



Universidad de Valladolid

Facultad de Educación y Trabajo Social

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

TRABAJO FIN DE MÁSTER

Máster en Profesor de Secundaria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y

Enseñanza de Idiomas

Fostering students' intercultural competence through foreign language activities

Autora:

Julia Ruiz de Anta

Tutora:

Natalia Barranco Izquierdo

Departamento de Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura

Valladolid, 26 de junio de 2017

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

Aristotle

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	5
2.	Justification	5
3.	Objectives.....	6
4.	Theoretical framework	6
4.1.	Pluriculturalty and interculturalty.....	6
4.1.1.	Interculturalty according to the <i>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment</i>	8
4.1.2.	<i>European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference</i>	9
4.2.	Communicative competence.....	11
4.3.	Intercultural competence.....	12
4.3.1.	Concept.....	12
4.3.2.	Learning intercultural competence approaches.....	12
4.3.3.	Intercultural competence in education.....	13
4.4.	Intercultural competence. Curriculum information.....	16
5.	Methodological framework.....	20
5.1.	Data collection.....	20
5.2.	Data analysis and interpretation of results.....	22
6.	Activities proposal.....	34
6.1.	Activity 1: “Debate on Trump’s immigration policy”	34
6.2.	Activity 2: “Break up with stereotypes”	35
6.3.	Activity 3: “Make a difference”	36
6.4.	Activity 4: “Warm welcome”	38
7.	Conclusions.....	39
8.	References.....	41
9.	Appendices.....	43

1. Introduction

Intercultural competence, broadly speaking, is understood as the ability of an individual to act and behave properly in multicultural situations. The fact that the present world is progressively becoming more and more multicultural emphasizes the necessity of working on this issue. It is true that cultural diversity is not a new circumstance, but this issue is gaining importance nowadays when glancing at education. Because, education, according to Aguado, Gil & Mata (2005), means cultural transmission and construction, production, consolidation and strengthening of communicative abilities and world perceptions. Moreover, accordingly to Byram (1997), “institutions and teachers [...] have a responsibility to pursue general educational aims together with those of the subject taught.” (p.43), in which intercultural competence is included. Thus, developing it in education is a duty, as well as a need. Furthermore, to do so, teachers must have trained previously intercultural competence in order to help their learners to foster it.

The aim of this essay is to highlight the relevance and necessity of implementing intercultural competence in education, so students will be able to develop intercultural competence within the classroom; to know how students feel about cultures and their attitudes towards them; and, finally, to provide some suggested activities due to work on intercultural competence in the classroom. For doing so, this paper firstly presents a personal justification of the topic, and then it points out the attempted objectives that are pursued throughout the paper. Thereafter, the theoretical bases related to this topic are presented for shaping a theoretical framework in order to support this essay. Subsequently, the methodological framework is made up of the analysis and interpretation of students’ personal attitudes towards different cultures, which was carried out through a questionnaire, and it will be deeply explained below. After having the data analyzed and interpreted, this paper provides an activities proposal for working on the intercultural competence in the foreign language subject (English) in secondary education and Bachillerato. This is due to the fact that one of the teachers’ tasks, and, above all, foreign language teachers’, is to prepare the student, explicitly, to the understanding of “self” and otherness. And, finally, it draws the accomplished conclusions after studying and researching on this field.

2. Justification

Since secondary education is a stage in which multiculturalism has an increased impact, it is especially important to work on the intercultural competence during this stage. According to Vilà (2006), during secondary education students have not shaped their attitudes towards

the others yet; moreover, they are prone to reject the unknown. Secondary education is the last compulsory formal education stage, so “es una etapa [...] que debe contener los contenidos básicos para vivir y convivir en sociedad, donde las competencias interculturales tienen un peso importante en este quehacer.” (Vilà, 2006, p. 356). That is why it is highly important and relevant the attention to diversity, in this particular case, cultural diversity. Through studying the theoretical basis dealing with this topic, as well as with some data that students from a high school provided, this essay would submit a didactic proposal in order to work with this issue during secondary education.

The information collected was provided during my internship in IES Pinar de la Rubia, where I had the opportunity to give the students a personal questionnaire consisting of eight closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. The aim of this set of questions was to know students’ attitude towards the different cultures. It would be relevant to point out that the purpose of this essay is working on intercultural competence in the classroom to prepare them to deal with cultural diversity in "real life". So, the fact that in this high school there are only few students from other countries is not a problem, as this competence is worth and necessary for academic, professional and personal fields. Nowadays, as the world is becoming a more and more globalized place, it is really common to meet people from different places, so making people aware of the need of establishing relationships based on tolerance, respect, and above all, integration among the cultures, is an essential issue. That is why teaching and working on inclusion in the classroom has a relevant importance.

3. Objectives

The objectives this essay pursues and aims to achieve are the following:

- Foment an education based on the principles of respect, tolerance, and, above all, inclusion within the classroom, as well as integration in society
- Promote intercultural education in secondary education and Bachillerato
- Highlight the benefits of teaching these values to the students
- Verify the importance of this issue in the 21st century Spanish society

4. Theoretical framework

4.1. Pluriculturality and interculturality

First of all, it would be remarkable to define and distinguish between pluriculturality and interculturality. To this effect, a comprehensive definition is provided by Beacco et al. (2010):

Pluriculturalism is the desire and ability to identify with several cultures, and participate in them. Interculturalism is the ability to experience another culture and analyse that experience. The intercultural competence acquired from doing this helps individuals to understand cultural difference better, establish cognitive and affective links between past and future experiences of that difference, mediate between members of two (or more) social groups and their cultures, and question the assumptions of their own cultural group and milieu.

Pluriculturalism - identification with two (or more) social groups and their cultures – and interculturalism – the competences for critical awareness of other cultures – may complement each other: active discovery of one or more other cultures may help learners to develop intercultural competence. (p. 16)

So, in other words, while pluriculturalism refers to the ability of identifying different cultures and, also, the identification with other cultures, interculturalism means the learning produced between cultures, as well as the personal desire to know more about them. In González, Guillén, and Vez's words, "[e]sta capacidad de convivir con la diversidad de lenguas es lo que define precisamente el plurilingüismo." (2010, p. 5). Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism could be linked as both terms combine the linguistic and cultural aspect, as plurilingualism

como principio—se ha traducido en la promoción de la diversidad no solo lingüística sino también cultural, al abordar las lenguas desde el punto de vista de los individuos que las utilizan por razones no solo instrumentales sino también integradoras—estas últimas de orden personal y social; es decir, en el sentido de desenvolverse de forma adecuada en los contextos sociales de otras comunidades lingüísticas, al mismo tiempo que de desarrollarse y enriquecerse en el encuentro con otros. (González et al., 2010, p. 40)

But, it is important to distinguish between multiculturalism and pluriculturalism due to the fact that these terms are usually used as synonyms, when a dissent lies under them. According to *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, the term multicultural means "of, relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures." (2017, n.p.), hence the main difference is that the concept multicultural alludes to the reflection of cultural diversity whereas the term pluricultural goes beyond, as it addresses identification with different cultures, as well as coexistence, and the experience itself. García & Sáez (1998) also distinguish between Intercultural Education and Multicultural Education since the term intercultural alludes to dynamism, active relationship between different human groups, including attitude and intentionality in order to achieve understanding.

4.1.1. Interculturality according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR from now on) is a document which

provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 1)

Therefore, it is essential to take this document as a base for this essay, as it deals with language teaching. Moreover, there are several parts throughout the document in which interculturality is taken into account. In order to analyze its relevant aspects for supporting this essay's study as theoretical basis, it is significant to note how this document understands the language learner:

The learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. Nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes plurilingual and develops interculturality. (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 43)

As pointed out, it affirms the development of interculturality through communicating in a foreign language. Thus, language and culture cannot be separated, allowing the learner—or user—to develop those intercultural skills.

When experiencing communication, it is important to take into account the context, which, in most of the face-to-face cases, would be exactly the same. But, the key thing is to overcome communication barriers, which may be provoked of the self-interpretation of the mentioned context. However, accordingly to CEFR, “[m]ore difficult to bridge are differences in values and beliefs, politeness conventions, social expectations, etc., in terms of which the parties interpret the interaction, unless they have acquired the relevant intercultural awareness.” (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 51). Intercultural awareness is produced when understanding the similarities and differences between the two sides, in other words, becoming aware of diversity. But, apart to bear in mind others' perspectives, this diversity leads to the creation of stereotypes, which, in most cases, are interpreted as conflicts in some way. The CEFR proposes intercultural skills, such as the coupling of cultures, deal with

misunderstandings produced by cultural differences, and subdue stereotypes, as a way of climate of understanding in every aspect of life between different groups.

Nevertheless, as pertinent as knowledge and understanding are, the personal characteristics also play an important role. Pursuant to CEFR, there are six factor groups: attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality factors. The first one of them, attitudes, comprises

the user/learner's degree of: openness towards, and interest in, new experiences, other persons, ideas, peoples, societies and cultures; willingness to relativise one's own cultural viewpoint and cultural value-system; willingness and ability to distance oneself from conventional attitudes to cultural difference. (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 105)

Secondly, motivation, which can be intrinsic or extrinsic; instrumental or integrative, and it also includes the human necessity for communicating. While values are ethical or moral, beliefs are based on ideologies, religions or philosophies. Then, the cognitive styles classify in convergent or divergent, or, synthetic, analytic and holistic. And, finally, personality factors consist, among others, of the individual's flexibility, open-mindedness, intelligence, self-awareness, self-reliance, self-esteem, proactivity or reactivity, and optimism or pessimism (Council of Europe, 2002). So, the school, and the classroom, should be places in which this sort of features are encouraged. It does not mean to change individual's characteristics, but to foster the thus termed 'soft skills'—qualities that are independent from acquired knowledge, such as dealing with people and a good attitude—due to overcoming cultural obstacles or differences (*Collins English Dictionary*). And all of this can be carried out through developing suitable activities within the classroom, in which students would be able to think about this fact and reflect on it. In other words, students would be aware of how to act to overcome the cultural differences.

In any case, teacher training in this field is essential so they will be working on students' attitudes towards cultural diversity. In Castro Prieto's words, "se hace necesaria una atención especial a las formación del profesorado que prepare para los encuentros interculturales inevitables en una Europa sin fronteras, plurilingüe y multicultural" (1999, p. 43). To this extent, the next part of the essay focuses on the *European Profile for Language Teacher Education* as a way of establishing some key aspects in the teacher's role.

4.1.2. *European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference*

This document is a report in which a European profile for foreign teachers is proposed. As it is said before in the essay, in order to work on intercultural competence with his students,

the teacher must have been trained previously on it. It states several elements that these teachers should cover, and this essay will focus on the following items, since they are relevant within this field: “experience of an intercultural and multicultural environment”, “training in social and cultural values”, “training in the diversity of languages and cultures”, “training in the importance of teaching and learning about foreign languages and cultures”, and “training in teaching European citizenship” (Kelly et al., 2004, pp. 5-6). The reason for pointing out these items is the fact that they include the cultural diversity and intercultural competence, and they will be briefly explained in the following lines.

The point of this report about “experience of an intercultural and multicultural environment” manifests that a trainee teacher is someone who has experience of living and working in a context in which several cultures coincide; moreover, he is also competent or suitable to foster and promote interactions between students, since he was taught through intercultural approach.

Subject 35 in the report, “training in social and cultural values”, states that teachers are aware of the fact that “teaching and learning foreign languages help promote social and cultural values such as respect for difference, active communication, a participatory attitude to society, and experience of a range of different cultures and lifestyles.” (Kelly et al., 2004, p. 81). Fostering these values comes from class strategies in which cultural diversity is provided.

Then, another element is “training in the diversity of languages and cultures”, in which Kelly et al. (2004) point out the fundamental elements in education: “respect for and promotion of diversity” (p. 82), as they are conscious plurilingual competence concepts. They also see English as a vehicular language for understanding and communication between groups of people.

Furthermore, the statement “training in the importance of teaching and learning about foreign languages and cultures” affirms that these teachers are conscious of the association between language and cultures; in other words, language and culture cannot be separated. And, by these means, learning a foreign language allows students to develop skills and abilities in order to a mutual understanding between people. This understanding involves respectful attitudes towards the different cultures. According to UNESCO (2005), inclusion is “a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning.” (p. 12), in other words, is a process which responds to the individual learners’ needs in order to reduce exclusion and achieve education for all. By contrast, conforming to UNRISD (1994) social integration means “equal opportunities and rights for all human beings”, “life chances” and “a

way of describing the established patterns of human relations in any given society.” (p. 5). In addition, learning foreign languages “is a way of safeguarding linguistic and cultural identity, a process in which foreign language teachers play a crucial role”, and languages “improve business opportunities, increase people’s mobility and allow people to experience foreign cultures and assimilate new commercial, social and cultural ideas.” (Kelly et al., 2002, p. 84). To sum up, teachers are aware of the benefits learning a new language implies, so they can show their students that learning a second language enable individuals to take as many benefits as possible, such as an enrichment in one’s culture, enhancement of mother-tongue competence, and the development of critical way of thinking in relation to cultural and social assumptions (Kelly et al., 2002). In the same way go González et al. (2010) when stating the importance of creating connections of coincidence between both languages

El plurilingüismo implica la construcción de una conciencia lingüística capaz de buscar similitudes entre las lenguas y desarrollar estrategias para gestionar las diferencias, y que, con la incorporación de nuevas lenguas al repertorio de cada individuo, ya sea a través de contextos educativos más o menos formales o de experiencias lingüísticas y culturales personales, facilita el aprendizaje de éstas. (p. 18)

At the final point, this report (Kelly et al., 2002) deals with “training in teaching European citizenship” which, basically, says teachers must know the elements included in the concept of European citizenship, such as values and laws, as well as the rights these citizens have. As teachers, they are supposed to promote the mentioned values selecting their teaching material, in order to make their learners aware of them.

4.2. Communicative competence

Regarding communicative competence, as a way of connecting in a logical way all the points in this paper, Trujillo (2001) defines it as

el conocimiento que nos permite utilizar el lenguaje como instrumento de comunicación en un contexto social determinado; es un concepto dinámico basado en la negociación de significado entre los interlocutores, aplicable tanto a la comunicación oral como a la escrita, que se actualiza en un contexto o una situación particular. (p. 410)

In addition, Canale & Swain (1980) consider four sub-competences within communicative competence: linguistic, discursive, sociolinguistic, and strategic.

The purpose of including, briefly, this aspect is to connect this competence with the intercultural competence, as they both have similarities, and one emerges through the other.

4.3. Intercultural competence

4.3.1. Concept

Even though this term has been mentioned above in the paper, it is essential to have a clear definition of it. After having pointed out several aspects or elements that surround this concept, a complete definition would be saying that intercultural competence involves skills and abilities for communicating with other people. This also implies bearing in mind the socio-cultural values of a particular group, so as to achieve effectively communication as a mutual goal. Furthermore, Byram (1997) asserts that intercultural competence must include *savoir-être* (change in attitude), *savoirs* (new concepts acquisition), *savoir comprendre* (interpretation skills), *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness) and *savoir-faire* (learning throughout experience). From this concept of intercultural competence, the feelings of empathy and tolerance arise, making the individual able to become interested and conscious about others'. But treating this concept just like this, just referring to an individual, is not enough. In order to integrate it, this essay moves to education; to analyze its integrations and implications in education.

4.3.2. Learning intercultural competence approaches

As stated by Oliveras (2000), intercultural competence is based on communicative competence theory, which lays emphasis on the learner and his needs when being in contact with other cultures. The basic reasons for communicative competence are the necessity of giving importance to sociocultural aspects when learning a language; the fact that each individual holds his own cultural grounding, so this personal identity should be taken into account when learning a language; both cultures—learner and foreign language's—have to be included within the classroom since it is the only manner to transform this experience into intercultural; and the relevance of emotional aspects, which play an essential role.

Dealing with this circumstance there are two important approaches for learning intercultural competence explained in Oliveras' book. The first one is The Social Skills Approach, which relies on the ability of acting appropriately according to social rules in an intercultural encountering. Its principle is that social skills are required for any social situation, in order to make it worthy. However, the individual's culture is relegated to learn a set of behaviors from the other culture. On the other hand, The Holistic Approach supports the idea that intercultural competence is an attitude matter. Contrary to The Social Skills Approach, the individual's culture becomes highly important in order to master comprehension and empathy. Within this approach, there are three aspects to take into

account: Identity and personality function, empathy development, and the intercultural actor. To begin with, identity and personality function considers that in an intercultural experience the individual has the ability to stabilize his own identity. Then, empathy development deals with the ability of understanding other's point of view. And, finally, the intercultural actor is the intermediary between the two cultures. His objective is to reach effective communication and understanding between people, so he has to understand intentions and perceptions.

4.3.3. Intercultural competence in education

When considering intercultural competence to be part of formal education, it is likely to wonder about the reasons and implications of this fact. To begin with, as asserted in *Libro Blanco sobre la educación y la formación. Enseñar y aprender. Hacia la sociedad del conocimiento* (1996), “[l]os idiomas constituyen también un eslabón necesario para el conocimiento de los demás. Por ello, saber idiomas contribuye a reforzar el sentimiento de pertenencia a Europa, con su riqueza y su diversidad cultural, y la comprensión entre los ciudadanos europeos.” (p. 72). This statement affirms the association produced between language and culture, which cannot be separated. Thus, learning a foreign language must take into account the culture learning itself.

According to Oliveras (2000), the state of the art is that the basis or principles of learning a foreign language are not enough to solve the misunderstandings caused by a lack of sociocultural competence. These misunderstandings are not only because of linguistic aspects, but for differences in behavior or cultural customs. The increase in cultural diversity in every situation is a fact in the present time; so, why not promoting students' intercultural competence within the classroom? García & Sáez (1998) claim:

La escuela es, por tanto, importante para el desarrollo de la interculturalidad. La práctica educativa, en la escuela o fuera de ella, estrecha, ineludiblemente, sus lazos con la interculturalidad y con sus contenidos y procesos, en la medida que una y otra fomentan formas y estrategias de aprendizaje que enseñan a los alumnos, ciudadanos de aquí y allá, a leer «el» mundo, «sus mundos», desde diversas perspectivas, lo que supone una manera abierta de combatir el racismo desde la educación al evitar el dogmatismo de la exclusividad y la intolerancia de la especificidad y al pedirle a los alumnos que piensen el mundo más allá de lo establecido por horizontes predeterminantes. (p. 23)

Along the same lines, Castro Prieto (1999) considers necessary to include cultural perception within the foreign language learning curriculum, since this learning will help the individuals to take values such as tolerance and acceptance, in order to achieve a better

coexistence. She manifests the importance that education plays in order to produce a change in people's minds by saying: "la educación juega un papel esencial por su carácter de integración social" (Castro Prieto, 1999, p. 41). Furthermore, according to García & Sáez (1998), «aculturación por inmersión» is produced when new learning arises due to continuous experience with other cultures. They also state how academic education influences in the ability of constructing categories that are based on exclusion and inclusion processes, as during this period cultural meanings appear in order to give rise to ideological patterns. This is the reason for claiming that is a necessity to work on the inclusion and integration of different human groups, so as to avoid racism and the effects it provokes. Thus, this inclusion must begin in classrooms, so it can breach formal education and take part in life experience. Moreover, Aneas (2005) asserts that interculturality within a body or organization transcends the pure coexistence and relationship between different cultures.

The importance of implementing this kind of learning within formal education organizations is reflected by diversity found in there. As explained in Beacco et al. (2010):

Schools are places of diversity:

- of learners, of the composition of their language repertoires, and of the structure and form of their social and cultural affiliations;
- of schools themselves, and particularly the language of schooling, which represents a new form for all who learn it
- a form which differs in part from the one they normally employ, and which must be used carefully and accurately;
- of the forms of the language of schooling which may, in the classroom, be close to ordinary speech, or shift towards controlled, "elevated" and academic varieties, transitions between which should be noted;
- of the discourse genres used in the school, which vary from subject to subject;
- of languages (particularly "foreign" languages), and of the discursive and cognitive forms peculiar to discourse communities (including the discourse practices of academic subject communities);
- of lesson content, which may be given many different forms (verbal, non-verbal) and of the ways in which it is transformed/transposed when mediated, e.g. by teachers (reformulation of textbook statements). (p. 34).

Thus, developing intercultural competence within the school would be a necessary consequence of this diversity. Schools must be places which "promuevan un entendimiento mutuo, tanto por parte de los alumnos como del profesorado, de las causas culturales que motivan las diferencias." (Tébar, 2006, pp. 87-88). If schools promote effective

understanding, students will be able to foster intercultural competence for the rest of their lives.

Beacco et al. (2010) provide some guidelines for teaching and fostering intercultural competences, which are described below:

- Knowledge to be aware of a particular social group and its customs, and which “may be located in another society, and may also be comparable to, and function like, a social group (occupational, subject-based, sport-related etc.) in one’s own society, to which socialization/education at school gives access” (p. 35).
- Ability to comprehend any document about other society and its values.
- “Ability to learn/ability to do” aspects of others’ societies, and to achieve interaction by means of suitable acting (p. 35).
- “Critical cultural awareness” in understanding different points of view, customs, practices, etc. This can be defined as the ability to be conscious of other cultures and avoid prejudging (p. 35).

The relevant aspects to make intercultural competence work are based on learner’s interest on interacting with individuals who belong to a different culture and also his ability to empathize with them, always bearing in mind others’ values and cultural references.

At this point, since education is regulated by laws, it would be essential to devote the subsequent section to the curriculum information dealing with this field. But, before studying thoroughly this topic within the curriculum, it would be of interest to highlight what González et al. (2010) claim about the necessity of students to develop abilities to interact

más allá de las propias fronteras lingüísticas y culturales ha dado lugar a que el desarrollo de la competencia plurilingüe e intercultural [...] sea considerado como un compromiso social, cultural y educativo. Este compromiso [...] se ha convertido en un reto para los sistemas educativos, en particular en los niveles de escolarización obligatorias, ya que, [...] suele suceder que la mayoría de la población no accede al desarrollo de esa competencia plurilingüe e intercultural si no es en el sistema escolar o en la formación continua. Un reto además que, [...] nos encontramos [...] con valoraciones que se reflejan en el estatus desigual de las lenguas (lenguas extranjeras con la primacía del inglés, lenguas de escolarización, lengua primera, lengua de origen, lengua materna, etc.). (pp. 40-41)

Thereby, this is a great challenge for education which must be taken seriously so as to help to create a better society, in which different cultures live together in a climate of understanding, learning, integration, and coexistence. Individuals have to know cultural diversity and be willing to get over barriers (Vilà, 2008).

4.4. Intercultural competence. Curriculum information

This part of the essay focuses on the Spanish Education Law, Real Decreto 1105/2014, which is regulated by the LOMCE (Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa), by which the curriculum for secondary education and Bachillerato is established. It states several competences, standards, objectives, methodology, criteria and contents that students are supposed to achieve during secondary education and Bachillerato stages. Firstly, Real Decreto 1105/2014 points out the curriculum key competences, which can be defined as the abilities to implement the contents of each educative stage and particular teaching in order to carry out activities, as well as solving complex problems in an effective way. By order of Real Decreto 1105/2014 (p. 172), the mentioned competences are:

a) Linguistic competence

b) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

c) Digital competence

d) Learning to learn

e) Social and civic competences

f) Initiative and entrepreneurship

g) Cultural awareness and expression

Due to this essay's topic, social and civic competences and cultural awareness and expression will be the relevant competences. And, of course, the linguistic competence will be also relevant in this essay, as it deals with the foreign language (English), so this competence will be implicitly developed regardless of the aspects treated in the classroom. According to Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (n.d.), it can be said, in short, that the linguistic competence involves different language skills due to develop interaction ability between people for communicating purposes, in such a way that it promotes socialization for both the educational field and society in general. The sociocultural component also includes knowledge about the world and intercultural dimension. Then, social and civic competences are related to the ability of understanding society as a changing, complex and dynamic element, in order to make sense of social problems and phenomena. It also implies the knowledge of the accepted behavior and conduct in each particular society, as well as equality, among other aspects, among different ethnic groups, societies and cultures, and also to understand cultural identities. This competence also means ability for communicating and showing tolerance when expressing and understanding different points of view. This last part suggests the feeling of empathy, by which people can show respect to the differences presented by others. Moreover, people are supposed to have a deep knowledge in concepts

such as democracy, justice, equality, and human rights. By this way, they must bear in mind the existence of multicultural societies in nowadays' world. People must be interested in intercultural communication, values diversity, and respect, so they would be able to get beyond prejudices. They are expected to develop skills in effective interaction with a view to show solidarity and interest in problem-solving. This also entails values such as collaboration, integrity, attitude, responsibility, and diversity support. Becoming aware of these values, likewise acquiring these skills and abilities, means putting yourself in others' place, as much as accepting the differences among people. On the other hand, cultural awareness and expression means to appreciate and value different artistic and cultural expression, and consider them as an enrichment source. This will vary according to the culture, that is why it deals with interculturalism. This competence is based on the development of abilities of thought in order to value, show interest to and take pleasure of different cultural expressions, as well as the respect for preserving them.

According to Real Decreto 1105/2014, the first L2 subject contributes, not only to the acquisition and improvement of the linguistic communication competence in the real world, but to the development of the conscious reflection and furtherance of other competencies that are linked to comprehension, expression, interaction, as well as the development of thoughts and feelings about oneself and others. This contributes to the creation of relationships as a social agent. The effective use of foreign languages (L2) implies an open-minded and positive vision about relationships, leading this fact to respectful attitudes towards other cultures and languages, people who have other beliefs, as well as the valuation of other cultures, beliefs and ideas. Moreover, these circumstances must be understood as a unique enriching mutual opportunity, likewise for solving conflicts. Furthermore, Real Decreto 1105/2014 collects several competencies for the students to achieve, and focusing on intercultural competence it states:

Las competencias sociales y cívicas, y la conciencia y la expresión culturales, tanto las circunscritas a los entornos más inmediatos como las propias de ámbitos cada vez más amplios de actuación, forman así parte de las habilidades que comprende una competencia intercultural integrada en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 423)

L2 subject entails, apart from other competencies such as the linguistic one, the integration of social and civic, and cultural expression competencies, which give place to intercultural competence skills.

By the same token, equality between men and women will be encouraged, as well as gender violence prevention, or violence against people with disabilities, enhancing the principles of people equality and no discrimination based on personal or social circumstances. Moreover, educational administrations will foster the pacific resolution of conflicts in all the personal and social situations. It is also their duty and responsibility to support principles and values

que sustentan la libertad, la justicia, la igualdad, el pluralismo político, la paz, la democracia, el respeto a los derechos humanos, el respeto a los hombre y mujeres por igual, a las personas con discapacidad y el rechazo a la violencia terrorista, la pluralidad, el respeto al Estado de derecho, el respeto y consideración a las víctimas del terrorismo y la prevención del terrorismo y de cualquier tipo de violencia. La programación docente debe comprender en todo caso la prevención de la violencia de género, de la violencia contra las personas con discapacidad, de la violencia terrorista y de cualquier forma de violencia, racismo o xenofobia, incluido el estudio del Holocausto judío como hecho histórico. Se evitarán los comportamientos y contenidos sexistas y estereotipos que supongan discriminación. (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 174)

It is highly remarkable to point out to equality, peace, democracy, human rights esteem, racism, discriminative stereotypes, located within the cross curricular subjects specified in the Real Decreto 1105/2014, which are relevant values that are joined for the topic of this essay.

Then, among all the objectives laid out throughout this document, there are some of them related at some extent to any aspect about intercultural competence. To begin with, the first objective in secondary education asserts:

Asumir responsablemente sus deberes, conocer y ejercer sus derechos en el respeto a los demás, practicar la tolerancia, la cooperación y la solidaridad entre las personas y grupos, ejercitarse en el diálogo afianzando los derechos humanos y la igualdad de trato y de oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres, como valores comunes de una sociedad plural y prepararse para el ejercicio de la ciudadanía democrática. (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 176)

By this way, it affirms the students' duties of respecting others' rights promoting human rights, likewise equality and democracy. This must be assumed by the students, as it is their responsibility. Speaking about human rights gives the students a sense of equity between their identity and others', highlighting the fact of equal opportunity and equality in diversity.

Thereupon, another objective is “fortalecer sus capacidades afectivas en todos los ámbitos de la personalidad y en sus relaciones con los demás, así como rechazar la violencia, los prejuicios de cualquier tipo, los comportamientos sexistas y resolver pacíficamente los

conflictos.” (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 177), which enhances relationships avoiding prejudices. And, finally, the last objective referring to this topic declares the existence of many cultures and it is the student's' responsibility to respect his and others': “Conocer, valorar y respetar los aspectos básicos de la cultura y la historia propias y de los demás, así como el patrimonio artístico y cultural.” (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 177).

On the other hand, there are two relevant objectives considered in the stage of Bachillerato; however, they are actually similar to the previously mentioned ones in secondary education. The first one states:

Ejercer la ciudadanía democrática, desde una perspectiva global, y adquirir una conciencia cívica responsable, inspirada por los valores de la Constitución española así como por los derechos humanos, que fomente la corresponsabilidad en la construcción de una sociedad justa y equitativa. (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 188).

This objective discloses the need of a fair and equal society so students must be taught in such civic principles. For instance, the respect to human rights in order to achieve the construction of a fair society in which all the people have the same rights regardless of their culture.

Then, the following objective underlines the pacific ways of solving social conflicts, thus, it arises the fact of cultural diversity coexistence, in which conflicts would take place: “Consolidar una madurez personal y social que les permita actuar de forma responsable y autónoma y desarrollar su espíritu crítico. Prever y resolver pacíficamente los conflictos personales, familiares y sociales.” (Real Decreto 1105/2014, p. 188). Furthermore, Delors (1996) wonders: “¿Sería posible concebir una educación que permitiera evitar conflictos o solucionarlos de manera pacífica, fomentando el conocimiento de los demás, de sus culturas y espiritualidad?” (p. 103). At first glance, addressing to conflicts immediately draws a negative idea, but it is important to think about conflicts as a way of learning. It is not about avoiding the conflict itself, but to know how to face it in order to benefit from it; as a way of seeing new opportunities through it. According to Delors, learning to live together (as he states like one of the four pillars of education) needs to be based on understanding others and the trend to common aims. Conflicts can promote learning about other cultures; this means something positive. Intercultural conflicts appear because of cultural diversity in the classroom. These are caused by interests contradicted or, in other words, they are produced by the cultural shock. This fact happens when an individual comes in contact with a new culture, as some aspects are taken positively but others negatively. People have to get adapted to it. (Oliveras,

2000). However, and as it is mentioned before, conflicts are learning opportunities in which solidarity, cooperation, peace and respect take place.

5. Methodological framework

After reviewing the essential aspects of the intercultural competence, it would be appropriate to introduce the research. This essay is based on my internship in the high school IES Pinar de la Rubia, which is a public high school in Valladolid, located, together with the public school Alonso Berruguete, in a piny area in Camino Viejo de Simancas. The high school facilities comprise two buildings which are connected, and they also separate the stages of secondary education and Bachillerato. There is also a sports center, a wide playground in the piny area, which has basketball courts and football pitches too, and, there is also an ecological vegetable patch in which students, teachers and families are involved. There is also radio booth in which students and teachers participate for recording information, interviews, etc., and then, they display it on the high school webpage. The students, who live in the nearby areas, belong to a middle class. There are some students from other countries, but in the classrooms I intervened there were few foreign students; in particular, in one of them there was one boy from Germany, and in another classroom there was a boy from Brazil.

During this period, I asked my mentor whether it was possible to give the students a questionnaire in order to accomplish and support my essay. He allowed me to do it, thus I prepared a questionnaire for them. So as to create it, I read “Mis competencias interculturales”, found in *Didáctica de las lenguas modernas. Competencia plurilingüe e intercultural*, by González et al. (2010). Then, I selected several questions which were relevant for this topic; and, finally, I adapted the questions for my study, having, ultimately, eight closed-ended questions. Moreover, I added to this questionnaire two open-ended questions so they could write their personal views and attitudes. Subsequently, all the questionnaires were collected, analyzed and interpreted, as it is displayed below.

5.1.Data collection

As it is said before, this study is based on what students between 13 and 19 years old think about the issue of culture, their personal attitudes and behaviors towards people from other cultures, their feelings in this kind of situations, their knowledge about this field in terms of conceptions that culturality implies and how they perceive and react to multicultural contexts. The total number of the sample is eighty-five, and these students belong to different

high school stages, such as second year of secondary education (thirteen students), fourth year of secondary education (thirty-seven students), first year of Bachillerato (nineteen students) and second year of Bachillerato (sixteen students). In order to carry this out, they were given a questionnaire—which, as it is explained before, is based on “Mis competencias interculturales” found in the book *Didáctica de las lenguas modernas. Competencia plurilingüe e intercultural*—in which they firstly had to indicate their nationality and some other personal data. Then, they answered this questionnaire made up of ten questions.

Nationality: Gender: Age: Grade:

	Yes	No	I don't know
1. Do you consider yourself an open-minded person for the unknown?			
2. Do you think that there are cultural stereotypes?			
3. Do you want to solve the misunderstanding that stereotypes can cause?			
4. Do you think that people from the same culture, keep their individual differences?			
5. Do you think that there are not first-class and second-class languages? (Do you believe that there are not better languages/cultures than others?)			
6. Can you value your own cultural roots and other's?			
7. Are you able to observe without judging?			

8. Do you accept that there are different attitudes and behaviors?			
--	--	--	--

- 9. Have you ever had contact with people from other cultures? Write, briefly, your own experience and your attitude towards him/her
- 10. In case you have answered ‘no’ or ‘I don’t know’ in any of the questions above (1-10), can you give an explanation or justification of your answer?

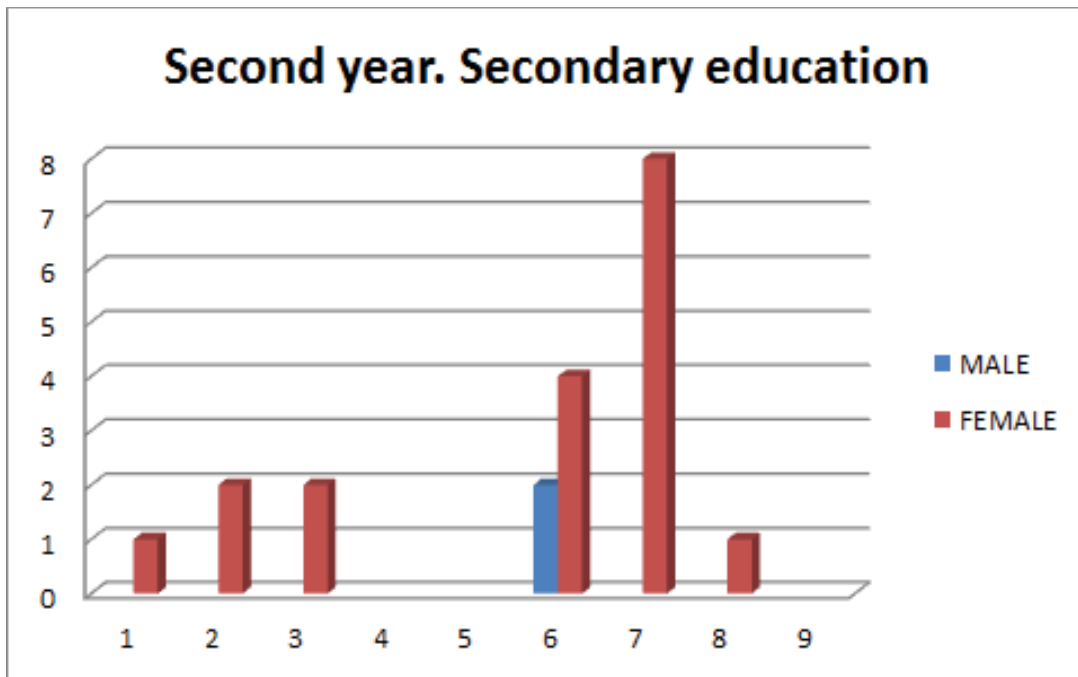
For this essay, it would be relevant to point out the nationality of the students, which, almost all the students asked, is Spanish. In second year of secondary education (2º E.S.O.) and in first year of Bachillerato all of them are Spanish, whereas in fourth year of secondary education (4º E.S.O.) thirty-six people are Spanish and one of them has German and Spanish nationality, and in second year of Bachillerato fifteen students are Spanish and one of them is Brazilian.

5.2. Data analysis and interpretation of results

All the data obtained from their answers to the mentioned questionnaire have been analyzed grouping the students into their school stage. Since the ideal answer for the first eight closed-ended questions is to say ‘yes’, they were asked to justify their answers in case they say ‘no’ or ‘I don’t know’. The data are shown below through bar charts.

- Data obtained from the second year of secondary education:

This classroom is made up of thirteen students between 13 and 15 years old, who were asked the previous questions. Among them, there are three boys and ten girls. The data obtained has been analyzed taking into account the questions they asked no or I don’t know, so in this group the negative answers are:



Then, they had to justify why they had answered ‘no’ or ‘I don’t know’ in any of the questions. After analyzing all the questionnaires, they all share these statements:

- In the first question, a girl does not consider herself to be an open-minded person because she distrusts the unknown.
- In the second question, two girls do not know if stereotypes exist, as well as they do not like them.
- In the third question, a girl says she is not interested in this issue, while the other one affirms that she does not really know it because she might be harmed.
- In the sixth question 50% of them state that they ignore how they can value it. Furthermore, they say there are not cultures better than others, and all of them should be equal.
- In the seventh one, all of them justify their answer stating that everybody judge while observing. Moreover, they say they would only judge the appearance as it is the first thing we see about the other person but they would not judge the personality. When meeting someone, the image you perceive of him/her will make you think if he/she is a good or a bad person. In addition, they are completely aware that it is not good or correct to prejudge.
- In the eighth question, a girl declares that she always tries to accept different attitudes, but sometimes she cannot accept them. She believes that not all the attitudes and behaviors can be accepted.

To finish with the analysis of the answers of this group, this essay will analyze their replies to the topic of their experience with people from other cultures. Some of the students reported that they have not had contact with people from other cultures, but the majority of them have. So, these are the relevant points about what they have said and they mentioned about their own experience:

- There are a wide range of different cultures and countries mentioned.
- They all describe as very nice, kind and interesting people the ones that they met from different cultures.
- 90% of the students affirm that they respect people from different cultures and countries.
- 60 % of them state that these people they are talking about are their friends or best friends.
- 60 % of them find this kind of experiences as an excellent way of bidirectional learning about cultures, as well as a good way for sharing interests.
- 90% of them also say they travel a lot and they fancy meeting people from different cultures, and they want to continue learning about other cultures as it is really interesting.
- 30% of them declare that, even though they completely respect a person from another culture when they had contact with him/her, sometimes they did not like some customs he/she has.
- One of them alludes to the problem of the language: a boy says that some of his best friends belong to other countries; therefore they speak another language, so they have to communicate using English, which he is not very good at.

Interpretation of the results

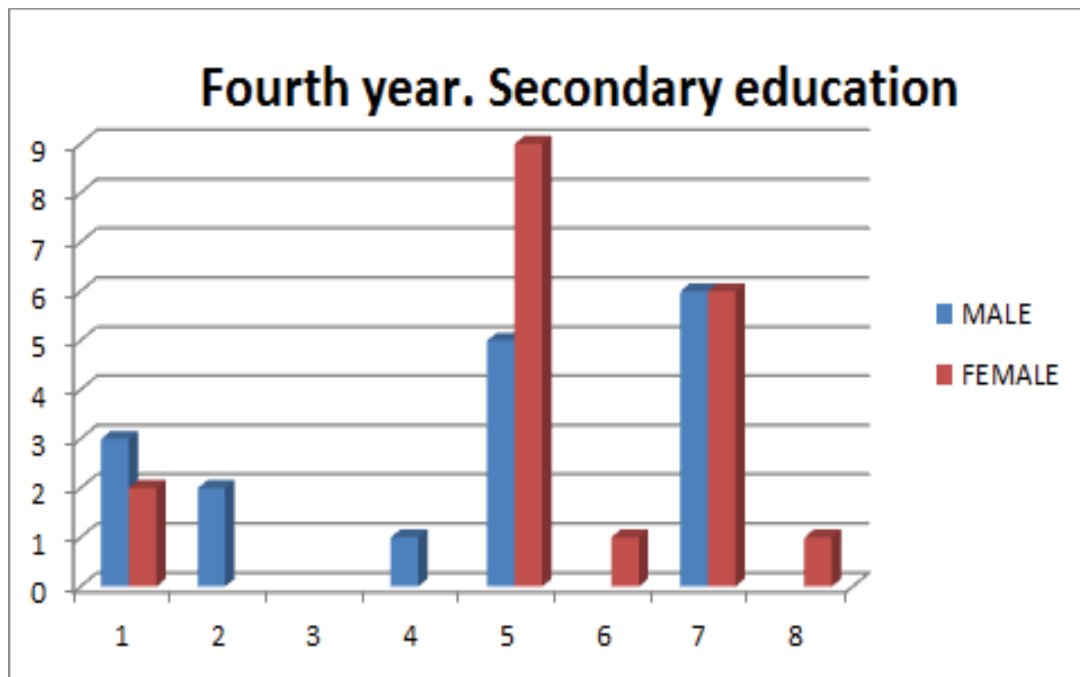
As it is observed, the majority of them states their respect for other cultures and their enjoyment in travelling to places in which they can meet people from different cultures and learn things about their cultures, even though they do not always share the same customs or fancy them. It can be said that they seem conscious about living together with other cultures as an actual fact. Moreover, they seem to know that cultures do not make people different in treatment or opportunities. It is highly interesting to see that the 60% of the students point out

learning produced when meeting individuals with other socio-cultural background. And, they all consider that there are not first-class cultures or languages.

On the other hand, the value judgments they mention should be borne in mind. If the purpose is to make learners get beyond differences, it should be worked within the classrooms. In this particular case, it is impossible to establish a trend taking into account gender, as the majority of the students in this class are girls.

- Data obtained from fourth year of secondary education:

The total number of students from two different classes who have asked the questions in 4^o ESO is thirty-seven, in which there are 17 boys and 20 girls. They are between 15 and 17 years old, and except one boy who has German and Spanish nationality, the rest of them are Spanish. The data obtained has been analyzed taking into account the questions they asked no or I don't know, so in this group the negative answers are:



Then, they had to explain and justify their negative or 'I don't know' answers. After reading and analyzing all of them, these are the statements they pointed out:

- 30 % of them say that it is sometimes difficult for them to be open-minded for the unknown. Otherwise, others affirm that they might be open-minded but depending on what for and which person.
- Dealing with the existence of better cultures than others, two of them consider that there are cultures richer than ours, as they imply more knowledge and history. By this way, they state that no one is superior to another person just for belonging to a

particular culture, but his/her culture might be considered superior since it is richer culturally speaking or the wealth of its language. The rest of the students justify their responses saying that all the cultures are the best, but some old traditions and customs must be left away, for instance women conditions or the issue of religion in some cultures. In this case, one girl says that due to the fact that some cultures are more respectful with women, these cultures are better than others. She joins two factors: respectful culture and better culture. She considers it in a global way that is why she justifies her answer saying that if a culture is more respectful than other, it should be beyond others. Moreover, these students also refer to the importance of some languages, like English, which has a global impact and all of us can communicate using this language. On the other hand, some students talk about countries' evolution, stating that each country has evolved differently, and some countries are still underdeveloped in terms of culture. One of the things they say is that if a culture is violent it is not good, and therefore, worse than peaceful cultures. Two of the students (a girl and a boy) also say that their negative answer for this question is based on their experience and principles or values.

- When they are asked why they have answered 'no' or 'I don't know' in the question about being able to observe without judging, all of them agree that every person judges and compares when meeting someone new, because he/she has to have a first impression about the other person, for instance, in order to know a little bit of him/her. They also say that if they see something different than them, they tend to judge it. In addition, they affirm that when seeing someone new, it is common to think that it is complicated or weird. It is important to highlight that one of them also states that nothing is what it seems, so it is really important to get to know the person.
- One girl states that depending which attitudes and behaviors, she would accept them or not.

Finally, they wrote about their personal experiences with other cultures and their attitude towards these people. These are the points they refer to:

- They refer to many different cultures when talking about personal experiences.
- 30% of them have lived in other countries for some days with a family in France or England, and they state they felt comfortable and happy with them.
- Moreover, they talk about feeling completely integrated within those families.

- 30% of the students write about their holidays in other countries. They say they met many people from those countries they had visited, which they liked so much.
- 90% of the students say positive things about this experience and the people they have met, such as their respect for them, kindness from these people, and good attitude and behavior reciprocally.
- They all highlight a respectful and equality behavior. The attitude towards everybody must be the same, it does not matter which culture he/she belongs to.
- One girl has a German friend and says that, although they are different in some aspects, they share many other things. She is very respectful with his customs, as well as with the differences that exist between them. She sometimes helps him to understand some things that he misunderstands from our culture.
- They also write about the learning between the cultures when meeting a new person from a different culture. They fancy asking them questions about their culture, and they like to know about the different customs they have. In short, they like learning about new things since they find it really interesting.
- Two boys claim that we are not different; we just have different customs, such as speaking a different language or eating different things. Furthermore, they stress this belief saying that except of the skin color or the accent each person has, we are all equal.
- One girl talks about Japanese and German cultures, which she knows. She considers these people methodic and disciplined, which she really likes, because she considers herself to be very methodic and disciplined.
- Two students (a girl and a boy) show empathy when writing about their experience. On the one hand, the girl writes about an experience with a boy from Sahara she met. This boy came to Spain for two months in summer, and then he decided to stay in Spain. The problem is that he would like to visit his family in Sahara, but he cannot do this because he is afraid of not been able to come back to Spain again. She feels really sorry for him. On the other hand, the boy narrates his experience in Marrakesh, which was amazing. But, he did not like seeing a little girl in the street selling tissues; he says that it was really sad to have seen this.
- A girl believes that, after meeting many people from other cultures, it is different how we can adapt to them. For instance, she believes that it is easier to adapt English and Spanish cultures, but in the case of Muslim culture it is really difficult as they do not

understand many aspects of our culture. But she also claims that they are getting more open-minded. She always respects all the cultures, even though she does not always share customs.

- Three of the students (a girl and two boys) seem to be cautious when meeting other people. They say, for instance, that they are nice people, but they are very conflictive. One of the boys says that he has always had good intention for meeting people from other cultures, but these people have not reacted in the same way, and they felt aversion towards him. The girl mentions the difficulty and complexity that implies, sometimes, understanding issues that are common for you and not for others, and vice versa. There are so many differences between cultures.

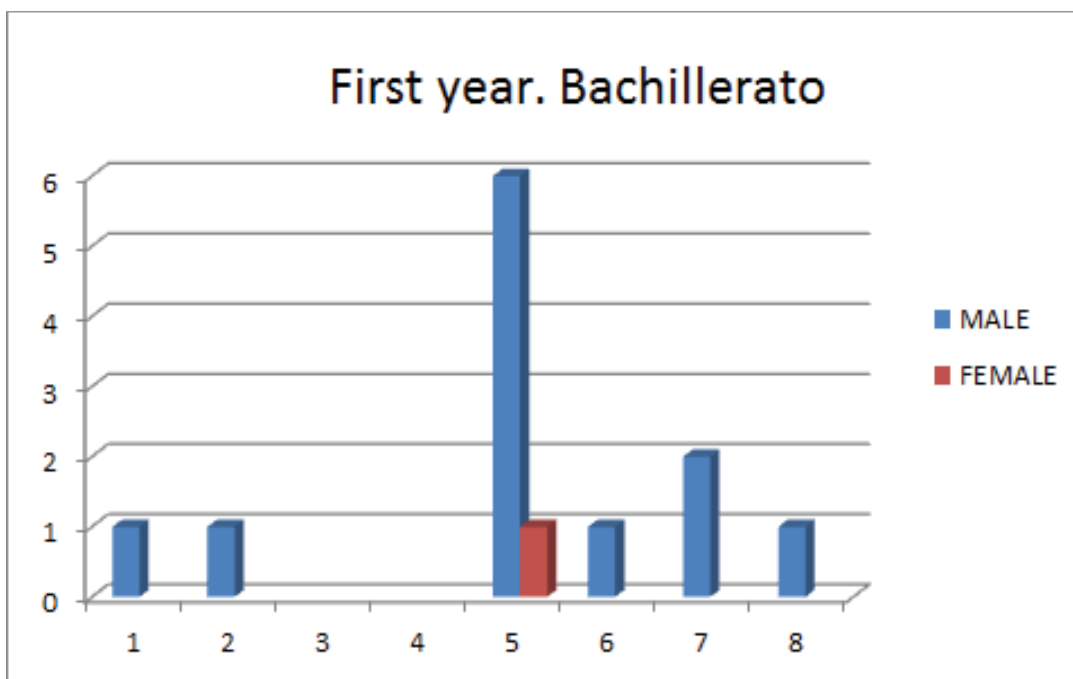
Interpretation of the results

In general, they show themselves aware of equality between cultures. However, some students point out the evolution of cultures in terms of women condition or religious aspects. It is good to appreciate that they reject violence as a means of practicing a religion. They also make mention of English as a vehicular language by which we all can communicate over the world, not by saying it is better than other languages, but affirming it is more important than others. Regarding open-mindedness, students show themselves as cautious about being open-minded. This viewpoint is relevant since this would determine, for instance, inclusion in the classroom and integration in society. This point is connected to the act of prejudice, which most of them declare their incapability to stop doing this.

At length, it is odd to observe the gender tendency in the answers. Due to the similar number of male and female in this stage, gender could be taken into account in order to try to establish whether they follow a trend or not. While boys tend to wonder about open-mindedness and the existence of cultural stereotypes, girls are prudent with the acceptance of different attitudes.

- Data obtained from first year of Bachillerato:

The number of students who asked to the questionnaire is nineteen—11 boys and 8 girls, who are between 16 and 18 years old, and all of them are Spanish. This is the recount of the questions they have answered ‘no’ or ‘I don’t know’:



Their justifications and explanations of their answers deal with the following main ideas:

- A boy justifies he has answered ‘I don’t know’ in the question about considering himself an open-minded person for the unknown because he thinks that this kind of questions should be answered by people that know him, and not by himself.
- About the cultural stereotypes, a boy affirms emphatically that there are stereotypes which are difficult to comprehend. He gives an example dealing with going out at night: when someone is in the street never comes to his mind to introduce himself to, for instance, a Romanian person. But, if this person is Spanish, he does, because he sees him friendlier.
- They consider that there are not better cultures than others, but more important or commonly used languages, for instance English. Moreover, they believe that, even though differences exist among cultures, these are not essential.
- A boy firmly states that for him the best culture is the Spanish one.
- A boy talks about his lack of awareness about other cultures.
- When dealing with the fact of judging people, two boys consider that everybody judges at first sight.
- A boy states that there are behaviors in some cultures that are impermissible and unacceptable.

When they talk about contact with people from other cultures, it can be pointed out:

- 30% of them do not know anybody from other culture. A girl says that she has not been able to enjoy the benefit of meeting someone from a different culture than hers, but in case she meets someone, she is sure that she would respect them.
- They also talk about great adaptation between different cultures when they met people that were not Spanish. Moreover, they believe that it was an incredibly experience. Even though there are some differences between cultures, the attitude towards them was the same as if they were with a Spanish person.
- They felt lucky for been able to have contact and experiences with people from other cultures. It is an enriching experience, and they would like to experience more situations like these.
- One of the boys says that his best friend is German, and he explains how he helped him at the very beginning when this German boy barely understood Spanish language.
- A boy has a friend from Bulgaria, and they have a good relationship.
- Another experience one boy tells is when he has lived in France for one month. He stayed with a Muslim family, with whom he felt highly comfortable. He writes about his experience saying that he ate typical Marrakesh dishes. He also says he still keeps in touch with them; he feels really close and attached to them, and they have a special relationship.
- 30% of them state that they have met people from Marrakesh in the high school. They respect him and had a good relationship. Anyone judged him for belonging to a different culture, although sometimes they found strange some of his religious customs.
- A boy narrates his experience living one year in Ireland. He stayed with an Irish family, and he did not like the experience. He says he did not like the food, and he affirms that they cooked badly. He also believes that Irish culture is really different and very strange compared to Spanish culture.

Interpretation of the results

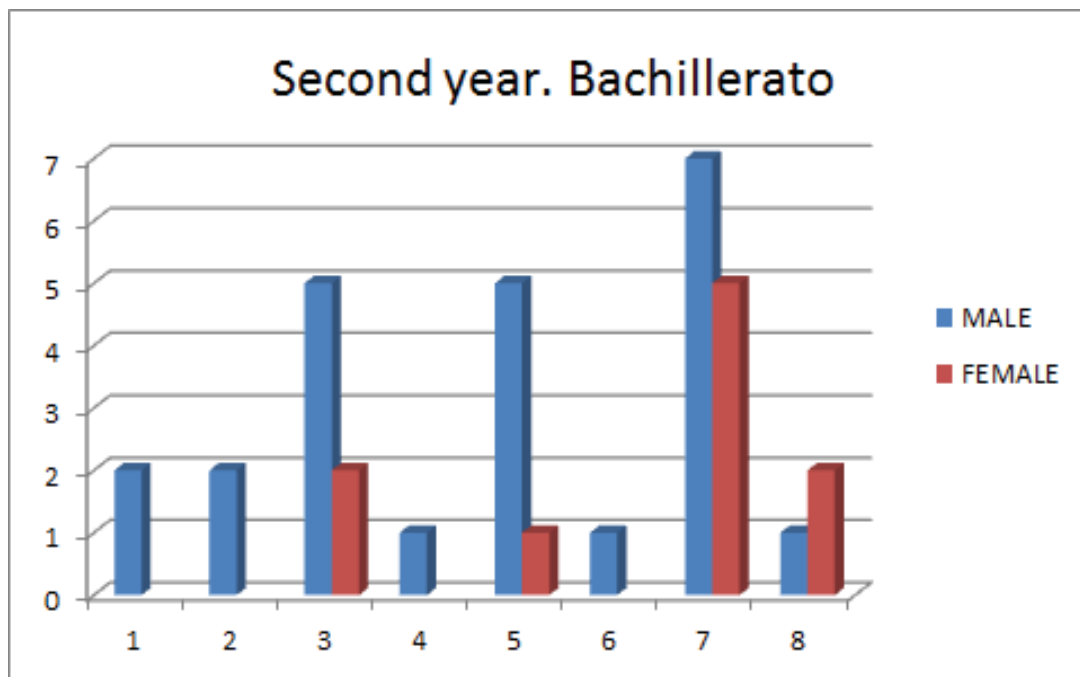
At first sight, the graphic chart calls the reader's attention since there is a lack of negative answers in the case of the girls. Almost all of them have had experiences with people from other cultures, and say positive things about it. But, it seem critical than one of the students considers his culture to be better than the rest of the cultures, because it seems that he feels

rejection to other cultures. Furthermore, the answer about stereotyped behaviours or traditions that are difficult to overstep is pretty alarming; it is society's duty to raise awareness about equality, so rejection to the unknown would be avoid, as well as judging without meeting someone which is broadly based on general knowledge about personal past experiences or taught generalizations.

Working on respect and equal treatment of all the people would be a need within the classroom, so they would not categorize people because of their societies. Moreover, they will be able to develop intercultural competence so entirely integration in society would be a reality.

- Data obtained from second year of Bachillerato:

In this group, sixteen students have answered to the questions given. They are between 17 and 19 years old. One of the boys is Brazilian, and the rest of the students are Spanish. These are questions in which they have answered 'no' or 'I don't know':



After analyzing the justification part of the questionnaire of this group, the points they deal with can be stated as:

- A boy affirms that he does not like changes, that is why he might be ignorant of considering himself as an open-minded person. Another boy says that he is narrow-minded because of the present happening situations.

- Speaking of solving the misunderstanding stereotypes can cause, they state that they want to solve them, but it is very difficult because these stereotypes are strongly internalized in society, that is why this is so difficult to change.
- Taking as a base the differences between cultures, 90% of the students claim that there are not first-class cultures or languages. Nonetheless, some of them are more important than others. They believe that not all the languages are equal in terms of importance, as some languages are widely used. Moreover, some cultures are principally known nowadays, while others remain unknown globally speaking, that is why there is a tendency of giving more importance to those more well-known cultures and languages.
- On the other hand, a boy firmly affirms his belief on the existence of cultures that are better than others. This statement is justified talking about the evolution and progress that some cultures have experienced. He says, for instance, that Muslim culture is backward and totally incompatible with the Occidental world.
- One boy does not know if he values his own culture.
- 90% of these students state that judging is unavoidable since we live in a society full of prejudices, in which everything is judged before knowing it. We always tend to judge by the appearances; it is our nature. They also say that the present situation is what makes us to judge (many of them allude to terrorism). A girl is aware of the mistake we make judging by appearances, and she admits that she would like not to judge people by their appearances, and she is trying not to do this anymore. Another girl also points out that judging does not reflect a reality, and the ideas that we have created in our minds from someone are later demolished.
- They accept any attitude or behavior while it is not harmful for other people. One of the boys stresses the necessity of helping others, but ‘zero tolerance’ with terrorism.

These students were asked about any personal experience with people from different cultures, and these are the points of their experience:

- They mention plenty of countries and cultures.
- They all agree that it was a great experience meeting different people. They also say that they did not have problems for communicating, and they also learnt a lot of these different cultures. They fancy meeting people from different cultures.
- 20% of them say that their best friends belong to a different culture.

- The Brazilian boy says that he is very happy here in Spain. He feels really comfortable, not only because of the country, but also because of the people. He states that Spanish people are really nice and kind, and also great friends for him.
- One of the girls considers that we are all different and equal at the same time. She affirms that this sort of experiences have shown her so many things, and specially, values that we sometimes forget, like respect and esteem for the different or unknown.
- Some years, in their classes, there were people from other cultures. They like meeting people from different cultures. They do not reject other cultures, as each person is different. They are conscious of the differences among people, and the fact of belonging to a socially frowned upon culture does not mean that all the people it involves are wicked.
- A girl underlines that, even though they always have a good attitude and good relationship with the people mentioned, sometimes people joke in class. That is why some of them think that people's attitude is so important, because we all are different.
- A girl thinks that there are differences, although her attitude is always appropriate. She supports her answer saying that, for instance, Russian people are more narrow-minded than Spanish people.
- One of the boys has had contact with people from Occident. He would not like meeting people from Oriental cultures, or cultures that differ so much from the Spanish or American one.

Interpretation of the results

As presented above, these students believe that all the cultures are equal: none of them is better than other. Nevertheless, there are differences between people from different cultures, which they seem to be stereotypes. But, they also talk about importance by saying that are languages more relevant than others. Moreover, like it is pointed out throughout the rest of the stages, they affirm to tend to have preconceived notions before meeting someone.

In conclusion, and as a broad comment, the complexity of thoughts, feelings and statements while students are older is clearly perceived. This fact is deductible, since age—in most of the cases—implies more knowledge, experience and critical thinking ability. In any case, how learners feel towards other cultures and their own interest in order to achieve effectively communication, understanding and integration is an essential matter. So, after having analyzed these learners' experiences and feelings, and the interpretation this paper

presents, we have considered to design some activities for the classroom, by which intercultural competence is developed.

6. Activities proposal

The activities proposed in this part of the paper are not planned to be implemented at any specific time during the academic year, nor to be a part of a lesson plan. They are aimed to work on intercultural competence as a cross curricular topic; even though it is true that language and culture cannot be dissociated, both of them are developed together. It is highly interesting to dedicate some lessons in order to specifically develop the learner's intercultural competence. These are the activities proposed to work on intercultural competence within the classroom in secondary education and Bachillerato. These activities, therefore, work on the issue of sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects stated in the Real Decreto 1105/2014. According to Real Decreto 1105/2014, they deal with social standards, courtesy rules and discourses or styles, customs, beliefs, attitudes, values, and nonverbal communication. These sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects are stipulated in the contents along all the secondary education stages, as well as in the contents for Bachillerato. Moreover, this issue is stated in the contents part in the four blocks that are established for each stage. The mentioned blocks found in the Real Decreto 1105/2014 are:

- Block 1: comprehension of oral texts.
- Block 2: production of oral texts.
- Block 3: comprehension of written texts.
- Block 4: production of written texts.

So, taking into account the features of the activities proposed below, the four blocks are tackled, acquiring more importance one of the blocks, or some of them, depending on the activity. These activities, a priori, would be suitable for any classroom, but in case any problem dealing with intercultural competence was detected, it would be necessary to modify them in order to adapt the activities to the learner's linguistic competence and his/her necessities.

6.1. Activity 1: "Debate on Trump's immigration policy"

Title: "Debate on Trump's immigration policy"

Description: this activity's aim is to carry out a debate on what the students have seen in a video about Donald Trump's immigration policy. First of all, while watching the video for the first time, students are supposed to take down notes about it. Then, the video will be displayed

again. The teacher will divide the class into four or five groups, and the students will have a discussion on this topic. After a while, all the class together will discuss this topic, highlighting the most surprising things for them, and what they think about this policy. This debate will be monitored by the teacher, and he/she will be guiding and conducting it in order to avoid lack of speaking at any moment. After the debate, each group of students has to imagine themselves as the presidents of the USA. In groups, they have to complete a worksheet in which they are asked to take measures in these areas: access to immigrants in the USA and refugee program. They have to explain how they would face these situations due to deal with them and give reasons for their answers. Then, each group tells the rest of the students their policies in these areas.

Timing: 50 minutes.

Input: Today's activity will be based on a nowadays situation that all of you may know: Donald Trump's immigration policy. Before starting the activity, I will tell you the groups in which you are going to work in. Now, you will watch a video. Make sure that while you are watching it, you take down notes about what it is about. After this first view, you will watch it again, so you can understand it better. (After watching the video twice). Now, you will have to discuss with the rest of the people in your group the things you have seen in the video and your opinions about all the aspects mentioned, then we will carry out a debate all together to point out the relevant things it shows, so we all will be able to share our opinions. (After the debate). At this point, in the same groups you have been working in, you have to imagine that you, as a group, are the president of the USA (the teacher gives a worksheet per group). As you can see, you have there two important issues that a president must deal with. Think about it, and then, you will tell your classmates how would you deal with these issues.

Resources: computer with Internet access and a projector/smartboard, video "Trump suspends refugee program, bans entry from 7 Muslim countries":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8f5ns1F9V2E>, and the worksheet (*see appendix one*).

Class management: the students will be seated in groups (the total number of groups and the people in each group would vary depending on each classroom).

6.2. Activity 2: "Break up with stereotypes"

Title: "Break up with stereotypes"

Description: students will be given a worksheet divided into two parts: the first part is a discussion made up of several questions dealing with the notion of culture and stereotypes, and the second part is the shape of a country. Students have to discuss the questions in

collaborative groups previously created by the teacher. Then, each group will turn the page in which there will be a sort of graphic organizer provided by the teacher (which is the shape of a country). They have to compile the stereotypes or ideas that they associate with that culture pointing out the ones they consider positive or negative. The positive stereotypes will be written inside the country's borders, while the negative ones will be written outside the country's borders. At the end of the class, they have to present to the rest of the class their activity.

Timing: 50 minutes.

Input: Today we will work on cultural stereotypes. You will be divided into groups (the teacher tells them their corresponding groups) in order to complete this worksheet (the teacher gives each group one worksheet). Do you know what a stereotype is? Check it there! You have an explanation before the activities. As you can see, there are two parts: the first one is made up of some questions and the second one is a country's shape. The first part of the worksheet is the same for all the groups, but the country's shape is different: each group has a different country. After answering the questions, you will have to carry out the second activity. Look at your worksheet and see which country you have. Each group has a country, and therefore, a culture. You have to think about that culture and discuss what you know about it: customs, ideas that you associate to it, stereotypes, etc., in other words, all the things that come to your mind when you think about that culture. Then, in your groups, you have to discuss which of those things related to the culture are positive or negative; and then, you have to write the things you consider positive, inside the country's borders, and, on the other hand, you will write outside the country's borders the negative things you associate with it. After this, each group will present to the rest of the class what they have done.

Resources: worksheets with the questions and the worksheet with the countries' shape (*see appendix two*).

Class management: students will be divided in collaborative groups previously created by the teacher. The groups will be made up of three or four students (depending on the number of students in the classroom), so the total number of groups will also vary.

6.3.Activity 3: "Make a difference"

Title: "Make a difference"

Description: for this activity, the teacher will divide the students into cooperative groups, in which there will be four students with a specific role within the group. The roles in each group will be a speaker, a timekeeper, a recorder and a coordinator. First of all, when they are

divided in groups, the students have to choose a role for each of them. Then, after each student has his/her particular role, the teacher will give them a worksheet per group. Each worksheet has a picture in which there are people from different cultures in diverse situations. The students have to describe their picture and reflect on what they are seeing; they have to explain their beliefs, such as how the people in the picture feel, and how they would feel in the same situation, what their personal thoughts are about that situation, and also to imagine or invent a brief story of the life of the person/people that appear in the picture. This will be a discussion within the groups. Moreover, they have to function as a group in which each of them has a specific role. They have to write all the ideas they discuss, and then, each group will tell the rest of the class about its picture and what they have said about it. The teacher will project on the smartboard each picture while they are presenting it to their classmates. By this way, the rest of the groups will have the opportunity to see other situations and also give their opinion.

Timing: 50 minutes.

Input: We are going to do a different activity today. You will be working in groups of four, in which each of you is going to have a different role. (The teacher chooses the students that will make up each group). Now, you have to choose the role for each person in the group: one of you has to be the speaker, another one the timekeeper, another one the recorder and then, one of you has to be the coordinator. (The teacher gives each group a picture). As you see, each group has a different picture. Can anyone tell me what aspect do you find in common? Well done, different cultures. So now, in groups, you have to describe the picture and reflect on what you are seeing; you have to explain what you think of the situation, how the people in the picture feel, and how you would feel in the same situation. As one of you is the recorder, you have to write all the things you discuss for this activity. I want to know what are your personal thoughts about the situation you have been given. Then, you have to imagine or a brief story of the life of the people that appear in the picture. After having discussed these aspects, each group will present to the rest of the class what they have done, and I will project on the smartboard that picture, so all of you will be able to see it.

Resources: computer with Internet access, a projector/smartboard and the worksheet (*see appendix three*).

Class management: students will be seated in groups of four people. The total number of groups will vary depending on the number of the students in the class.

6.4. Activity 4: “Warm welcome”

Title: “Warm welcome”

Description: in this activity, students will read a newspaper article about a school welcoming some refugee children. For doing so, they will be in groups of three or four people reading it and commenting it. Then, the teacher will project the video that appears in the article, so students will be able to reinforce the information they have just read. After the video, the teacher will lead a sort of discussion in which he/she will ask questions dealing with their personal opinion, how they felt when reading the piece of news, etc. Then, they have to carry out a task: they have to design a welcome program for some refugee children who are coming to the school. Later, all the groups will show the rest of the classmates their programs.

Timing: 50 minutes.

Input: for today’s activity, you will be working in groups (the teacher divides the students into groups). I will give you this piece of news about a warm welcome to refugees in a Canadian school. I want you to read it and tell me what you think about it. (After reading it in groups). Ok, I hope all of you have understood the article. Now, you are going to watch this short video in which you can see some of these students. (After the video). I am going to ask you some questions, and I want all of you to participate in the discussion. What do you think about this situation?, how do you feel after having read it?, do you feel identify in any way?. Now, as you see in your worksheet (the teacher has given one worksheet per group), you have to imagine that your school is receiving some refugees for the following academic year. You have to design a program of inclusion, or a welcome program, to help them feel comfortable in their new school. And later, you will tell your classmates what you have designed.

Resources: the piece of news: <http://globalnews.ca/news/3473459/young-syrian-refugees-receive-warm-welcome-from-white-rock-elementary-students/> and a worksheet for their welcome program (*see appendix four*).

Class management: students will be seated in groups, which will vary taking into account the total number of the students in the classroom.

7. Conclusions

After having studied the theoretical background and the bases in this field, as well as analyzed students' experiences and attitudes towards people from different cultures, this essay can provide some conclusions.

Taking into account all the studied theories about intercultural competence that compose and support this paper's framework, it is worth to state the importance and necessity of implementing activities that work on intercultural competence within the classroom. As it is mentioned before, foreign language teachers have to work on this field in their subjects, since multiculturalism has a great impact in secondary education. Students are still shaping their attitudes and understanding of "self" and otherness, so is in this stage in which they have to learn and develop all the aspects that intercultural competence implies. This learning is not only for the formal education period, but also for professional and personal scopes as nowadays world is composed of a wide variety of cultures living together. Furthermore, fomenting an education based on principles such as respect, tolerance and inclusion leads to the desire integration in society.

In addition, the Real Decreto 1105/2014 points out in the competences it displays, as well as throughout the whole document, aspects that highlight the importance and value of working on this during secondary education and Bachillerato. The foreign language subject does not only work on linguistic competence, but it develops comprehension, expression, interaction and the ability of thinking about oneself and the others, which is linked to identity. The Real Decreto 1105/2014 enhances the development of tolerance, cooperation and equality between people, promoting effective communication and avoiding racism and discrimination. Moreover, language learning implies knowledge about others, in other words, language and culture cannot be dissociated. This is one of the main reasons that supports the implementation of intercultural competence within formal education, so teachers' duty is to foster students' intercultural competence in the classroom in order to go beyond formal education and possess this competence for life experience.

Through the questionnaires answered by the students it can be reaffirmed the necessity of working on intercultural competence in education. The fact that many of them consider whether one culture is better than other, or seem cautious when meeting people from other culture, is noteworthy. Intercultural competence must be developed within formal education; teachers must dedicate some lessons to work on this issue, so learners will be able to develop abilities like tolerance, solidarity and respect, which, among others, compose the intercultural competence. In this way, the activities proposal in this paper can be taken as a suggestion for

further implementation of this relevant competence, since it is recommended to spend some lessons, entirely, to foster students' intercultural competence through foreign language activities.

8. References

- Aguado Odina, T., Gil Jaurena, I., & Mata Benito, P. (2005). *Educación intercultural: una propuesta para la transformación de la escuela*. Madrid: Catarata.
- Aneas Álvarez, M. A. (2005). Competencia intercultural, concepto, efectos e implicaciones en el ejercicio de la ciudadanía. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*. 35/5, 1-10.
- Beacco, J-C., Byram, M., Cavalli, M., Coste, D., Cuenat, M.E., Goullier, F., & Panthier, J. (2010). *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. Geneva: Language Policy Division.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. England: Multicultural Matters.
- Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1-47. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/I.1.1>
- Castro Prieto, P. (1999). La dimensión europea en la enseñanza/aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras: la competencia intercultural. *Lenguaje y textos*, 13, 41-53.
- Comisión Europea (1996). *Enseñar y aprender. Hacia la sociedad del conocimiento. Libro Blanco sobre la educación y la formación*. Luxemburgo: Oficina de Publicaciones Oficiales de las Comunidades Europeas.
- Council of Europe (2002). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Strasbourg: Cambridge University Press.
- Delors, J. (1996). *La educación encierra un tesoro*. Madrid: Santillana.
- García Martínez, A., & Sáez Carreras, J. (1998). *Del racismo a la interculturalidad. Competencia de la educación*. Madrid: Narcea.
- González Piñeiro, M., Guillén Díaz, C., & Vez, J.M. (2010). *Didáctica de las lenguas modernas. Competencia plurilingüe e intercultural*. Madrid: Síntesis.
- Kelly, M., Grenfell, M., Allan, R., Kriza, C., & McEvoy, W. (2004). *European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference*. A Report to the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture.
- LEY ORGÁNICA 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.mecd.gob.es/mecd/educacion-mecd/mc/lomce/el-curriculo/curriculo-primaria-eso-bachillerato/competencias-clave/competencias-clave.html>
- Multicultural (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary* (11th ed.). Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/multicultural>

- Oliveras, À. (2000). *Hacia la competencia intercultural en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Estudio del choque cultural y los malentendidos*. Madrid: Edinumen.
- Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre, por el que se establece el currículo básico de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. (B.O.E. núm 3, de 3 de enero de 2015).
- Soft skills (n.d.). In *Collins English dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/es/diccionario/ingles/soft-skills>
- Tébar, P. (2006). *La gestión de los centros educativos. Una propuesta intercultural*. Madrid: Catarata.
- Trujillo Sáez, F. (2001). “Objetivos en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras: De la competencia lingüística a la competencia intercultural”. Comunicación presentada en el Congreso Nacional “Inmigración, Convivencia e Interculturalidad”. Instituto de Estudios Ceutíes. Retrieved from <http://fernandotrujillo.es/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/objetivos.pdf>
- UNESCO (2005). *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all*. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001402/140224e.pdf>
- UNRISD (1994). *Social integration: Approaches and issues*. Retrieved from [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/%28httpAuxPages%29/510920DA18B35A6880256B65004C6A7B/\\$file/bp1.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/%28httpAuxPages%29/510920DA18B35A6880256B65004C6A7B/$file/bp1.pdf)
- Vilà Baños, R. (2006). La dimensión afectiva de la competencia comunicativa intercultural en la educación secundaria obligatoria: escala de sensibilidad intercultural. *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, 24 (2), 353-372.
- Vilà Baños, R. (2008). *La competencia comunicativa intercultural. Un estudio en el primer ciclo de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Política Social y Deporte, Subdirección General de Información y Publicaciones.

PART 2

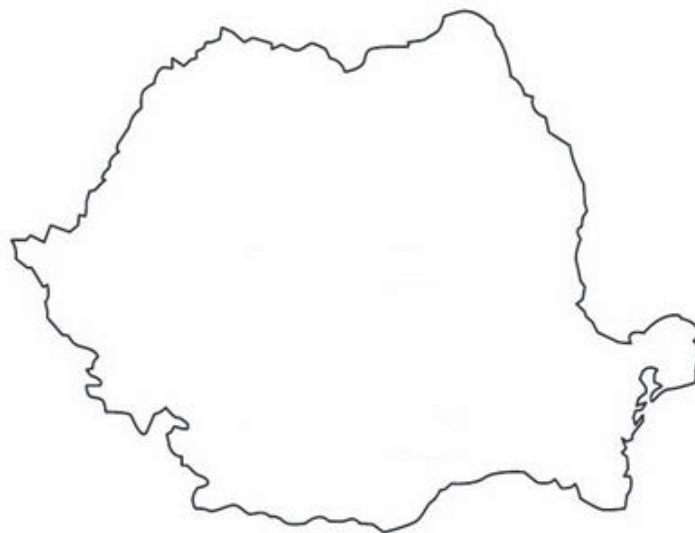
Group 1: France



Source:

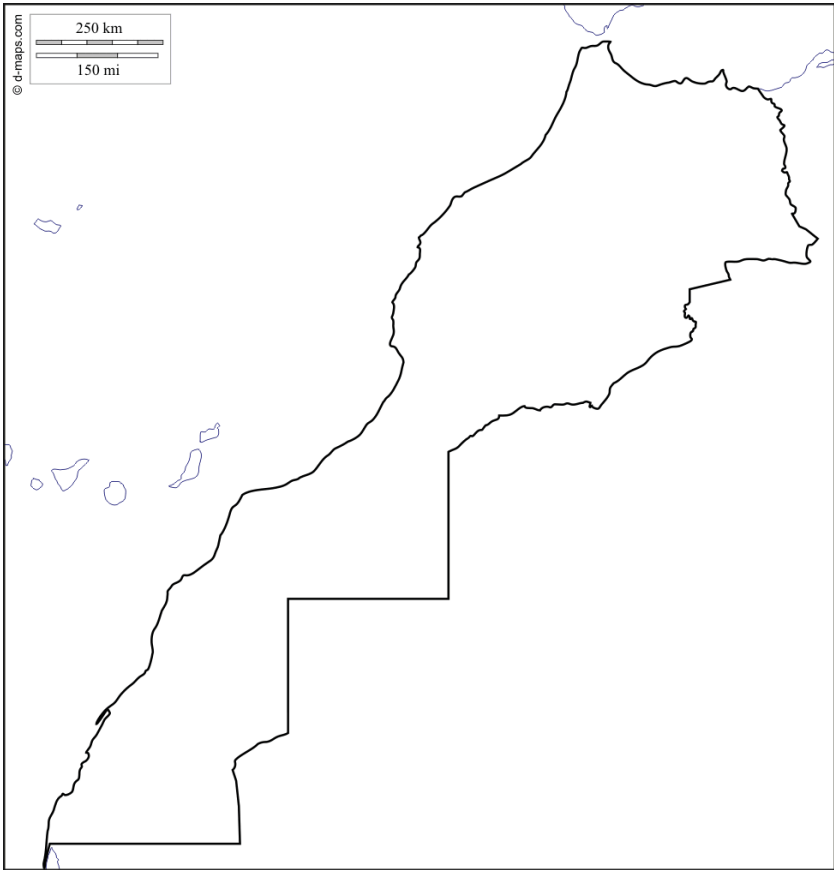
https://www.google.es/search?q=inglaterra+silueta+del+pa%C3%ADs&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKFwjw1Nrs8aPUAhVCtROKHS38CdYQ_AUIBigB&biw=1366&bih=638#tbm=isch&q=rancia+silueta+del+pa%C3%ADs&imgcr=y_igryB-q6ThjM:

Group 2: Romania



Source: <http://laminasparacolarear.blogspot.com.es/2012/08/>

Group 3: Morocco



Source:

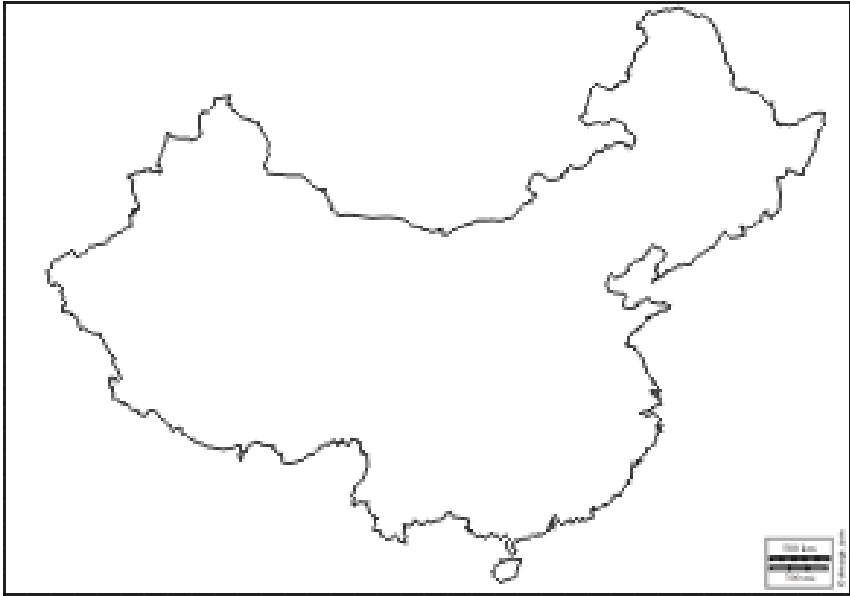
https://www.google.es/search?q=irlanda+silueta+pais&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6-PK896PUAhXBbxQKHVYjCAwQ_AUIBigB&biw=1366&bih=638#tbn=isch&q=marruecos+silueta+pais&imgdii=oXgHb6Zoco1z8M:&imgcr=2GwE37Fmsl3eiM;

Group 4: Mexico



Source: <http://www.supercoloring.com/es/siluetas/mapa-de-mejico>

Group 5: China



Source:

https://www.google.es/search?q=irlanda+silueta+pais&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6-PK896PUAhXBbxOKHVyjCAwQ_AUIBigB&biw=1366&bih=638#tbm=isch&q=china+silueta+pais&imgdii=aloMYbesXYaNEM:&imgrc=CT_Wtz_aBeXktM;

Group 6: Brazil



Source: <https://www.ecosia.org/images?addon=chrome&addonversion=2.0.2&q=BRAZIL+COUNTRY+SHAPE#>

Group 7: Italy



Source: <https://www.ecosia.org/images?q=italy+silueta+pa%C3%ADs>

Group 8: England



Source: <http://www.supercoloring.com/silhouettes/england-map>

Appendix three



Source:

https://www.google.es/search?q=pictures+to+describe&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjwifaig6TUAhXGxxOKHZxgApIQ_AUIBigB&biw=1366&bih=638#tbn=isch&q=bebes+de+diferentes+razas&imgsrc=eBNbdhgu1Lru8M



Source:

https://www.google.es/search?q=refugees&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiKp56T76jUAhWDXhoKHWSxBXIQ_AUIBygC&biw=1366&bih=638#tbn=isch&q=refugees+in+europe+helping&imgcr=httGoBNW98wl4M:



Source:

https://www.google.es/search?q=pictures+to+describe&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjiwifaig6TUAhXGxxQKHZxgApIQ_AUIBigB&biw=1366&bih=638#imgcr=4IU4rTRa1L45zM:



Source:

https://www.google.es/search?q=pictures+to+describe&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjwifaig6TUAhXGxxQKHZxgApIQ_AUIBigB&biw=1366&bih=638#imgrc=0RPJ62ThdQcIHM:



Source:

https://www.google.es/search?q=pictures+to+describe&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjwifaig6TUAhXGxxQKHZxgApIQ_AUIBigB&biw=1366&bih=638#tbn=isch&q=ni%C3%B1os+de+diferentes+razas&imgrc=ktJHcRFQs1p2qM:



Source:

https://www.google.es/search?q=refugees&rlz=1C1CHMC_esES483ES483&site=webhp&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiKp56T76jUAhWDXhoKHWSxBXIQ_AUIBygC&biw=1366&bih=638#imgrc=3QNjieKSBpRbjM:

Appendix four

WORKSHEET

Imagine that your school is receiving some refugees for the following academic year. In groups, design a plan or program of inclusion to help them feel comfortable in their new school.