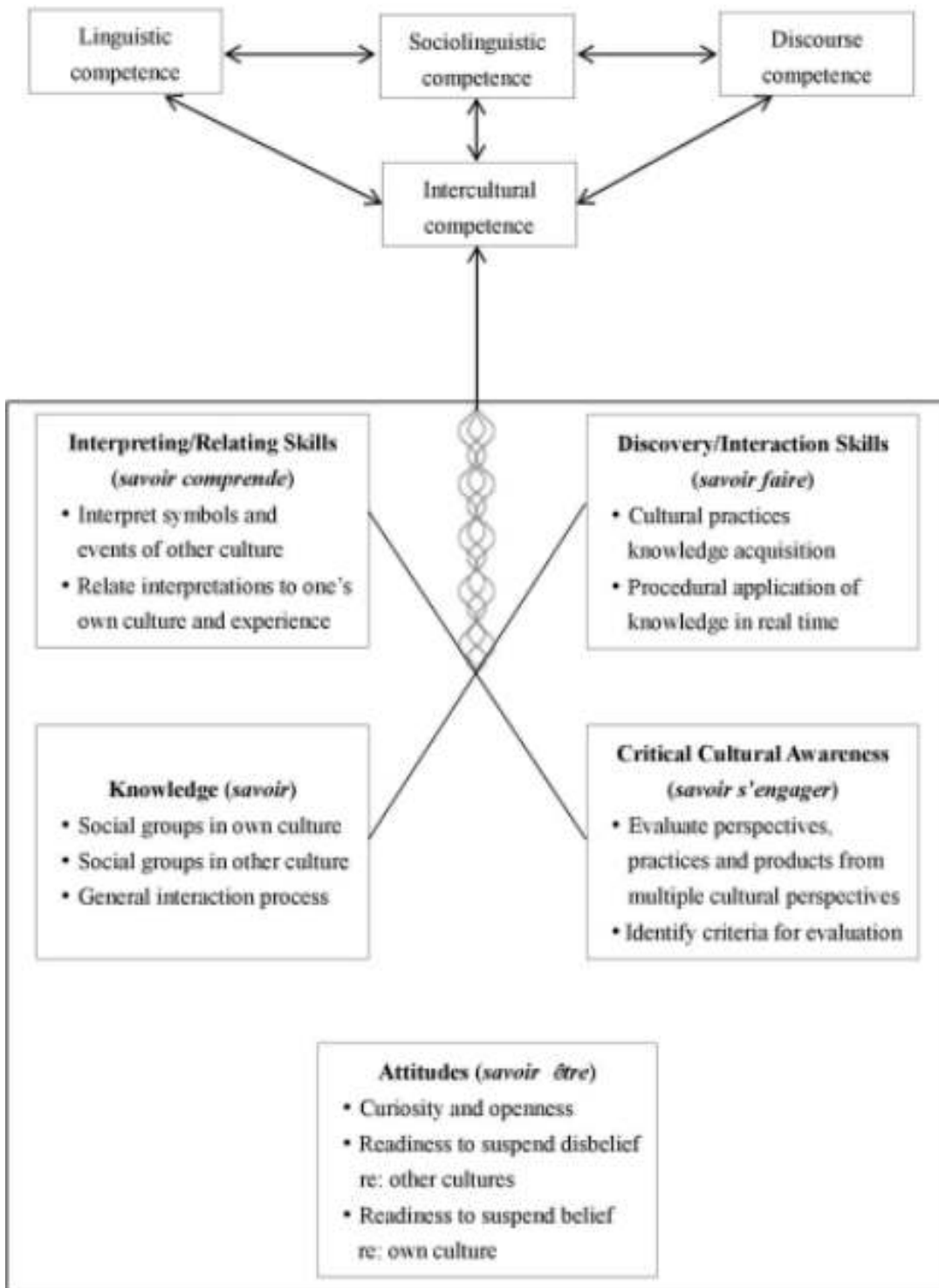
5. APPENDIXES AND REFERENCES

## Appendix A. Main aspects of the three Second Language Acquisition theories reviewed
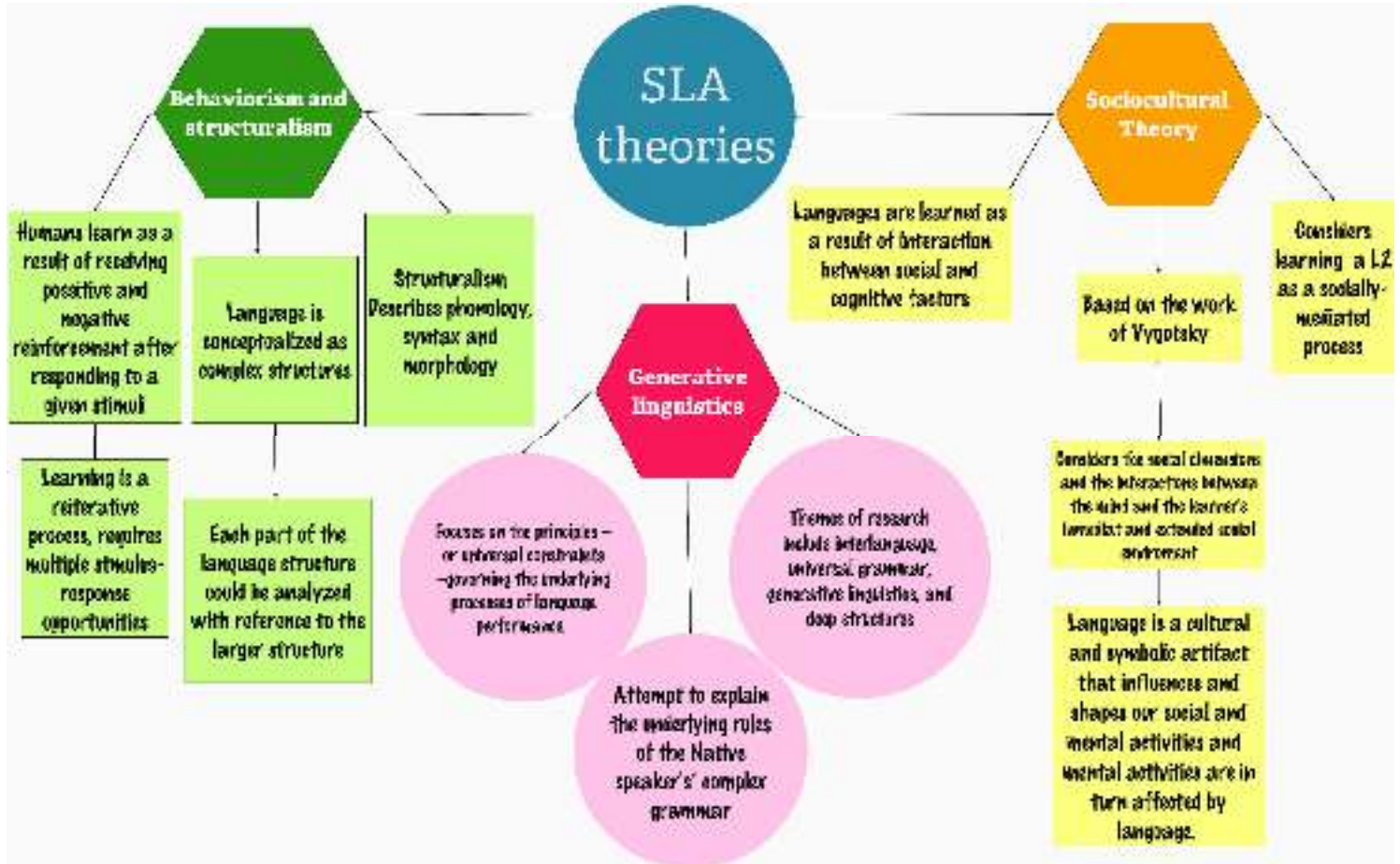
Cerón, Claudia (2021). Second Language Acquisition Theories' diagram.

Appendix B. Intercultural Competence features

Linguistic competence ↔ Sociolinguistic competence ↔ Discourse competence

Intercultural competence

Interpreting/Relating Skills (savoir comprende)
- Interpret symbols and events of other culture
- Relate interpretations to one's own culture and experience

Discovery/Interaction Skills (savoir faire)
- Cultural practices knowledge acquisition
- Procedural application of knowledge in real time

Knowledge (savoir)
- Social groups in own culture
- Social groups in other culture
- General interaction process

Critical Cultural Awareness (savoir s'engager)
- Evaluate perspectives, practices and products from multiple cultural perspectives
- Identify criteria for evaluation

Attitudes (savoir être)
- Curiosity and openness
- Readiness to suspend disbelief re: other cultures
- Readiness to suspend belief re: own culture

Peng Bingzhuan (2018). Study on Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence.

Appendix C. Mural Family diversity
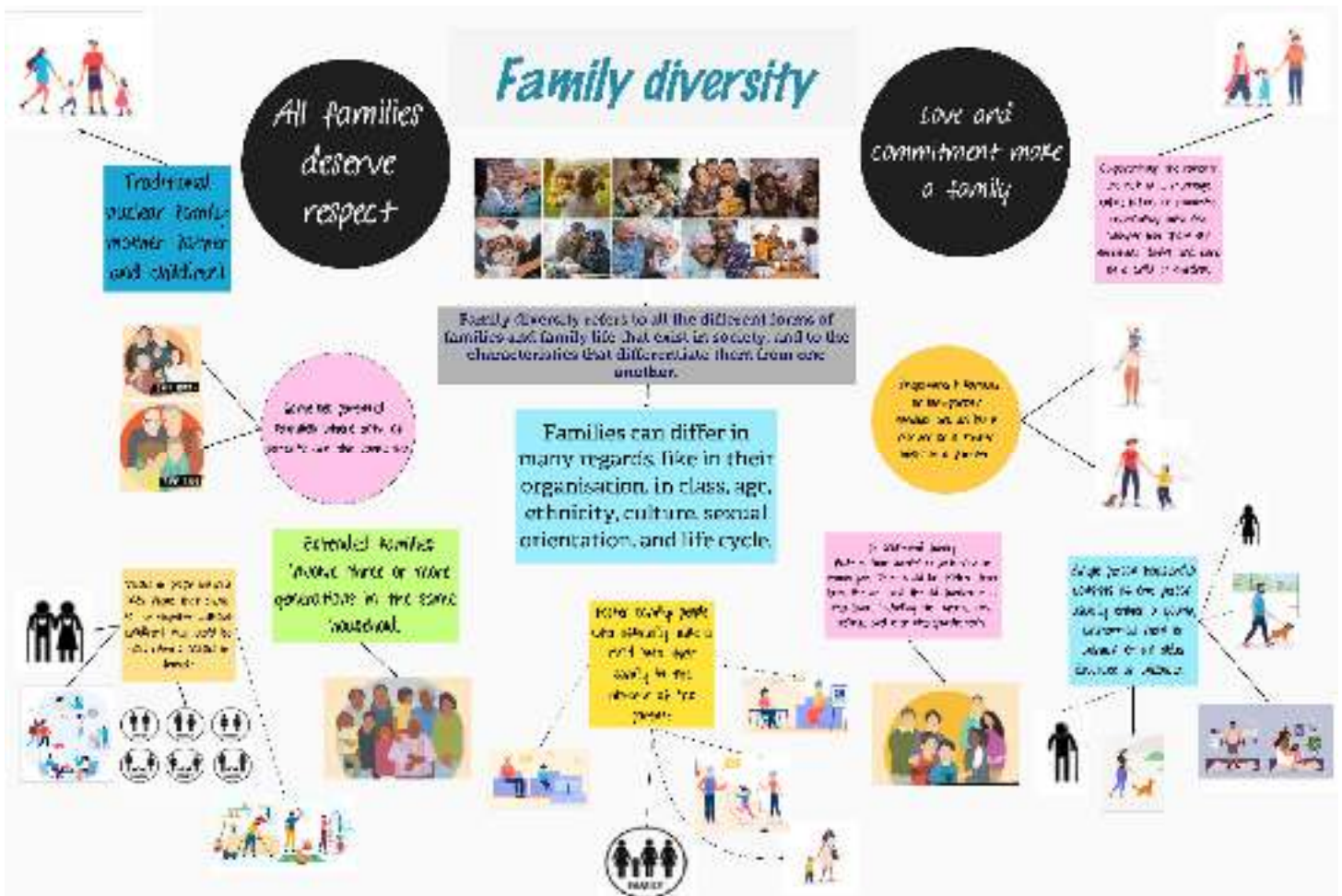
Cerón, Claudia (2022). Family diversity mural.

Appendix D. Reading exercise

Family diversity

People who officially take a child into their family in the absence of the parents

Reconstituted family

Families where both of parents are the same sex.

Foster family

Families led by a mother or a father without a partner.

Traditional nuclear family

Families that involve three or more generations in the same household.

Same-sex parented families

FAMILY

Include mother, father and child(ren)

Extended families

Families built by lone parents re-partnering or remarrying. There could be children from both the new and the old families in a step-family including step-parents, step-siblings, and even step-grandparents.

Single-parent families or lone-parent

FAMILY

Cerón, Claudia (2022). Family diversity reading.

Appendix E. Authenticity letter

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