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**TRABAJO FIN DE MÁSTER**

**Planning plurilingual and interdisciplinary learning  
situations. A project proposal for Secondary Education**

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## **Abstract**

This paper deals with the planning of learning situations from a plurilingual and interdisciplinary perspective in Secondary Education. These are the three axes that articulate the theoretical framework, which also analyzes the theoretical and practical implications of some curricular contents. The second part outlines a project teaching proposal, which materializes in two plurilingual and interdisciplinary learning situations for the fourth year of Secondary Education. This proposal involves four interrelated subjects: Foreign Language, Second Foreign Language, Geography and History, and Digitalization. Subsequently, some conclusions about the advantages of incorporating the plurilingual and interdisciplinary dimension in the foreign language classroom are presented.

**Keywords:** Secondary Education, Plurilingual Education, Interdisciplinarity, Project proposal, Language learning situations.

## **Resumen**

Este Trabajo Fin de Máster aborda la planificación de situaciones de aprendizaje desde una óptica plurilingüe e interdisciplinar en la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria. Son los tres ejes que articulan el marco teórico, en el que se aporta además un análisis de los contenidos curriculares desgranando sus implicaciones teóricas y prácticas. En la segunda parte se presenta una propuesta didáctica, que se concreta en dos situaciones de aprendizaje –plurilingüe e interdisciplinar– para el cuarto curso de Educación Secundaria. En dicha propuesta intervienen de manera interrelacionada cuatro materias: Lengua extranjera, Segunda Lengua extranjera, Geografía e Historia y Digitalización. Seguidamente, se exponen algunas conclusiones en torno a las ventajas de incorporar la dimensión plurilingüe y la interdisciplinariedad en el aula de Lengua extranjera.

**Palabras clave:** Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Educación plurilingüe, Interdisciplinariedad, Planificación didáctica, Situaciones de aprendizaje.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Justification

In today's world, knowing just one foreign language is behind the times. Thus, knowing more than two languages opens new prospects for students in the role of learners but as citizens as well. As Beacco et al. (2016) claimed, not only plurilingual education promotes language acquisition and the development of intercultural skills, but also personal development.

As specified by language policies of the European Union, education systems must guarantee that European students, over their formal years of schooling, are provided with linguistic and intercultural skills so that they can effectively participate in their citizenship, acquire knowledge and adopt broad-minded attitudes towards other individuals. Hence, it stands to reason that it is of utmost importance to foster plurilingual and intercultural education in Spain and, in particular, in Castilla y León, a region distinguished by a long tradition of monolingualism and monoculturalism.

The abovementioned reasons led us to plan a project proposal. It stems from "Article 91" of the LOMLOE (2020) which alleges that curricular planning and designing of the learning situations are part of the teacher's role. However, even though curriculum dispositions encourage to the implementation of plurilingualism and interdisciplinarity in today's language education, it still tends to be a challenge for both learners and educators. In that sense, few proposals of this characteristic have been suggested so far, and if any, there is a slight possibility of their being incorporated in the classroom. In the light of this fact, the pursuance of this Master, which requires a six-credit subject commonly known as TFM upon completion, came as a great opportunity to conduct our master's Thesis around plurilingual and interdisciplinary learning situations. As to the language involved in the Master, Teaching English as a Foreign Language is our major area of expertise, as shown in the title: *Máster en Profesor de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanzas de Idiomas. Especialidad: Inglés*. Indeed, this paper allows us to largely consolidate most of the core aspects acquired throughout all the Master's subjects.

As a final remark, this Master's Thesis demonstrates the great deal of competencies developed during the Master certification process, among which we highlight three:

- *General competence number 6*: Acquire strategies to stimulate student effort and promote their ability to learn on their own and with others, and develop thinking and decision-making skills that facilitate personal autonomy, confidence, and initiative.
- *Specific competence number 7*: To transform curricula into programs consisting of activities and working plans.
- *Specific Competence number 15*: To know and apply basic methodologies and techniques of research and evaluation in Education and to be able to design and develop research, innovation and evaluation projects.

## **1.2 Aims**

In the light of the prevailing curriculum dispositions and current social necessities, this Master's Thesis intends to bridge the gap between European recommendations and practice (in compliance with the up-to-date curricular laws of the time). After years of academic literature narrating their benefits, plurilingualism is a fact and interdisciplinarity a must. Therein lies the aim of this paper: to give plurilingual and interdisciplinary education its rightful place in today's teaching education so that it will no longer be overlooked. To that end, we propose a project-based proposal. This proposal, which lays the foundations for putting plurilingualism and interdisciplinarity into practice, showcases how versatile the curriculum is, since it allows to plan plurilingual and interdisciplinary learning situations at the same time. However, it is not our intention to offer an exclusive proposal that cannot not be otherwise, but quite the contrary: we would like to raise awareness of how many different approaches exist to address plurilingualism and interdisciplinarity to make the most of all its bright sides in Secondary Education.

Our project-based proposal plan, which is built on English and French as Foreign Languages, embraces additional subjects to fully integrate interdisciplinarity (engaging Geography and History as well as Digitalization), but it should be noticed that the focus of our projects still lies in enhancing Foreign Language Acquisition. Hence, the project proposed in this paper should serve as an inspiration not only to promote coordination between departments, but also as a way to foster the four founding principles of plurilingual and intercultural education outlined by the Council of Europe: -the acknowledgement for linguistic and cultural diversity; -everyone's right to communicate thanks to their linguistic abilities; -freedom to acquire competence and a better command of languages, and -the core of interpersonal dialogue, which involves languages.

Finally, not only is it the intention of this TFM to provide reflections on this knowledge area, but also to provide alternatives for further improvement in this academic field and line of research.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Plurilingual and intercultural education

Over the last few decades, plurilingual and intercultural education came into existence since it was necessary to develop both plurilingual and intercultural competence. Aase et al. (2009, p. 3) advocates that “education systems must be able to handle the different types of plurality which reflect those that exist in the wider society, ranging from a diversity of languages, cultures and social groups to different values and priorities”. Regarding plurilingualism, this emerging concept was considered groundbreaking back in 2001, with the first CEFR edition. As of today, plurilingual and intercultural education are not addressed as a simple optional recommendation as it used to be back in early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. What is more, they must be implemented in the Spanish education system and its *curriculum*, according to the current applicable Law of Education known as LOMLOE (which stands for *Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación*). The concept of plurilingual education, which is aimed in today’s Spanish educational institutions, came into being because of the increasing plurilingual and multilingual contexts that have occurred in Europe over the past few decades. The great majority of Spanish autonomous communities shares a long monolingual tradition, but plurilingual education is where education should head to.

When it comes to plurilingualism, there are thought to be plenty of concepts that are apparently considered the same thing, but nothing could be further from the truth. Particularly, many of those prefixes preceding concepts such as monolingualism, bilingualism, multilingualism or plurilingualism (i.e. mono-, bi-, pluri-, multi-) can be widely misused. The so-called CEFR, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2020) distinguishes between a) multilingualism, defined as “the coexistence of different languages at the social or individual level” (p. 30) and b) plurilingualism, conceived as “the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner” (p. 30).

In line with CEFR, plurilingual individuals share the fact that they hold a unique repertoire (Council of Europe, 2020) made up of diverse languages. An illustrative example could be a student whose linguistic repertoire consists of A1 level in Italian, B1 in French and B2 in English, based on the CEFR. What the plurilingual and intercultural

education states is that every scholar's diverse linguistic background must be recognized and used in all subjects (Beacco, 2016), not only in isolation within each foreign language subjects. This author specifies that plurilingualism is related to students who enhance plurilingualism at school or to those who become plurilingual due to the language spoken in their homes.

As conceived by Byram et al. (2009): “plurilingualism acknowledges the importance of ‘intercomprehension’, the use of one’s own language whilst understanding the languages of others” (p. 16). This fact implies a thoughtful language reflection along with an array of strategies to manage the differences and similarities within the linguistic repertoire associated to everyone (González Piñeiro et al., 2010). Those strategies are highlighting in both *Decreto 39/2022 and Decreto 40/2022* as part of the plurilingual contents covered by the Spanish Educational laws.

As it stands, plurilingualism emerge from the diverse intercultural scenarios that occur in the outside world. Global situations require communicating when immerse in different languages due to the cultural melting pot. Thus, several European aspirations are officially collected in order to create plurilingual and intercultural classrooms. It is worth mentioning at this point that plurilingual and intercultural education both go hand-in-hand (Council of Europe, 2020). Hence, special prominence must be given to the cultural aspect given the fact that there are significant conceptual differences. As signaled by Byram et al. (2009), interculturality not only raises awareness and increases empathy regarding different cultures, but it also allows people to interact in cultural environments (i.e. mediating when needed). Besides, it implies being open towards other cultures and promotes reflecting on how other cultures can make an impact in one’s daily life. It stands to reason that the curriculum does not intend to implement pluricultural education since it requires much more than being plurilingual or being willing to know different cultures: pluriculturality requires identifying with another cultural or even embrace and carry out multiple cultural practice (Byram et al., 2009).

### **2.1.1 European institutional policies**

Europe's linguistic diversity leads to the necessity of developing plurilingual competence, which is at the core of the European educational framework. It is worth noting that Europe is made up of plurilingual and intercultural diversity and attention must be drawn to the wide diverse spectrum of languages covered by plurilingual and

intercultural education. These languages can be classified in three categories: first of all, any language which is taught at school; secondly, languages which are accredited by the school without being taught and, finally yet importantly, additional languages and cultures existing in the school but unrecognized and not taught, as outlined by the Founding Principles of the Council of Europe website.

Regarding the Official Journal of the European Union (2019), one of the latest European recommendations in relation to this lies in a terminological mismatch since:

While the Council of Europe uses the term ‘*plurilingualism*’ for referring to multiple language competences of individuals, European Union’s official documents use ‘*multilingualism*’ to describe both individual competences and societal situations. This is partly due to difficulties making a distinction between plurilingual and multilingual in other languages than English and French (2019, 15).

For illustrative purposes, also terms like *polyglot* can be misleading. *Polyglot* is a very knowledgeable person when it comes to languages rules and vocabulary, since they know many languages in depth. However, little does a *polyglot* know about adapting to the register or context or even speaking, as outline by González Piñeiro et al. (2010). By contrast, *plurilingualism* came into existence in Europe in pursuance of citizens communicating in different languages and cultural environments in a bid to transcend not only *monolingualism* (the ability to use just one language to communicate) but also *bilingualism* (the ability to communicate in two languages) due to the fact that currently Europe lives immerse in multilingual atmospheres (with the presence of many languages that coexist at the same time in the same space). In Byram et al. (2009) words, ‘*multilingualism*’ has also been conceived as an obstacle for mutual understanding. However, not only *plurilingualism* is seen as an operative way to overcome this obstacle to facilitate communication, but also it is thought to create European identity features that make everyone feel they belong to the European culture and heritage (Byram et al., 2009).

It is expected that *plurilingualism* goes beyond educational institutions to have an eco-social transcendence at a citizen level in Europe. The Official Journal of the European Union (2019) signalled this point through the upcoming idea: Mobility in education, training, work and migration within the European Union remains on the rise and, as a result, education and training systems need to re-examine the challenges of language teaching and learning. Promoting *plurilingualism* and interculturality brings



about a very positive impact not only as a student, but as European citizens in such a democratic area. Broadly speaking, some of these advantages, collected by the Council of Europe (2022) when discussing the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture, can be put forwards as follows:

- It brings about many upsides from the cognitive, linguistic and social point of view.
- It brings European societies together in a stronger and cohesive way.
- It enriches the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe.
- It ensures citizens integration in society and promotes inclusive education as well as participation through the enhancement of plurilingual and intercultural competence.

It is undeniable that there are diverse significant reasons to implement pluricultural education in the language official programs aside from just being granted a certificate for job or study purposes. According to Beacco et al. (2016, p. 30), “in very many countries, the objective of language learning is the development of competences with reference to one of the CEFR levels”. However, plurilingualism stems from the ability of individuals to manage to communicate in different languages rather than being fluent in all of them. As for the recommendations to develop plurilingual competence mentioned by the Official Journal of the European Union (2019), they exceed the educational framework since *recommendation number 7*, for instance, implies that many Europeans claim not to be able to have a conversation in a language different to their own, which hinders interactions when it comes to administrative-individual level (i.e. in border regions). Due to the fact that this particular issue needs addressing, European aspirations attach particular importance to sensitizing students in the classroom to achieve it. Furthermore, it will promote globalization and awaken their interest in the opportunities plurilingualism offers. In turn, *recommendation number 9* may very well be a window of opportunity for the students and citizens to know more than two languages, especially in terms of promoting employability. Deeply attached to this fact, *recommendation number 13*, particularly, talks about how plurilingual competence could foster employability, personal fulfillment, active citizenship, intercultural understanding or social inclusion.

Alternatively, not only does plurilingualism arise out of practical factors such as employment or opportunities, but it is widely claimed to be beneficial terms of cognitive advantages. Taking Alshewiter et al. (2024) study as reference, it is of utmost importance to place emphasis on the fact that plurilingual individuals manage to navigate through language and cultural ongoing challenges switching constantly from one language to another, which is illustrative of the phenomenon called “cognitive flexibility”. Alshewiter et al. (2024) proceed asserting that unlike monolingual cognition, plurilingual people have substantial cognitive advantages since it increases their abilities for adaptability and working memory when it comes to overcome cultural and linguistic predicaments. Further to this, Koch et al. (2024) add weight to this matter due to their findings of their study: heterogeneity emerging from the shift in the cultural setting (cultural cognition) supports that plurilingualism enhance emotional competence, particularly factors like executive control or divergent thinking.

### **2.1.2 Spanish Education Curriculum: Plurilingual Competence**

Emerging from the urgent need for the educational systems to guarantee the right to everyone having access to all languages of schooling, as argued by Aase et al. (2009), Languages of schooling includes “main language, regional/minority language or foreign language in the case of bi-/plurilingual teaching” (Beacco et al., 2016, p. 10), but apart from languages of schooling, plurilingual repertoires of students may also encompasses “migration languages, modern or classical languages” (*ibid.* p. 10). As a consequence, plurilingual education should not be limited to “foreign languages” subjects.

It stands to reason that plurilingual education needs be based on solid foundations when it comes to the Spanish education law. Therefore, the Spanish curriculum in force (built on the LOMLOE law) puts forward eight different key competences, among which plurilingual competence should be noteworthy. *Decreto 39/2022* makes the following statement to define plurilingual competence:

La competencia en comunicación plurilingüe es la habilidad de utilizar distintas lenguas de forma adecuada y efectiva para el aprendizaje y la comunicación. [...] Además, esta competencia supone reconocer y respetar los perfiles lingüísticos individuales. También implica aprovechar las experiencias propias para desarrollar estrategias que permitan mediar y hacer transferencias entre lenguas, [...] Integra, asimismo, dimensiones históricas e interculturales orientadas a conocer, valorar y respetar la diversidad lingüística y cultural [...] (p. 48887).

As an outstanding remark, plurilingual competence must be developed through foreign or second languages, but within all the subjects as well. This paper context requires having a closer insight into the specification of the plurilingual contents, which are aimed at developing the plurilingual competence. To that end, the official dispositions of Castilla y León (at MESO level) will be taken into consideration. More specifically, this project focuses on the *Decreto 39/2022*, which is aimed for Secondary Education (ESO), even though some considerations towards *Decreto 40/2022*, devoted to Bachillerato, will be mentioned as well. In pursuance of understanding how plurilingual contents should be implemented in practical terms, this paper contains our own in-depth interpretation of the five plurilingual contents for the four secondary years (consulted specifically in the *Decreto 39/2022, Section B*). Hereinafter, these five plurilingual concepts are analyzed under two main headings (theoretical implications and practical implications):

***First plurilingual content (Year 4 of ESO):** Strategies and techniques to respond effectively and with increasing levels of fluency, appropriateness and correctness to a specific communicative need despite the limitations derived from the level of proficiency in the foreign language and in the other languages of one's own linguistic repertoire.*

➤ Observations

It seems that this first plurilingual content gradually becomes more comprehensive as the students upgrade their course. All in all, year 1 of Secondary Education (ESO) the curriculum put aside the words like “effectively, fluency, appropriateness, correctness” and they mention “*other languages of one's own linguistic repertoire*” for year 2, year 3 and year 4 of ESO, but never year 1.

➤ Theoretical interpretation

This first plurilingual content implies that, at a given communicative circumstance occurring in a plurilingual environment, even if students do not understand, for example, every single word of any language of which they have some knowledge of, they will be able to develop their communicative competence in general terms to understand and be understood. Broadly speaking, students aspire to be communicative enough in plurilingual environments, despite the linguistic limitations

they might have within their linguistic repertoire. This means using different languages to communicate should not hinder communication in general terms.

➤ Practical implications

When it comes to applying it into practice, interacting and using different kinds of “foreign words, calques or loan translations” in different languages could be a good implementation. Another example could be including typical fillers such as *oh my god* (English), *voilà* (French), *bite* (German), *alora* (Italian) and so on in every learning environment, regardless the subject. The aim is to use any language filler or expression indistinctly and normalize them in regular conversations or texts. Furthermore, were students to make use of different languages they partially or fully know, that would be excellent and should be honored in the class.

*Second plurilingual content (year 4 of ESO): Commonly used strategies to identify, organize, retain, retrieve and creatively use linguistic units (lexis, morphosyntax, sound patterns, etc.) based on the comparison of the languages and varieties that make up the personal linguistic repertoire.*

- Observations: The contents remain the same for every academic year of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

This second statement outlines the importance of the linguistic components that are inherent to a language, from the morphosyntactic aspects to the intonation.

➤ Practical implications

In words of Thompson et al. (2020):

If the structure of language vocabularies mirrors the structure of natural divisions that are universally perceived, then the meanings of words in different languages should closely align. By contrast, if shared word meanings are a product of shared culture, history and geography, they may differ between languages in substantial but predictable ways (p. 1029).

Thus, we can help students develop strategies to avoid the misunderstandings produced by the so-called ‘false friends’. To cite an instance, we can provide students with strategies to identify and create linguistic units by giving them correspondences that can automatically apply, for example, the suffix *-mente* (Spanish) is equivalent to *-ly* (in English) or *-ment* (in French).

***Third plurilingual content (year 4 of ESO):*** *Commonly used strategies and tools for self-assessment, co-assessment and self-repair, analogue and digital, individual and cooperative.*

- Observations: This content statement gradually increases its complexity from the year 1 of ESO to the last year of ESO. More specifically, year 1 of ESO statement misses the concepts of ‘co-evaluation’ and ‘self-repair’, whereas in the year 2, they only add the concept ‘co-evaluation’. It is not until the year 3 of ESO that they implement both, ‘co-evaluation’ and ‘self-repair’.
- Theoretical interpretation

The comprehensive third content, stated from years 3 and 4 of ESO, reveals the necessity to raise awareness of assessing not only their plurilingual performance but also that of their classmates. To put it another way, this content is intended to help students reflect on their communication skills and help them regulate what they say with the objective of being understood and to amend their mistakes. Besides, it is aimed to evaluate other classmates and repair their communication in case it has been lost due to their linguistic variety of their repertoire or their heterogeneous linguistic level. What is more, it is not only intended to assess their performance while communicating in class, but also to assess themselves while communicating online, either collaboratively (in terms of virtual exchanges) or individually (through one-to-one digital tools).

- Practical implication

Students can foster their plurilingual skills with their widely-known classmates. However, it seems really appealing to get this project off the ground by being directly in contact with speakers of other languages, possibly peers overseas either face-to-face (classical exchanges) or via virtual exchanges, which are placed in different locations thanks to telecollaborative activities carried out online.

***Forth plurilingual content (year 4 of ESO):*** *Specific expressions and lexicon of common use to exchange ideas about communication, language, learning and communication and learning tools (metalanguage).*

- Observations: This content remains invariable for all academic years of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

It could be understood that students should be able to explain what strategies they make use of to learn and to communicate themselves using different languages. Or rather, they should be able to talk about the intrinsic elements of a language while using that language to explain linguistic concepts of that language as such, preferably in a natural and effortless way. Further to this, learners need to express themselves about the communication process itself, which means talking about languages *per se* or about the learning process as such. As for plurilingual expectations, students aspire to explain linguistics concepts of languages of their repertoire, and they can use a combination of more than one foreign language to render a high plurilingual profile.

➤ Practical implication

A good practice to put it into practice may be analyzing the morphology and semantic components of the words instead of just teaching a word in isolation so that student can identify words coined from the same semantic field or identify and produce words with identical prefix or suffix. For illustrative purpose, a way of developing learners' metalanguage may be using words of any grammatical category (noun, verbs, adjectives, adverbs...) belonging to a certain semantic family such as the case of *-able*. There exist many words sharing the same semantic family, namely. *disable, unable, ability, disability, inability, disabled*, etc. Students could also benefit from comparing them with any classmate's mother tongue as well as their respective languages of their repertoire. Since this practical implication is not exclusive, the idea of comparing languages could be transferred to the next and final fifth statement.

***Fifth plurilingual content (year 4 of ESO): Comparison between languages based on elements of the foreign language and other languages: origins and relationships.***

- Observations: No changes are observed in this content for the four academic years of ESO.
- Theoretical implication/interpretation

This fifth plurilingual content emerged to provide a different overview. As way of illustration, in a second language (L2) lesson students can compare that foreign language studied with other different languages other than their mother language (L1) instead of comparing only that L2 with the common L1 shared by most of the students. It seems to be an interesting strategy to present the plurilingual contents in a plurilingual

way. In pursuance of selecting which other languages could be used when comparing the L2 of the student with other languages, it stands to reason that the teacher should not select any language randomly. For example, comparing Romance languages if Spanish is the L1 of the student seems to be based on solid grounds and it is more likely to have a significant learning transference out of it. Comparing implies analyzing similarities, but also differences. It is essential students are aware of false friends too. More specifically, Meléndez Quero (2013) states that the common origin of two Romance languages does not ensure the correct production of written texts and oral documents, but it may very well have the opposite outcome: many students' mistakes are the result of the analogy between structures presented in the similarities between their Romance languages.

➤ Practical implication

One teaching practice that could serve well for this purpose is comparing the etymology of words in different languages with close origins, for instance, exploiting the differences and similarities in meaning of cognates. More specifically, Otwinowska and Szewczyk (2019) put forward that *cognates* refer to words that are similar in terms of lexical representation (orthography, phonology and semantic); however, *non-cognates* words share similar meaning although they are different regarding phonology and orthography; finally, *false cognates*, commonly known as *false friends*, resemble in form whose meaning is far from being shared in both languages (also cited by Pavlenko, 2009).

On the one hand, after fully having explored *Decreto 39/2022*, in turn it is worth mentioning that *Decreto 40/2022*, aimed at years 1 and 2 of Bachillerato, seems to make no distinction regarding plurilingual contents within the subjects of Lengua Extranjera I and Lengua Extranjera II. Consequently, all plurilingual contents remain the same for both Bachillerato years.

On the other hand, the content sections of the *Decreto 39/2022* do not only include plurilingual contents *in Section B*, but also six intercultural contents, included in *section C*, which are closely related to main objective of this project. Thus, this paper has also interpreted the most relevant intercultural remarks based on the official statements:

***First intercultural content (year 4 of ESO):*** *The foreign language as a means of interpersonal and international communication, as a source of information and as a tool for social participation and personal enrichment.*

- Observations: No changes are observed for the four academic years of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

This content represents how language is an important part of other people's culture. Language itself mirrors culture, since the way we talk represents not only our identity, but the culture we come from. It could be beneficial to add critical thinking when presenting this content for students in order to bring out the most positive elements of each culture, so that students do not believe what they hear or see at first glance.

- Practical implication

In practice, through language you can present a culture itself. The best way to learn about a certain culture is communicating in the language that people speak. With the aim of promoting that culture, the class management should focus on using the foreign language of the foreign subject as much as possible to explain any cultural aspects of the language as much as possible (to interact, to communicate and, in short, to learn during the class).

***Second intercultural content (year 4 of ESO):*** *Interest and initiative in carrying out communicative exchanges through different means with speakers or students of the foreign language.*

- Observations: No variations are observed for the four years of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

This second intercultural statement refers to the deliberate enthusiasm that a learner may show for foreign cultures in general, not only for the cultures related to the languages spoken or taught in the class. This includes going further through the teacher's instructions or activities and diving into foreign cultures on their own. This content ranges from small interest signs in class to getting involved in different cultural activities by themselves. A student can be driven by personal curiosity towards the other culture including, but not limited to, asking questions, trying to communicate with people or students from different countries, watching videos, talking about the enrichment of getting to know different cultures, etc.

- Practical implication



A way to promote that is to allow students freedom to be curious with activities that lead to open answers. We should ignore cultural activities that come with correct or incorrect answers and let students ask or get informed about what they are interested in.

***Third intercultural content (year 4 of ESO): Sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects of everyday life, living conditions and interpersonal relationships; commonly used social conventions; non-verbal language, linguistic politeness and digital etiquette; culture, norms, attitudes, customs and values of the countries where the foreign language is spoken.***

- Observations: There are little changes in the writing of this sixth content, especially regarding the words “attitudes” and “norms”, which do not appear in years 1 and 2 of ESO. Even though they can be implicit on the contents themselves “culture, customs and values”.
- Theoretical interpretation

The third intercultural content gives rise to the ongoing culture lifestyles as well as the way people communicate today in a particular cultural scenario. In this case we should be especially careful with stereotypes and sensitize students towards different lifestyles and attitudes. We need to prepare students to compare foreign cultural practices without judging them with their mother culture eyes.

- Practical implication

Namely, the British politeness is indicative of linguistic differences in comparison with the directness of Spanish speakers. For instance, polite disagreement or half agreement where English speakers do not usually disagree but respectfully disagree (or even the way they hedge to avoid showing what they truly think, unlike Spanish speakers who directly take a stance). In this sense, a student speaking a foreign language is likely to adopt their foreign language cultural behavior (unconsciously or not) at the expense of preserving the foreign language's naturalness or form correction of its language.

***Forth intercultural content (year 4 of ESO): Graded readings specific to foreign language learning or based on significant literary works that reflect the idiosyncrasies and culture of the countries and territories where the language is spoken.***

- Observations: This content statement remains stable within the four years of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

Far from the up-to-date culture practices of people's belonging to a particular culture, students must be instructed of the memorable feats that surrounded certain cultural background throughout the last decades or centuries. This content refers to the Culture with capital C, the Culture that is one of the record books that went down in history. More specifically, graded readings can offer a general insight into a particular time and place that characterized a culture in general, and offers a clear insight of the language spoken by that time as well.

- Practical implication

Graded readings can be advantageous when it comes to cultural knowledge, but they might certainly be overwhelming from the communicative linguistic point of view provided the teacher presents authentic materials. Additionally, the old-fashioned terms used by the author targeting a native audience of that era do not seem practical for communicative purposes (but it could be rewarding to learn intercultural knowledge indeed). Therefore, adapting literature for cultural purposes plays a crucial role in this content and the teacher should select the most appropriate and significant topic for each class's interests each year.

***Fifth intercultural content (year 4 of ESO):** Strategies of common use to understand and appreciate linguistic, cultural and artistic diversity, attending to eco-social and democratic values, linguistic, cultural and artistic diversity, taking into consideration eco-social and democratic values.*

- Observations: The statement remain the same within the four years of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

The one who is not receptive to embrace other cultures may fall into prejudices and is set to believe there is no decent culture other than theirs. It stands to reason that one feasible strategy to avoid ethnocentrism is promote empathy putting in other person shoes thinking what they may be feel having their vital background.

- Practical implication

Role-plays can be an alternative to do so and allow learners to stand up for foreign values and support other culture's beliefs. It can turn out to be effective when learners put themselves in someone else's shoes and defend other people's position, situation or culture customs from the foreign culture perspective. This involves forgetting what students own opinion is or what their personal reaction would be in their home country.

***Sixth intercultural content (year 4 of ESO):*** *Commonly used strategies for detecting and acting upon discriminatory uses of verbal and nonverbal language.*

- Observations: The statement never varies throughout all the years of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

As intercultural content providers, it is essential for teachers to be aware of student's reactions towards foreign culture in all their forms. Only based on how receptive learners are towards those contents can the teacher guide cultural lessons. Strategies to activate these contents should help students identify what they feel when receiving foreign cultural knowledge and help them identify how their classmates react to it as well.

- Practical implication

With the purpose of giving students practical tools to regulate their emotions and their peer's emotions, role-plays based on "how might you be feeling?" upon a discriminatory situation may very well help. Another possibility could be planning trips or activities in which students interact with people that have suffered from discrimination to shed real light into this potential situation. Providing cultural knowledge is not enough, instead we could encourage students to give some thoughts about how the cultural knowledge learned in class makes them feel and act. Emotionally rich activities can be a good fit.

***Seventh intercultural content:*** *It is noticeable that, exceptionally, only years 1 and 2 of ESO includes Geopolitical, physical and economic aspects of the countries where the foreign language is spoken.*

- Observations: It only applies to years 1 and 2 of ESO.
- Theoretical interpretation

With a view to understanding a culture, students need to be able to place that country on the map and know some significant information and current facts. This can

help them identify countries themselves and understand their relationship with each student's home country and the country where each student is attending for educational purposes, among other things.

➤ Practical implication

Students could participate in little projects to gather cultural information involving different subjects. Depending on the scale of the project or tasks, the idea would be creating small mock-ups (they can be virtual or physical) which serve as a reference model to outline significant geographical, political and socioeconomical knowledge about that culture. In the best-case scenario students could do a virtual, or ideally, face-to-face international exchange with students belonging to the culture being learned to make it more significant and with a specific focus.

## 2.2 Interdisciplinary education

### 2.2.1 Conceptual background

Redchenko (2016) reveals that the current educational framework is increasingly experiencing changes. The educational paradigms are witnessing a turning point, which focuses on placing the learner in the middle of its own learning process. The target is to individualize students learning. Making the students adopt an active role paves the way towards projects, and projects are proven to prepare the grounds for interdisciplinary education at the same time.

The National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE 1995) alleges that "educational experiences are more authentic and of greater value to students when the curricula reflects real life, which is multi-faceted rather than being compartmentalized into neat subject-matter packages". Additionally, the website *Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics* (2010) in their section *Why Teach with an Interdisciplinary Approach?* argues that a single discipline is not able to describe and resolve real-world problems in an adequate manner; instead, interdisciplinary tends to mirror the complexity of real-life problems in a more compelling way.

On the one hand, the Department of Education of Maine distinguishes different categories related to the nature of the disciplines themselves (in parallel with the classification suggested by Lenoir, 2013). Three of these categories do not contribute to interdisciplinarity, since they are not interrelated with each other (they are just related):

- INTRAdisciplinarity: it refers only to a single discipline within an education field.
- MULTIdisciplinarity: it designates some education fields that are contiguous and related to each other.
- CROSSdisciplinarity: it refers to a single discipline that helps to promote the understanding of another educational field.

On the other hand, the Department of Education of Maine classifies two additional categories that undeniably support the interdisciplinary approach:

- INTERdisciplinary: it comes to pass when several education fields interact with each other (interrelationship).
- TRANSdisciplinary: it involves co-mingling different education fields along with further non-educational areas when they interact with each other.

With a view to conceptualizing interdisciplinarity, it cannot be overlooked the fact that it involves teachers and learners working together. Their aim is none other than to approach subjects in the curriculum to expand contents that have common elements between different subjects. In accordance with Lenoir (2013, p. 20), “una característica primordial de la interdisciplinariedad reside en su búsqueda de convergencias entre las disciplinas, no la marcación de diferencias”. That means to say that teachers are required to collaborate with other teachers within their educational institution so that both lesson plans line up.

Interdisciplinary education involves teachers planning together to develop projects that embrace several subjects. Therefore, interdisciplinary is not the accumulation of contents of other subjects in a particular subject, but a reciprocal interrelation between them. Lenoir (2013) defines interdisciplinarity in a comprehensive way as follows: it is a matter of building connections (relationships) between two or more school disciplines and these connections are established in curricular, teaching and pedagogical terms, which entails the establishment of complementary or cooperative links or reciprocal actions between different subjects and their different aspects (purposes, objects of study, concepts and notions, learning procedures, technical skills, etc.), with a view to promoting the integration of both learning processes and knowledge in the learner.

### **2.2.2 Interdisciplinary integration into the Spanish curriculum**

Interdisciplinary education's purpose is to integrate coherently subjects instead of isolating them. Especially for adolescent students, the interdisciplinary approach seems to serve quite well to offer secondary education learners an education based on comprehensiveness far from discipline fragmentation (Duerr, 2008). Thus, significant attention must be given to the fact that interdisciplinary education is on the rise. The current curriculum includes criteria and competencies relations, which is a way to enforce and integrate interdisciplinary education. Herrero Molleda et al. (2023) contend

that the organization by competences of the curriculum, proposed by the LOMLOE (2020), could enable us to observe some existing map relationship: the specific competences of each subject reveal essential knowledge of different subjects, which serves as an attempt to overcome occasional interdisciplinarity in order to implement it as a regular practice.

In accordance with the curricular statements, *Decreto 39/2022* incorporates interdisciplinarity as follows:

La interdisciplinariedad puede entenderse como una estrategia pedagógica que implica la interacción de varias disciplinas. El aprendizaje interdisciplinar proporciona al alumnado oportunidades para utilizar conocimientos y destrezas relacionadas con dos o más materias. A su vez, le permite aplicar capacidades en un contexto significativo, desarrollando su habilidad para pensar, razonar y transferir conocimientos, procedimientos y actitudes de una materia a otra. (p. 49252)

More specifically, let us note that we can find some specific connections particularly between Foreign Language subjects and other subjects or competences. Indeed, within the subject Foreign Language itself, there is a section devote for interdisciplinarity that shows the connection of Foreign Languages with several subjects. By way of illustration, Foreign Language subjects contribute directly to develop the communicative key competence. In this sense, the curriculum shows that the acquisition of a Foreign Language is related to Spanish Language Arts, Literature and another Second Foreign Language. Likewise, *Decreto 39/2022* (p. 49252) still outlines that interdisciplinarity regarding Foreign Language subjects can cover a wide range of subject areas: interdepartmental projects, the reading plans and even international projects. Aside from that, *Decreto 39/2022* continues its statement asserting that Foreign Language subjects can be considered a vehicle of communication that aims to develop student communicative key competences, due to the fact that Foreign Languages can adapt contents to any student level as well as relate a selection of contents to the rest of the subjects in the curriculum.

The latter argument appears to be valid for every academic year of Secondary Education, since it applies inherently to Foreign Language subjects in general. By way of example, ICT-related subjects (standing for Information and Communication Technologies) establish clear direct connection with Foreign Languages. The subject of Computer Programming, contained in the *Decreto 39/2022* (p. 49395) is also related to

the subject Foreign Language or Second Foreign Language, in this case, English, since many of the programs and resources used are written in this language and use acronyms or names coming from English. In the same spirit, English and Computer Programming can be fused together in one, they are not separate blocks explained one after another.

When it comes to enhancing a Foreign Language using projects, Redchenko (2016) implies that “besides achievement of a certain result, one of the main tasks of organization of students’ project activities is the use of a foreign language at all project implementation stages” (p. 6205). What is more, projects are claimed to be especially comprehensive in terms of foreign language skills since they promote the development of all language communicative activities. Not only that, but a project-based approach is also expected to integrate all curricular regulations. For example, the fact that projects open a new window for students to design, implement and assess their activities on their own (Redchenko, 2016), which is closely linked to many key competences of the curriculum and thus, a way to strengthen interdisciplinary education, as promoted by *Decreto 39/2022*.

### **2.2.3 Benefits of interdisciplinary education**

On the evidence given by Newell (1990), the bright side of the interdisciplinary approach includes, but is not limited to the following four aspects: firstly, making students sensitizing to bias and ethical issues; secondly, fostering students to think in an original and unconventional way; thirdly, helping students to synthesize in a more integrate manner and finally, broadening student’s perspectives or horizons. Hence, interdisciplinary education appears to be rather appealing to secondary students. The aforementioned website, *Starting Point: Teaching and Learning Economics* (2010), sheds light on how interdisciplinary education enhances learners to develop structural knowledge in terms of *declarative knowledge* (factual dimension) along with *procedural knowledge* (process-based dimension). Additionally, taking into account the fact that interdisciplinary education requires students' engagement and that it is claimed to be far more interesting than addressing one single discipline (Newell, 1990), it seems obvious that interdisciplinarity cover the three dimensions of learning: not only conceptual and procedural but also attitudinal (being much more likely to foster students’ enthusiasm and motivation).



An illustrative example of how to implement interdisciplinary approach is making use of projects. Implemented by Haring and Kelner (2015) the skeleton of their project cover the following steps in chronological order, and here we literally quote Haring and Kelner (2015, p. 1-4)'s headings: “deciding to collaborate”, “starting small”, “co-assessing and co-improving”, “discerning and fixing problems together” and all of them can be outline by different “ways of working”, which includes “develop common language”, “get creative about combining classes”, “co-plan creatively” and “opening classroom doors”. Attention must be drawn to the latter step, “opening classroom doors”, owing to the fact that other department chiefs were invited to attend the classes to observe the interdisciplinary work in progress, which promoted that whole building can get immersed in an open and collaborative network. This openness should serve as an inspiration for any educational framework.

## **2.3 Language Learning situations**

### **2.3.1 Communicative and Task-based Language Teaching**

In a bid to foster the learning of the communicative contents and enhance the communicative key competence (in relation to the intercultural and plurilingual specific competences and contents) described by the Spanish Current Curriculum, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can be implemented within a Task-based Language Teaching Approach (TBLT). According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), TBLT:

is based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the central units for the planning and delivery of instruction. [...] Task-based language teaching is an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and an attempt by its proponents to apply principles of second language learning to teaching (p. 540).

In words of Lin (2022), even though both approaches share many more points in common, the divergences are limited to the fact that CLT brings focus to language use, while the TBLT call attention to communicative language competence. Additionally, Richards and Rodgers (2001) point out that Task-based Approach is more motivated by a learning theory than a language theory. In this sense, Lin (2022) points out that the Task-based Language Teaching arises out of the necessity to complement the theoretical communicative approach towards a more practical approach.

In this line of research, Hasnain and Halder (2023) state that TBLT is a prominent approach that arose during the 1980 decade as an extension of the CLT. Notwithstanding, it is worth noticing that the Task-based Approach is applicable to any curricular subject, not just to language teaching: The tasks are the core of plenty of classroom theories and sometimes curriculums are organized around simple tasks adjacent to different subjects (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). From a curricular point of view, these authors exemplify different tasks (in language teaching) to be conducted instead of having grammar, vocabulary or functions as the central axis, such as “using the telephone to obtain information; drawing maps based on oral instructions; performing task analysis actions based on commands given in the target language; giving orders and instructions to others, etc.” (p. 540).

Communicative Language Teaching tends to distance itself from the traditional 'Present-Practice-Produce' approach in an attempt to place emphasis on communication (Lin, 2022), and the way TBLT promotes communicative competence of the Foreign Language is through tasks. Likewise, this argument is aligned with Hasnain and Halder's standpoint (2023), who state that tasks prioritize meaning and communicative language use over form. In fact, it does not mean that linguistic forms are ignored (Nunan, 2006), but tasks give students the freedom to select their own structures to accomplish the aim of the task (Willis and Willis, 2001; as cited in Nunan, 2006, p. 17),

In TBLT, it is necessary that real-world language is used to undertake the task (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). These authors argue that a task will be successful providing that an outcome can be assessed. Added to this, in the line of Nunan's prospects, Ellis (2014) distinguish two main types of tasks:

real-world' or 'pedagogic'. Real-world tasks aim at both situational and interactional authenticity in that they mirror the actual tasks that learners may have to perform in real life (e.g. ordering a meal in a restaurant). Pedagogic-tasks aim only at interactional authenticity (i.e. they do not correspond to real life events but still generate natural language use). Spot-the-difference is a classic example of a pedagogic task (p. 104).

In this line of research Nimis et al. (2022) took Ellis' standpoint that distinguishes between "situational authenticity," and "interactional authenticity". The former stands for task conducted in real life (such as buying transportation tickets, order food or coping with the paperwork required to get visa) while the latter deals with those tasks performed in the classroom that need abilities to interact as if they were carried out in real life outside the classroom. Some of the typical pedagogical tasks are, on the one hand, 'genuine information gap' to ask for information (interactional authenticity) and, on the other hand, 'spot-the-differences' activities to elicit language interaction (Ellis, 2014).

In contrast with most classroom language exercises, tasks can have a non-linguistic outcome. As a matter of fact, Nunan (2006) mentioned that "individual tasks may be part of a larger sequence of tasks, for example, the task of weighing a patient may be a sub-component of the task 'giving a medical examination' (p.15)". Hence, the more different types of tasks in our learning situations, the more communicative the process will be since the objective of the task goes deeper and is not that of studying the

language as such (Richards and Schimdt, 2002, p.541). Additionally, although the focus is not on the form, Hasnain and Halder (2023) feature that tasks allow students to grasp linguistic features in the communication process conducted by real language use.

Within this methodology, language is the vehicle that makes communication possible, so that students do not learn the language as such but learn to use the language in order to understand and be understood. In line with Hasnain and Halder (2023), TBLT draws more attention to fluency and meaning rather than form, and, to this end, the teacher acts as a facilitator whereas students take an active role to interact and negotiate meanings to complete tasks, especially when students team up in groups or pairs. The latter are the driving forces which are, in turn, closely shared with the Communicative approach. In addition, they all contribute to boost the development of the five communication skills: oral comprehension (listening), oral production (speaking), written comprehension (reading), written production (writing) and both oral and written interaction (Council of Europe, 2020).

### **2.3.2 Situational Syllabus**

When it comes to language teaching, it appears to be six different types of syllabi: the structural, the notional-functional, the situational, the skill-based, the task-based and the content-based syllabi (Krahnke, 1987). With a view of learning situation, attention must be drawn specifically to the situational syllabus, which refers to curriculum planning around real communicative situations (visiting the doctor, going to the cinema, meeting someone...) to present the linguistic content used in such contexts. Therefore, it is a type of syllabus that involves language planning by promoting situations as a pretext. In the words of Richards and Schmidt (2002), a Situational Syllabus applies only if the entire Syllabus is organized around situations to present linguistic components in a systematic manner. It is paramount to mention the concept of ‘target situation’ in curriculum development, defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) as:

the situation or setting in which the student will have to use the target language. This may be a study or work situation or any context in which the learner needs to use the language. Analysis of the communicative and linguistic demands of the target situation is an essential phase (p. 539).

In this line of research, Krahnke (1987) also puts forwards that situations serve as pretext to develop specific linguistic aspects depending on their focus, which can range from grammatical focus, lexical focus, functional focus or discourse focus. Another possibility that suggests the former author is that situations can lead to teaching different types of speech or how to interact. Krahnke (1987) stands out that usually such situations were presented to the students in the form of dialogues at the beginning of the class although they can take place at any time during the lesson. This author describes two ways to work different situations (Krahnke, 1987):

Many situations are presented in full, and students are then asked to play out the same situation using their own language and, possibly, settings. On the other hand, situations can be presented as role plays, in which the students are expected to create, supply, or fill in much of the language that occurs in the situation (p. 46).

### **2.3.3 Language Learning Situations in the Spanish Curriculum**

Consonant with the action-oriented approach proposed by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020), which contributes significantly to the design of eclectic methodologies, *Real Decreto 217/2022* (p. 190) is considered to be a competency-based curriculum at a national level that encourages teachers to create interdisciplinary through contextualized, meaningful and relevant tasks, which means developing learning situations where students can become autonomous social agents and gradually responsible for their own learning process. In this conceptual line, *Decreto 39/2022* contains an in-depth conceptualization of the learning situations, specifically in *Annex II.C (Núm 48910)*:

*Different circumstances, moments, dispositions and scenarios, among others, can make up a learning situation, which should be presented as a problem situation in a given context, be comprised of tasks involving increasing complexity, depending on the students' psycho-evolutionary level, and whose creative resolution involves the integrated mobilization of what has been acquired and learned in the subjects that make up the stage and entails the construction of new learning. Therefore, they require students to use deep mental processes, as well as the mobilization of varied resources and require the combination of different knowledge, the establishment of connections with the environment and the participation of the educational community.*

Added to this, Learning Situations, as described by the *Decreto 39/2022*, must meet certain well-defined characteristics: first of all, they must motivate students and be appealing for them, which will facilitate them apply and develop key competencies

appropriately; secondly, it is key that they provide students with meaningful and contextualized learning, so that learners can be transferred to other daily situations; thirdly, learning situations are thought to follow the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL); fourthly, it is essential to involve oral production and interaction and, finally, it is absolutely advantageous that they can include authentic resources in different media and formats.

It is undeniable that *Decreto 39/2022* place emphasis on situations of everyday life, to transfer them to the classroom, since they not only involve oral production and interaction, but also include the use of authentic resources in different media and formats. Daily situations deal with aspects related to common interest, sustainability or democratic coexistence; hence, it is paramount for the curriculum to prepare learners to respond effectively to the challenges of the XXI century.

Regarding Foreign Languages subjects, four proposals for the development of learning situations in real scenarios are presented by *Decreto 32/2022* (p. 49251). Different activities, with their process and their final product expected, are proposed in four context situations (education, personal, social and professional contexts):

- In the educational field, the curriculum proposes facing the context of training. The academic future of students should be analyzed by the learners: it is pivotal to discuss the choice of subjects to be studied in high school or other studies. Through a round table discussion on the different options and subjects, students will describe them and express their preferences; the product will be an oral presentation regarding the conclusions.
- From a personal point of view, in the context of food and health, the curriculum suggests learners coping with ways to improve the students' eating habits, by gathering information through an infographic on the subject and engaging in a dialogue about their preferences, tastes and their benefit or harm to their health.
- Socially speaking, the *Decreto 39/2022* suggests dealing with the context of sustainability and responsible consumerism. The situation raised by the curriculum here requires students to make purchases in a supportive and sustainable way. To do so, students will be provided with a source text out of which they will prepare a selection of questions (flipped classroom); afterwards,

in class they will carry out in small groups, an information panel of the goals they want to achieve regarding a sustainable and ethical consume.

- In terms of the professional context regarding employment, the situation given by the *Decreto 39/2022* involves the search for students' first job at the end of Compulsory Secondary Education. To this end, students will be asked to prepare a series of questions and conduct a survey among their relatives about their jobs. Subsequently, students will act as an intermediary and explain the pros and cons of performing certain types of jobs (from the adult's point of view). Eventually, by writing an essay learners can reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of joining the labor market at such an early age.

All examples considered, *Decreto 39/2022* concludes this section placing emphasis on the fact that students will carry out these and further learning situations based on the mobilization of strategies and contents that contribute to the acquisition and development of competencies. Added to this, it is of utmost importance to highlight that *Decreto 39/2022* (p. 48910) states that the Assessment Criteria that will be used to select, design and evaluate each learning situation should be built on the Specific Competences that underpin the curriculum, which in turn are related to the curriculum Key Competencies.

### 3 PROJECT PROPOSAL

#### 3.1 Context: School setting and learning environment

This proposal is based on a project aimed at Year 4 of ESO that follows an ordinary curriculum, whose Syllabus is regulated by the *Decreto 39/2022* (at MESO Level in Castilla y León, Spain). For this project-based proposal, there will be one classroom group targeted, which is made up of 20 students. Students from this class are enrolled in both English and French, but there is a significant and opposing difference:

- Half of the class pursues French as a First Foreign Language and English as a Second Foreign Language.
- The other half of the class studies French as a Second Foreign Language and English as a First Foreign Language.

The group includes students with a heterogenous linguistic level in each subject, even though the Syllabus used in each ordinary classroom is being instructed around a B1 level in the First Foreign Language and around an A2 level in the Second Foreign Language. It is worth mentioning that there are students from other European countries such as Ukraine and Germany that may contribute to plurilingualism in a greater extent.

It should be noted that this is an interdisciplinary proposal, not a bilingual one, since the foreign language is related to other subjects in order to look more deeply into linguistic aspects. For example, this project makes use of geography to acquire the foreign language, but not the opposite: it does not use foreign languages to learn aspects of geography or digitization subjects. Simply put, the goal is that students learn Foreign Languages and, implicitly, Geography or Digitalisation.

This proposal consists of a project combining both interdisciplinary and plurilingual educational approaches. The interdisciplinary part of the project involves 4 subjects: English, French, Geography and History and, finally, Digitalisation (closely related to ICT Information and Communication Technologies). On the occasion of Europe day, May 9<sup>th</sup>, this project brings together subjects that contextualize significant aspects of Europe to enhance linguistic communication by speaking in different languages, with a special focus on English and French. In turn, Geography and History will help to prepare the foundations of the facts and reliable information, which will be part of the topic of the exchange. The fourth subject, Digitalisation, promotes



international links between European countries from an early age in Secondary Education, which will be materialized through virtual exchanges. Finally, plurilingualism includes but it is not limited to Spanish, English and French subjects. Nonetheless, languages such as German or Ukrainian spoken by those native students coming Germany or Ukraine may be involved.

### **3.2 Selection of curricular elements**

Since the project gives prominence to plurilingualism, more weight is given to English and French, while less attention is given to Geography and History or Digitalisation. This section is organized by subject, and each subject is comprised of specific competences, assessment criteria and contents.

#### **3.2.1 Foreign Languages**

In this section the specific contents of English and French as Foreign Languages will be outlined, based on contents in force for Year 4 of ESO stated by *Decreto 39/2022*. From the contents of the Section A. Communication, this project emphasizes:

- *A.1. Commonly used strategies for planning, executing, monitoring, and repairing comprehension, production, and co-production of oral, written, and multimodal texts.*
- *A.2. Commonly used analog and digital tools for oral, written and multimodal comprehension, production and co-production; and virtual platforms for interaction, cooperation and educational collaboration (virtual classrooms, videoconferences, collaborative digital tools, etc.) for learning, communication and development of projects with speakers or learners of the foreign language.*

When it comes to the plurilingual contents (Section B), this project will focus on:

- *B.1. Commonly used strategies and tools for self-assessment, co-assessment and self-repair, analogue and digital, individual and cooperative.*
- *B.2. Specific expressions and lexicon of common use to exchange ideas about communication, language, learning and communication and learning tools (metalanguage).*
- *B.3. Comparison between languages based on elements of the foreign language and other languages: origins and relationships.*

As for the intercultural contents (Section C), we will be fostering:

- *C.1. The foreign language as a means of interpersonal and international communication, as a source of information and as a tool for social participation and personal enrichment.*
- *C.2. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects of everyday life, living conditions and interpersonal relationships; commonly used social conventions; non-verbal language, linguistic politeness and digital etiquette; culture, norms, attitudes, customs and values of the countries where the foreign language is spoken.*

- *C.3. Interest and initiative in carrying out communicative exchanges through different means with speakers or students of the foreign language.*

In line with the abovementioned contents, the Specific Competences selected for this project are:

- *3. Interact with others showing growing autonomy, by using cooperative strategies and making use of analog and digital resources, in order to respond to specific communicative purposes in exchanges respectful of the rules of courtesy.*
- *5. Expand and use personal linguistic repertoires among different languages, reflecting critically on the way they work and becoming aware of one's own strategies and knowledge, respecting cognitive, social and cultural diversity, to improve the response to specific communicative needs.*
- *6. Be able to evaluate critically and adapt to linguistic, cultural and artistic diversity from the foreign language, identifying and sharing the similarities and differences between languages and cultures, in order to act in an empathetic and respectful way in intercultural situations.*

Regarding the evaluation criteria, each of the specific competences 3, 5 and 6 will be evaluated with their respective Assessment Criteria 3.2, 5.1 and 6.1 as follows:

- *3.2 Select, organize, and use appropriate strategies to initiate, maintain, and terminate communication, take and yield the floor, request and formulate clarifications and explanations, reformulate, compare and contrast, summarize, collaborate, debate, solve problems, and manage compromised situations.*
- *5.1 Compare and argue the similarities and differences between different languages, reflecting on their functioning in a progressively autonomous way.*
- *6.1 Act in an appropriate, empathetic and respectful way in intercultural situations, building links between different languages and cultures, rejecting any type of discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes in daily communicative contexts and proposing solutions to those socio-cultural factors that hinder communication.*

### **3.2.2 Geography and History**

The contents that this project integrate for the subject Geography and History correspond with Section A, which the curriculum titled '*Challenges of the Current World*'. This project selected 2 contents:

- *Society of information. Information search, information processing, use of data in digital environments and evaluation and contrast of the reliability of sources. The problem of misinformation. Specific use of the lexicon related to the historical and artistic fields.*
- *Mass media culture. Techniques and methods of Social Sciences: text analysis, interpretation and elaboration of maps, diagrams and synthesis, representation of graphics and interpretation of images through accessible digital media.*

The two specific competences selected are number 1 and number 6, which the curriculum writes under the following statement:

- *1. Search, select, process and organize information on relevant topics of the present and the past, critically using historical and geographical sources, to acquire knowledge, elaborate and express content in various formats.*
- *6. Understand the geographical, historical and cultural processes that have shaped the multicultural reality in which we live, knowing and disseminating the history and culture of ethnic minorities present in our country and valuing the contribution of movements in defense of equality and inclusion, to reduce stereotypes, avoid any kind of discrimination and violence, and recognize the richness of diversity.*

In consonance with the specific competences 1 and 6, the assessment criteria considered by the curriculum are 1.3 and 6.1 respectively, which are stated as follows:

- *1.3 Transfer information and knowledge appropriately through storytelling, posters, presentations, oral presentations, audio-visual media, and other products other products.*
- *6.1 Reject discriminatory attitudes and recognize the enrichment of diversity, based on the analysis of the relationship between geographical, historical, eco-social and cultural aspects that have shaped today's globalized and multicultural society, and knowledge of the contribution of movements in defense of the rights of minorities and in favor of inclusion and real equality, especially of women and other discriminated groups.*

### **3.2.3 Digitalisation**

There are 3 contents to be implemented which belong to Section B, which Decreto 39/2022 titles as ‘Digitization of the personal learning environment’. The contents themselves are shown as follows:

- *Search, selection and filing of information.*
- *Editing and content creation: productivity applications, development of simple applications for mobile and web simple applications for mobile devices and web, virtual reality, augmented and mixed reality.*
- *Communication and online collaboration.*

In relation to the above-mentioned contents covered in the Digitalisation Subject, this project is to foster the specific competence number 2:

- *2. Setting up the personal learning environment, interacting and taking advantage of the resources of the digital environment, to optimize and manage lifelong learning.*

To evaluate specific competence 2, 2.1. and 2.2. assessment criteria are considered:

- *2.1 Manage learning in the digital environment, setting up the personal learning environment through the integration of digital resources in an autonomous way.*
- *2.2 Select and file information according to their needs, making use of the tools with critical sense and following basic safety rules on the web.*

### **3.3 Methodological remarks**

In view of the 4 subjects that are interrelated, several methodological approaches included in the curriculum of each subject are adopted:

As for the Foreign Language subjects, the communicative approach and cooperative learning are considered, since they promote interaction, active participation or shared learning construction.

With regard to Geography and History, Task-based Language Teaching will be adopted in that includes enabling and communicative tasks and fosters motivation and gradual building up of knowledge.

Concerning Digitalisation, project-based learning is taken, around which our entire project proposal is structured. It is this approach what truly let the interdisciplinarity take place.

### **3.4 Organising the lessons**

The target group of this project is Year 4 of Secondary Education. Additionally, the proposal is divided into 2 learning situations, making a total of 9 sessions of 50 minutes each. The first learning situation is made up of 5 sessions, while the second learning situation is comprised of 4 sessions. The second learning situation cannot take place unless the first learning situation is successfully completed, so the chronological order of the sessions must be preserved. There are tasks to be completed in every session and the sequence they follow is compulsory to reach the final task: giving an interactive presentation in pairs.

To accomplish the first learning situation, students will be prepared to participate in a virtual exchange with students from six European countries: The UK, The Republic of Ireland, Malta, France, Switzerland and Belgium, where French or English are spoken. Furthermore, students belonging to these countries study Spanish as a Foreign Language as well, that is why they will collect information about our student's home country. Learners will pair up twice: the first time they are virtually paired with students from other countries, whereas the second time the pair work is carried out with classmates from their own class. Spanish pair work requires that both students are assigned with a student from the same European country. By way of illustration, two students of the same class will pair together on the condition that both had been in

contact with someone from France, to cite an instance. The idea is that pairs in the Spanish class discuss diverse cultural aspects constantly: prior to the virtual exchange and once it has been conducted. Discussing the cultural similarities or differences they find, for example, from France, may be really thought-provoking since the cultural information provided by their international peer might differ from one French person to another.

The second learning situation gives rise to the final task: our students must give an interactive presentation showing some aspects learned during their virtual exchange in a way to raise awareness of Europe Day (held on 9<sup>th</sup> May every year to celebrate peace and unity in Europe). This final presentation will take place within the Spanish classroom where students give a presentation along with their same Spanish pair as always.

To collect the information, the students will put into practice their communicative competence whenever students work in pairs. On the one hand, the objective is to understand their international peer to gather that information requested and provide that peer with the same information about Spain or their home country. To that end, international pairs need to interact with their non-international classmate assigned. It is worth noting that their assigned international peers have the same final task to complete in their home country, so during the virtual exchange, students will need to take turns and negotiate how they are going to exchange that information to each other.

With respect to the plurilingual competence, the students will use any language of their repertoire that allows them to understand their international partner as long as they can get their meaning across. This means to say that students themselves must figure out autonomously which language to use while interaction is taking place. In the meantime, teachers will encourage the use of Foreign Languages to ensure that learners do not overuse the mother tongue. To that end, teachers will be monitoring students' interaction around the class, especially when they will be working in pairs. After the communicative virtual exchanges, students will be asked to provide an essay reflecting on the language they use to communicate and how they felt about it.

The intercultural contents that are intended to address include 'Culture with a capital C' and 'culture with a small c'. The former ranges from geographical or

topographical elements (such as nature or landscapes) to monuments, museums, cities, towns, places, literature, art, music, architecture, historical characters or illustrious people, significant dates, relevant celebrities, etc. However, the latter involves lifestyle, living condition, social conceptions, non-verbal gestures, cultural norms, attitudes, customs or values, among others.

### 3.4.1 Learning situation 1: European virtual exchange

*Collection of information to locate emblematic places and gather reliable information about cultural elements from different European countries and know how to express that knowledge interacting in the Foreign Language with another international student*

Target group: Secondary Education – Year 4

Timing: 50 minutes per session

Interdisciplinarity remark: Geography or Digitalisation teachers simply assists in the project, but the weight is carried by both Foreign Language Teachers

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#### Session 1: *Celebrating Europe Day*

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** English and French

**Description:** This session is divided into 3 parts of 20, 15 and 15 minutes each. The first 20 minutes, students will be explained the instructions. They will be told about the logical progression of the tasks process, the length and sequence of the project and the subjects involved. Attention will be paid to the final product of the project: giving a presentation of the foreign European culture assigned, which will be in pairs. The second part of 15 minutes consists of a flip classroom activity: the project pairs within the classroom will be assigned and they will be asked to start working in those pairs to gather information about *why, what, when and where Europe's Day is celebrated*. The last part (15 minutes) consists of sharing the information gathered by each pair before the English teacher recapitulates and correct all the information students found about Europe Day by playing a quiz in groups of 4: only one member has the correct answer and plays the role of a judge to reveal the right answers.

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## Session 2: *Célébration de la Journée de l'Europe*

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** French and English

**Description:** This session is also divided into 3 parts of 20, 15 and 15 minutes. The language used in the session will be French, since it is carried out by the French teacher. This session focuses on the general difference between ‘Culture with capital C’ (10 minutes), and ‘culture with lower case c’ (for further 10 minutes). At this point, students, who already know their respective Spanish partners to work along the sessions, will interact in pairs to reflect on their own culture for 15 minutes. The aim is to discuss the differences between ‘Culture’ and ‘culture’ and provide examples of their home culture (this is what they will be doing with their international peer in sessions 4 and 5). The next 15 minutes consist of looking up examples of the European country assigned and sharing what they have found about ‘Culture’ and ‘culture’ (stereotypes are expected).

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## Session 3: *Gathering reliable information*

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** Geography and History, French and English

**Description:** This session is divided into 4 parts of 5, 15, 15 and 15 minutes each. During this 50-minute session, students will still be working in the same pairs. The first 5 minutes will be to explain the sequence of this session. Then, in the first tasks they will have 15 minutes to prepare the information they would like to share in the virtual exchange about Spain or their home country (7.5 minutes devoted for the ‘Culture with capital C’ and 7.5 minutes to talk about ‘culture with lower case c’). The next 15 minutes will be devoted to coming up with questions about the ‘Cultural’ aspects they are interested in about the European country assigned. Preparing for the virtual exchange, each Spanish pair will need to negotiate and come to an agreement to pose the same questions about the same topics (there is a minimum of 10 questions related to both type of cultural elements, but the more information they are able to collect, the better). The next 15 minutes will consist of deciding questions about ‘culture with lower case c’ about the European culture assigned. Students will have their Geography and History Teacher to guide them about what questions to make, but also

the English and French Teachers will be running this session to help them with the language learning process. This cooperation between departments will be kept entirely until the end of the project since it is what promotes plurilingualism and guarantees an interdisciplinary project approach.

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#### **Session 4: European virtual exchange on progress- Culture with C**

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** Digitalisation, English and French

**Description:** This session takes place in the ICT room and is divided in three parts of 10, 20 and 20 minutes each. The very 10 first minutes are taken to get students ready for the virtual exchange, which will be carried out through Teams. Regular classroom pairs split up to pair up with their international pair. Students are working individually with their own laptop until they are connected with their virtual peer. Once they have logged in to the system, they are allowed to start. This first virtual exchange is to emphasize artistic, geographical or historical cultural aspects (mainly ‘Culture with C’). At this point in time, learners are free to exchange the cultural questions they had prepared in session 3 in a one-to-one European virtual exchange. The structure of the session is divided as follows: during the first 20 minutes students will be discussing about their home culture (in most of the cases it is Spain) and during the next 20 minutes students will deal with the home culture of their international peer. Students will have all the technological tools at their disposal: camera, microphone and chat. Upon agreement, they will activate the more convenient tools for them ranging from having a face-to-face interaction (promoting oral or audiovisual interactional skills) to written interaction where they are allowed to use the chat box in case it is needed (written interactional skills). Additionally, they are allowed to share screens to show them visual information (strategic competence).

Their English and French teachers will be there to always support their communication process. Further to this, not only their Digitalisation teacher will make sure that the internet is properly functioning, but they will ensure that all students communicate in a respectful and safe manner. Additionally, since students must be talking until the end of each Teams session, those teachers in charge will distribute a worksheet with further ideas so that learners can pose extra cultural questions or keep



communicating with their international peers. This should serve as a backup plan in case students do not have enough questions or in case that they have already talked about all the aspects planned.

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**Session 5: *Virtual Exchange on progress: Culture with lower case c***

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** Digitalisation, English and French

**Description:** The timing and structure of this session mimics season 4. There is just one difference, learners already know each other. Hence, students are now ready to go deeper into ‘culture with lower case c’. This session still takes place in the ICT room as well.

**3.4.2 Learning situation 2: Interactive *Hologlobe* presentation**

*Elaboration of a digital and cartographical presentation through a safe use of digital resources in an interactive and communicative way*

Once both students of the Spanish pair have collected enough cultural information of the assigned country after the virtual exchange, learners can move forward to learning situation 2. It is time to pair up again with their classmate assigned in session 1. Now, each pair needs to compare, analyze and select the main information they would like to present to their ordinary classroom. They are requested to use several digital tools.

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**Session 6: *Comparing cultural issues***

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** Digitalisation, English and French

**Description:** This session still takes place in the ICT room. The timing for each task is organized in 10, 15 and 25 minutes respectively. The first 10 minutes will be devoted to complete a self-evaluation worksheet to reflect on individual impressions after the virtual exchange process in general: what they like the most or the least,

strengths and weakness of themselves as learners, strengths and weakness of the teacher coordination, main cultural similarities and differences founded... The next 15 minutes will be used to compare, in pairs, the answers obtained from both of European peers they talked with (7.5 minutes for ‘Culture’ and 7.5 minutes for ‘culture’). They will compare their communication process and make a personal list to brainstorm: dominant language during the virtual exchange, the language skills they feel they developed (or even overdeveloped, or underdeveloped), depending on if they communicated more orally or writing through the chat). They might add any problem that they faced during the virtual exchange. After sharing their virtual experience, students will work individually for 25 minutes to write an opinion essay reflecting on the pros and cons of their experience (to be handed in the last day on session 9). If they need more time to discuss the information gather, they are allowed to keep discussing (however, they need to finish their essay after the class).

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### **Session 7: 3D Mode Hologlobe**

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** Geography and History, Digitalisation, French, English

**Description:** The activities are organized in one 10 minute-task and two 20-minute tasks with the aim to prepare the final presentation. 10 minutes will be devoted to explaining to them the presentation structure. The presentation will have 3 slides to be concise and promote communication skills: the first one will deal with the instructions on how to use the *Hologlobe*; the second one, to talk about common aspects of the foreign ‘Culture with C’ and the last one, to discuss the most significant aspects of the foreign ‘culture with lower case c’. Bearing that in mind, each pair will now have 20 minutes to organize the first part of their presentation. Students are told that it must be an interactive presentation, which means, for example, that it can follow a riddle approach to introduce their audience the Merge Edu App called *Hologlobe*. The Digitalisation teacher will provide them with guidance to use the app and World Map 3D. The last 20 minutes will be used to transfer that information into a digital presentation (they can use Canva, Genially, Power Point...). To that end, students will benefit from the Geography and History teacher attendance to contrast information provided by their international peers with reliable sources.

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### Session 8: Interactive Presentation Day – Part 1

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** English and French

**Description:** Since there are 20 students in the class, we have a total of 10 pairs. Only 5 of these pairs will give the presentation today. Each pair will have 10 minutes to give their presentation following this timing: 1 minute to get their presentation ready on the digital board and get their classmates ready to install the Merge Edu App; 3 minutes to guide their classmates through the *Hologlobe* riddle (audience need to locate the country on the map); 3 minutes for the main ‘Cultural with capital C’ aspects and 3 minutes to talk about the most relevant ‘cultural aspects with low case c’. It is worth mentioning that when students do carry out the riddle interactive presentation, the pair can ask the rest of the classmates to focus on countries or mountains and then to tap the screen to interact. The purpose is to head their audience to the specific location they will talk about just afterwards. As a little reminder for them, the pros and cons Essay requested in session 6, is due in session 9.

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### Session 9: Interactive Presentation Day – Part 2

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**Interdisciplinary subjects:** English and French

**Description:** This final session mirrors session 8. To conclude the plurilingual and interdisciplinary project the five remaining pairs will give the presentation in session 9. The Pros and cons Essay is due this Day.

As a final remark, it is worth mentioning that if students do not have time to finish some activities in class, they must complete them at home to live up to the expected pace required to move to the next session. The virtual exchange is an exception since the time devoted for each video call is already arranged and students cannot catch up with their international peers at different moments. Regarding the rest of the tasks, they can attend private tutoring with any of the project teachers at any time. Furthermore, this project proposal is somehow flexible in the sense that it depends entirely on the potential students. Hence, it leaves the door open to possible changes to

attend to diversity as appropriate in all its forms. Thus, the teachers in question are entitled to make curricular adaptations as appropriate to meet all students' necessities and adapt it to adjust to their students' styles of learning accordingly.

By way of conclusion, the teachers of the 4 subjects would be always coordinated. This means that they would always have access to all the supplementary material distributed to the students. Added to this, all teachers involved in the project would also be updated on how far the students got in the previous class and where to resume the next class.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

All things considered, one can conclude that this TFM contributes to the Language Education field for Secondary Education in a promising way: it may open good prospects to foster and integrate long-awaited practices, such as interdisciplinary and plurilingual learning situations in secondary language education today.

On the one hand, this Master' Thesis gives an overview of existing literature regarding three main points of the paper: interdisciplinarity, plurilingualism and learning situations. On the other hand, with an eye to materializing the conceptual insights collected, this TFM has combined both interdisciplinary and plurilingual approaches through project-based plan designed in two learning situations. It is our hope that this proposal is put into practice in the forthcoming future since it would prove its feasibility and effectiveness to determine its pros and cons.

However, one should not question the inherent upsides that incorporating the plurilingual and interdisciplinary dimension in the foreign language classroom brings about. In the light of its advantages, we have drawn to the conclusion that plurilingual and interdisciplinary education have a common denominator: in the same way that languages are not separate compartments (referred to plurilingualism), subjects and academic fields are not fragmented areas either (referred to interdisciplinarity). Therefore, integrating the two approaches together in the project proposal appears to illustrate a holistic way to boost Secondary Education through tasks and activities that can be transferred to real life. Additionally, the fact that teachers work together between departments serves as a role model for students, which points out the value of teamwork with a focus to becoming good team players for future jobs.

With a particular view to our project proposal section's, the headings we devise in the second part of this paper could serve as models to design any kind of plurilingual and interdisciplinary project. By way of illustration, it is plausible that the learning environment or the selection of curricular elements suggested in our learning situations plan could be extrapolated to other situations or classroom settings. Moreover, this project-based proposal seems suitable for promoting further active methodologies other than Communicative Language Teaching or Task-based Language Teaching. What is more, one should note that beyond this paper proposal there are myriads of ways to adapt plurilingualism and interdisciplinarity to each educational scenario, especially in Foreign Language Teaching. However, it depends very much on different factors such

as the student's profile in each class, the teachers' qualifications, the repertoire of languages involved in the learning-teaching process, the program of each educational school, etc.

Additionally, particular attention should be attached to the fact that a project proposal may be an exceptional way to promote interdisciplinarity. However, it does not constitute a sine qua non for interdisciplinary education since it can also be coordinated on a smaller departmental scale (involving less subjects). Proof of this is the wide range of potential combinations to interrelate academic fields. For instance, another alternative to our proposal could be to involve just two subjects (instead of four) in a systematic manner throughout the whole academic year (rather than take just nine sessions in the short term). Nonetheless, it would be of utmost importance to train students and teachers to prepare the ground for this educational shift.

Were this proposal to be implemented or delved into further, there would be some aspects to improve the practical implications: for example, specify the can-do statements and how both learning situations would be assessed to cover self-evaluation, co-evaluation and heterogeneous evaluation by the teachers. This would require agree on the mark that each subject devotes to each task to line up with the curriculum competence assessment criteria. In addition, there would be some ways to expand the proposal for upcoming learning situations: involving different or more countries; engaging additional subjects such as arts, P. E. or other Foreign Languages such as German or Classic Languages; exploring the whole *Hologlobe* digital app or even planning a traditional exchange that requires travelling to have a proper closing remark beyond the screens. All in all, strong coordination is a precondition to take this potential implementation to the next level of complexity.

Finally, to increase the probabilities of success, this TFM intends to urge active teachers to implement plurilingual and interdisciplinary approaches from Year 1 of Secondary Education. To that end, it would be beneficial if teachers undergo a continuous training process to organize and plan interdisciplinary and plurilingual learning situations with an effort to provide with a most significant, comprehensive meaningful learning in the long term, which would give meaning to the current curricular assessment plan that requires key competences assessment along with specific competences evaluation. By doing so, not only may students very well finish their stage of studies in Year 4 with a great deal of expertise in plurilingual interaction, but also with a more cohesive learning.

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