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Citizens of the World: Fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence in the EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the increasing cultural diversity in classrooms and highlights the importance of promoting Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in secondary education. Based on Byram's theoretical model, it shows how foreign language learning promotes intercultural awareness. The core of this study is the design of a didactic unit entitled *Citizens of the World*, designed for 3rd secondary students, which combines active methodologies and cross-curricular content such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This unit seeks to enhance ICC through English learning by encouraging empathy, cultural awareness, and respect for diversity through meaningful learning experiences. Through activities that foster communication, critical thinking, and reflection, students are invited to explore diverse cultural realities, fostering inclusion and reflection in the English classroom. Ultimately, this proposal aims to contribute to a more inclusive, respectful, equitable, and globally conscious educational practice.

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), cultural diversity, secondary education.

RESUMEN

La presente tesis analiza la creciente presencia de diversidad cultural en las aulas y subraya la importancia de fomentar la Competencia Comunicativa Intercultural (CCI) en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en la educación secundaria. Basándose en el modelo teórico de Byram, se observa cómo el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera favorece la conciencia intercultural. El núcleo central de este TFM es el diseño de una unidad didáctica titulada *Ciudadanos del mundo*, diseñada para alumnos de 3.º de ESO, que integra metodologías activas y contenidos transversales como los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). Dicha unidad didáctica tiene como objetivo promover la CCI mediante el aprendizaje del inglés, fomentando la empatía, la conciencia cultural y el respeto hacia la diversidad mediante experiencias de aprendizaje significativas. A través de actividades que estimulan la comunicación, el pensamiento crítico y la reflexión, se anima al alumnado a explorar diversas realidades culturales, promoviendo la inclusión y la reflexión en el aula de inglés. En definitiva, esta propuesta didáctica pretende contribuir al desarrollo de una práctica educativa más inclusiva, respetuosa, equitativa y global.

Palabras clave: Competencia Comunicativa Intercultural (CCI), Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, diversidad cultural, educación secundaria.

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Introduction

Nowadays, in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, cultural diversity stands out as a defining feature of modern societies.

Cultural diversity is the presence of variation in human culture; each culture has its own aspects which may distinguish it from others, and this becomes particularly apparent when different cultures occupy the same geographical region. A monoculture community, on the contrary, is one in which only one culture exists in the community, however this is rare and most human communities are influenced by at least some level of cultural diversity. (Al-Obaydi, 2019).

In this context of increasing immigration and international mobility, educational settings are becoming progressively diverse and culturally heterogeneous. This shift has emphasized the importance of fostering the development of intercultural competence. This competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. According to Byram (1997, p. 4), “communication is being presented as interaction among people of complex cultural and social identities”. Consequently, this evolving context has given rise to what is now widely referred to as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), an extension of the original concept of intercultural competence, a concept that highlights not only cultural awareness, but also the capacity to communicate meaningfully across cultural and linguistical boundaries.

The concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence has been defined by numerous scholars over time. For instance, Deardorff (2006, p. 247-248) defines ICC as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes”. In the same way, Byram (1997, p. 3) defines ICC as “the qualities required of the sojourner”. Byram’s model highlights the need to foster critical cultural awareness, empathy and openness to others. To conceptualize these competences, he developed a framework with the five key components—or *savoirs*—that an intercultural speaker should have:

- Intercultural attitudes (*savoir être*): curiosity and openness; a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
- Knowledge (*savoirs*): of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.
- Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it, and relate it to documents or events from one's own.
- Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*): ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.
- Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*): an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

In summary, Byram (1997) argues that it is not sufficient to know how to use a language accurately; rather, it is necessary to develop the abilities, attitudes, and critical thinking required to engage in meaningful interactions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. He highlights that Intercultural Communicative Competence constitutes the general framework, while the *savoirs* represent its core components. These components promote critical thinking and contribute to the formation of engaged and responsible global citizens. As such, they provide a theoretical and pedagogical foundation for integrating intercultural competence into the academic context, particularly in the learning of foreign languages.

Classrooms, considered places of socialization, reflect cultural diversity through the coexistence of students from different cultures, ethnicities, and beliefs. This diversity enhances the teaching-learning process in a positive way by fostering multiple perspectives, mutual understanding, and empathy. As Aguado, Ballesteros & Malik (2003, p. 58) explain, "most teachers admit that they have had little or no training at all to work with culturally diverse students and lack the necessary pedagogical strategies to enable them to obtain good results with these students", highlighting the need for intercultural approaches in education. However, the mere presence of cultural diversity in the classroom does not ensure or guarantee

meaningful interaction, the exchange of experiences, or the development of an open mindset that promotes respect for others and cultural differences. Therefore, the absence of a methodology that promotes critical interculturality in the classroom can lead to the creation and development of prejudices, stereotypes, and disrespect, resulting in a more unjust, unequal, and less inclusive society. As Banks (2004, p. 291) states, “Unity without diversity results in cultural repression and hegemony. Diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the nation-state. Diversity and unity should coexist in a delicate balance in democratic, multicultural nation-states”.

Traditionally, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has emphasized the development of linguistic competence, with a strong emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. As Freeman (2000) explains, this method gives importance to reading and writing, neglecting speaking and listening. This approach, rooted in methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method, focused on the memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary lists, aiming for accuracy over communicative competence. As Richards and Rodgers (2014, p. 3) explain, “Grammar Translation Method is a way of studying language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of target language”.

However, this methodology is very restricted as it lacks many important aspects, for example, interaction. As language education has evolved, there has been a shift towards approaches that integrate the development of intercultural competence. By incorporating intercultural elements into language teaching, students develop the ability to communicate effectively with English speakers from different backgrounds, reducing misinterpretations. Therefore, emphasizing communication and interaction in the EFL classroom enhances fluency and confidence as well as the development of communicative strategies, motivation, and meaningful learning experiences.

Although interculturalism has gained increasing importance in educational curricula in recent years, it often fails to emphasize the development of intercultural competence. Consequently, a significant gap can be observed between the theoretical approach promoted by educational policies and its practical application in classrooms. For instance, in many

schools, the teaching of culture in foreign language classes is reduced to a mere superficial presentation of factual information about English-speaking countries—such as who St. Patrick was and why the day is celebrated—without encouraging critical reflection. This educational gap restricts foreign language learning from a competency-based perspective, as advocated by the LOMLOE (2020) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), which emphasize that language learning must include linguistic as well as intercultural competence.

In addition, educational curricula and teaching practices tend to give greater prominence to certain cultures—the United States, and the United Kingdom—while leaving in the background the cultural and linguistic diversity of other English-speaking nations, such as India or South Africa. This selective representation offers a partial stereotyped view of the English-speaking world and contradicts the principles of intercultural education. According to the UNESCO (2006, p. 32), intercultural education should “provide all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations”. So, it is essential the English as a Foreign Language curriculum adopt a broader cultural perspective that integrates the full linguistic diversity of English-speaking countries.

Once this educational need has been identified, it becomes necessary to suggest a pedagogical response. To this end, a didactic unit entitled *Citizens of the World* is proposed, whose main objective is to foster the development of intercultural competence within the teaching-learning of English as a foreign language. That is to say, it aims to help students in the 3rd year of secondary education improve their English proficiency through the implementation of intercultural learning situations, a set of guided activities that encourage critical thinking and engagement with cultural diversity. These learning situations, aligned with the competency-based approach promoted by the LOMLOE (2020), foster meaningful learning and promote values such as respect, empathy, global citizenship, or inclusion. Moreover, in accordance with the Spanish curriculum, this didactic unit also contributes to the development of key competences, while integrating the principles of diversity and intercultural education.

1.1 Justification of the topic

As previously mentioned, today's world is becoming increasingly interconnected and globalized. Therefore, education is a key element in the preparation and formation of students, focusing not only on the learning of academic content but also on the development of skills, values, and personal attitudes that enable them to live in multicultural environments and societies. Within this context, foreign language classrooms become ideal environments to develop cultural awareness alongside linguistic competence. In fact, the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020) explains the importance of developing “the attitudes, knowledge and skills they need to become more independent in thought and action, and also more responsible and cooperative in relation to other people”.

The present didactic unit, focused on the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence, arises from the need to provide a solution to the existing educational limitations, specifically, in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Compulsory Secondary Education.

However, despite the fact that both the LOMLOE (2020) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) underscore the importance of incorporating Intercultural Communicative Competence into the curriculum, its integration into teaching practice is quite reduced. In fact, as previously mentioned, the cultural content in lessons is based on a mere explanation of isolated facts about certain countries of the target language, without critical reflection and intercultural engagement.

Thus, fostering the development of ICC involves both social and educational needs. On the one hand, it ensures that all students feel respected, included, and represented, and, on the other hand, it turns students into committed citizens who are able to face the difficulties and challenges encountered in today's world. In addition, promoting ICC in the EFL classroom connects foreign language learning with real-world contexts, thereby increasing students' engagement, interest, and intrinsic motivation.

In summary, the choice of this topic is grounded in the aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice, while also providing students with both communicative and intercultural skills that enable them to interact and live successfully in multicultural societies.

1.2 General objectives

This dissertation is based on the need to promote intercultural competence in the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). As mentioned above, this dissertation aims to respond to the growing demands of having a globalized society with cultural diversity. Thus, this research not only aims to implement this didactic unit but also to stimulate and encourage reflection and critical thinking among students. All this will be achieved through the design of the didactic unit, based on pedagogical innovation.

Concerning the general objectives, the first one is to explore and contextualize the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence in relation to foreign language teaching and learning, as well as to investigate to what extent this competence is integrated in the educational curricula and is implemented in classrooms. Although intercultural competence has gained importance in recent decades, in practice its application is often scarce and superficial.

Language teaching has long been associated with teaching in a country or countries where a target language is spoken, but this approach is inadequate. In the contemporary world, language teaching has a responsibility to prepare learners for interaction with people of other cultural backgrounds, teaching them skills and attitudes as well as knowledge. (Martin and Byram, 2018).

To address this situation, throughout this dissertation, a didactic proposal will be created in which intercultural competence will be embedded in the learning objectives, the evaluation criteria, the achievement indicators, and in the different sessions that form the learning situations. At the same time, various European institutions, such as the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020) will be taken into account, as they highlight the importance of intercultural awareness in communicative competence.

The second objective is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the effects of integrating intercultural competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. This analysis will focus on how this integration can be achieved through different active methodologies, for instance, cooperative learning and Task-Based Learning (TBL). These methodologies are dynamic pedagogical strategies that foster students' autonomy and critical thinking. In other words, it is important to keep in mind that it is not enough to recognize that intercultural competence must be fostered, but it must be carried out, put into practice, and see what positive effects it has on the teaching-learning process of a second foreign language, in this case, English.

The third objective is to design a didactic unit for 3rd year secondary students, with the aim of integrating the ideas and principles that are transmitted in intercultural competence. This didactic unit will reflect the values and principles explored in previous objectives, and it will serve as a pedagogical model created with the purpose of serving as a guide or model for other teachers.

The fourth objective focuses on the implications of applying Intercultural Communicative Competence in the classroom, specifically, the need for a change in the teacher's role. As Jata (2016, p. 42) explains, "the foreign language teacher is seen as the mediator between two different cultures. Foreign language teachers bear the responsibility to help students to understand and raise their awareness and familiarity of the target culture". This entails that the teacher should no longer be simply an authority figure transmitting knowledge and information but should act as a guide for learning, a facilitator of dialogue among students, a cultural mediator, a promoter of critical thinking and reflection, and a companion in the academic and personal development of each student. For this transformation to take place, it will be necessary for teachers to receive prior training that focuses on the different existing active methodologies and Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Finally, the fifth objective of this dissertation is to integrate Intercultural Communicative Competence with cross-cutting issues existing in educational contexts, such as gender equality, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015), training in digital skills, or human rights. By relating these aspects, an interdisciplinary

approach will be obtained, which allows a more global and representative vision of interdisciplinary competence. In summary, this TFM seeks to demonstrate that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes are not only spaces for linguistic learning but also for the transmission of values, ethical principles, and attitudes essential to their integral formation.

In conclusion, the general objectives of this TFM are summarized as follows:

1. To investigate the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence in foreign language teaching, examining its presence in educational curricula and its application in the classroom.
2. To analyze the effects of such competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.
3. To design a didactic unit in which Intercultural Communicative Competence is promoted among students.
4. To examine the different implications of the application of ICC in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.
5. To integrate ICC with cross-cutting themes present in the educational environment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In recent years, foreign language teaching has rapidly adopted an intercultural dimension, establishing that effective communication in a foreign language requires not only linguistic skills, but also it is necessary to have cultural knowledge and to develop a critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997). In fact, Hennebry (2014) mentions that “[i]t has been argued that culture is the marginalized sister of language” (p. 135). In other words, this author highlights the need to integrate cultural learning with foreign language learning.

In later publications, Byram (2008) suggests that foreign language teaching serves not only educational purposes, but also functional purposes, as it contributes to the development of *intercultural citizenship*. In other words, it aims to form empathetic individuals who are committed to global issues. Following this idea, according to Kramsch (1993, p. 1), culture “is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them”. That is to say, culture is not an optional aspect of foreign language learning, but rather an integral and mandatory element, as it is always present in the process.

This integration of foreign language and culture teaching is reflected in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020). This European standard places special emphasis on the importance of understanding existing cultural differences as a fundamental aspect of linguistic competence, while also highlighting the importance of pluricultural competence. Moreover, this intercultural approach has been driven by two key factors: globalization and migration. Both have transformed classrooms into increasingly culturally diverse environments, made up of students from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This multicultural situation makes education an essential tool for embracing such cultural diversity and for promoting a respectful classroom climate. In fact, UNESCO (2006) places special emphasis on the importance of intercultural education as a means of providing quality education for all.

In a world experiencing rapid change, and where cultural, political, economic and social upheaval challenges traditional ways of life, education has a major role to play in promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Through programmes that encourage dialogue between students of different cultures, beliefs and religions, education can make an important and meaningful contribution to sustainable and tolerant societies. (UNESCO, 2006).

In Spain, students are growing up in a deeply interconnected and globalized world, in which English has become a lingua franca, serving as a vehicle for interacting with people from all over the world. Therefore, in order to turn these students into *Citizens of the World*, the teaching of English should not focus solely on the development of language skills but should also promote values that foster respect and equality. As mentioned above, UNESCO (2006) states that intercultural education is an essential element in promoting social integration and peaceful coexistence among people.

In relation to the points mentioned previously, the present theoretical framework reviews the main learning theories and pedagogical models that support a functional approach to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for secondary school students, with a special focus on Intercultural Communicative Competence. This review is organized chronologically, beginning with Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, which proposes that learners construct knowledge through stages based on their interactions with the environment (1952). Then, it introduces Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the fundamental role of social interaction and introduces the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development as a space where learning is enhanced through guidance and collaboration (1978). Next, Ausubel's Theory of Meaningful Learning is presented, focusing on the importance of connecting new information to learners' prior knowledge (1963). The review continues with the principles of Cooperative Learning proposed by Johnson and Johnson, which stress positive interdependence and individual accountability within group work (1999). Finally, it explores the Action-oriented approach of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which views learners as social agents (2020), and concludes with Hall's cultural iceberg mode, illustrating the visible and invisible aspects of culture (1976).

Each of these sections will not only explain the corresponding theory, but will also connect it to its application in a secondary foreign language classroom, always based on the

development of Intercultural Communicative Competence. In other words, this theoretical framework establishes the foundational basis for the subsequent design of the didactic unit *Citizens of the World*.

2.1 Piaget's Cognitive Constructivism

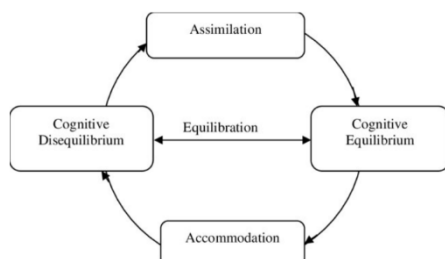
According to Piaget (1973), he considered learning as an active internal process in which students construct their own knowledge by integrating prior knowledge with new information. Also, Piaget (1973) states that learning is an internal cognitive process in which individuals integrate new information with prior knowledge. By creating relationships between concepts, ideas and objects, learners gradually constructs their own knowledge. Thus, cognitive constructivism “emphasizes the role each person plays in constructing his or her own knowledge” (Branscombe et al., 2014, p. 9).

As Piaget explains (1955), “every acquisition of accommodation becomes material for assimilation, but assimilation always resists new accommodations.” So, this statement shows how learners are constantly encountering new situations and existing cognitive schemas may or may not work in responding to new situations. As Boom (2009) states, “for Piaget, this implies a process that improves existing structures and replaces temporally achieved equilibria through re-equilibrations. This process is designated by Piaget as equilibration”.

When a new situation aligns with an existing schema, there is a state of equilibration. However, this is not always the case. If the new situation does not fit the learner's current schemas, that existing knowledge is not sufficient to deal with the new situation, resulting in a state of disequilibrium. As Scott (1975) explains “When the phenomenon encountered gives rise to confusion as to how to proceed, the individual dissatisfied with systems heretofore found to be successful methods of dealing with like phenomena [...] At the point where the individual is stimulated by the phenomenon he enters the state Piaget has termed disequilibrium” (p. 233).

Figure 1

Cycles of Adaptation and Equilibrium [Diagram]



Note. Adapted from *The Role of Equilibration in the Formation of Cognitive Structures in Mathematics Learning*, by S. Bormanaki & M. Khoshhal, 2017, in *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364273135_THE_ROLE_OF_EQUILIBRATION_IN_THE_FORMATION_OF_COGNITIVE_STRUCTURES_IN_MATHEMATICS_LEARNING/figures

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, Piaget (1978) highlights the importance of active pedagogies in which the learner plays a central role in their own learning process. In other words, students should not be passive recipients of knowledge, but rather take on an active role in constructing and internalizing it:

[There is the] fear (and sometimes hope) that the teacher would have no role to play in these experiments and that their success would depend on leaving the students entirely free to work or play as they will. It is obvious that the teacher as organiser remains indispensable in order to create the situations and construct the initial devices which present useful problems to the child. Secondly, he is needed to provide counter-examples that compel reflection and reconsideration of over-hasty solutions. What is desired is that the teacher cease being a lecturer, satisfied with transmitting ready made solutions; his role should rather be that of a mentor stimulating initiative and research. (Piaget, 1973, p. 16).

This statement supports the idea that the teacher is a guide; he has to facilitate situations and activities that engage autonomy and critical reflection. That is, the teacher's role is facilitator of knowledge. For example, instead of giving a traditional lecture on the grammatical rules of passive voice, the teacher designs a discovery-based activity in which students take an active role—formulating hypotheses, exploring patterns and finding solutions.

As mentioned above in the image analysis, Piaget's learning model involves the integration of new information with existing knowledge. Therefore, it is essential that the EFL teacher takes into account the students' prior knowledge when introducing new content. As Duckworth (2006, p. 12) states, "students bring their prior expectations, interests and knowledge to the learning experience".

Piaget and Inhelder (1958) identified that Compulsory Secondary Education (students aged 12 to 16) corresponds with the transition to the formal operational stage of cognitive development. In this stage, students develop the ability to reason and think abstractly. They become individuals capable of logical thinking and of engaging with cultural values or global issues. Therefore, the development of this cognitive stage is essential in *Citizens of the world*, as this didactic unit addresses cultural themes, includes activities that require reasoning and encourages the adoption of multiple perspectives. These types of activities promote the active use of the foreign language while supporting the development of formal operation thinking, aligned with the fulfillment of the objectives of Intercultural competence.

Another key idea proposed by Piaget (1972) is that learning becomes more meaningful and lasting when students discover knowledge for themselves and actively participate in the process. When learners engage, explore, and construct their own understanding, the result is more meaningful and deeper learning.

Children should be able to do their own experimenting and their own research. Teachers, of course, can guide them by providing appropriate materials, but the essential thing is that in order for a child to understand something, he must construct it himself, he must re-invent it. Every time we teach a child something, we keep him from inventing it himself. On the other hand that which we allow him to discover by himself will remain with him visibly. (Piaget 1972, p. 27).

This can be related to Task-Based Learning or inductive grammar teaching, in which students deduce rules and answers from examples provided by the teacher. In line with this approach, the final project of the didactic unit requires students to create a cultural manifesto based on the information they have previously researched and analyzed in class. In other words, students will have constructed their own knowledge through the activities carried out during the sessions, resulting in a tangible result outcome, the manifesto.

In summary, Piaget's cognitive constructivism (1973) states that students actively construct knowledge based on what they already know. Throughout the learning process, students should be the protagonists, while teachers act merely as facilitators of knowledge. These constructivist principles form the foundation for active student participation and the development of meaningful learning.

2.1 Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and the ZPD

Vygotsky (1978) believed that Piaget's emphasis was centered too closely on the internal processes of individuals. Vygotsky viewed cognitive development primarily as a function of cultural, historical and social interaction rather than of individual construction. He suggested that people create psychological tools to master their behavior, the most important being language. Whether knowledge is viewed as socially situated or whether it is considered to be an individual construction has implications for the ways in which learning is conceptualized. (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012).

In other words, Lev Vygotsky argued that learning is fundamentally a social and cultural process, rather than a merely individual act of discovery. While Piaget (1958) emphasized independent exploration of knowledge, Vygotsky asserted that knowledge is constructed through language, collaboration, and guided support. This role of language is supported by John-Steiner & Mahn (1996) who explain, "for Vygotsky, psychological tools, particularly language, were of primary concern". In this view, learning begins as a social phenomenon in which any higher mental function first appears intermentally (between individuals), and later intramentally (within the individual). As Jane and Robbins (2007) state: "Thinking progresses through 'intermental' functioning to 'intramental' functioning. That is, thinking occurs first on the social plane (between people engaged in joint sociocultural activity), and later on the individual plane (that is, within the child)". Hedgaard (2001) states:

In Vygotsky's theory, learning is a social process that takes place between people. He conceptualized learning as internalisation of social interactions in which communication is central. Learning takes place in social interaction in a specific context which comes internalised by a person. By internalisation, Vygotsky did not mean copying but transforming the external interaction to a new form of interaction that guides the child's actions. Internalisation does not directly mirror the external social relations; it is a transformed reflection. (Hedegaard, 2001, p. 16-17).

One of the main concepts in Vygotsky's theory, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) stands out. Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) defined this concept as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer".

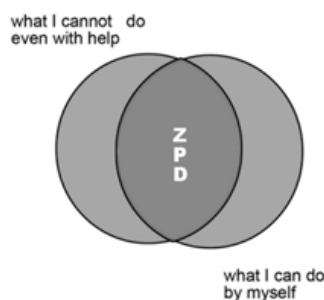
In other words, the ZPD represents the gap between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with support. Vygotsky viewed this *zone* as the optimal point for learning, the *next attainable level* when adequate assistance is provided.

The ZPD was understood by Vygotsky to describe the current or actual level of development of the learner and the next level attainable through the use of mediating semiotic and environmental tools and capable adult or peer facilitation. The idea is that individuals learn best when working together with others during joint collaboration, and it is through such collaborative endeavors with more skilled persons that learners learn and internalize new concepts, psychological tools, and skills. (Shabani, Khatib & Ebadi, 2010).

Therefore, the teaching-learning process is most effective when students are given activities that they cannot complete independently, but which they can successfully carry out with support. "The idea is that, after completing the task together, the student will likely be able to complete the same task individually next time." Through this process, "the student's ZPD for that particular task will have increased". (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010, p. 238).

Figure 2

The Zone of Proximal Development [Diagram]



Note. Adapted from *Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development: Instructional Implications and Teachers' Professional Development*, by K. Shabani, M. Khatib, & S. Ebadi, 2010, *English Language Teaching*, 3(4), p. 248. Canadian Center of Science and Education. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v3n4p237>

A concept closely related to the ZPD (1978) is the practice of scaffolding, a term coined by later researchers.

More often than not, it involves a kind of “scaffolding” process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. This scaffolding consists essentially of the adult “controlling” those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence. (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976, p. 90).

According to Samana (2013), applying scaffolding in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom can take many forms. For example, the teacher might use visual aids to support students' understanding of the content being explained, or group students in pairs, where one student is more proficient than the other, so that peer support can take place. As the learner develops skills and becomes more competent, the support is gradually withdrawn, allowing them to complete the activities independently:

Roosevelt (2008) holds that the main goal of education from Vygotskian perspective is to keep learners in their own ZPDs as often as possible by giving them interesting and culturally meaningful learning and problem-solving tasks that are slightly more difficult than what they do alone. (Shabani, Khatib & Ebadi, 2010).

That is to say, when students consistently engage in activities within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), they become fully involved and committed, which in turn fosters the development of their abilities and skills.

In the cultural context, it is clear that Vygotsky's ideas are closely aligned with the objectives of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Vygotsky (1982) reiterates the fact that social interaction with cultural artifacts forms the most important part of learner's psychological development. Cultural tools or artifacts include all the things we use, from simple things such as a pen, spoon, or table, to the more complex things such as language, traditions, beliefs, arts, or science (Cole, 1997; Vygotsky, 1982). (Shabani, Khatib & Ebadi, 2010).

This suggests that integrating grammar and vocabulary with cultural content is essential for effective language development. In practice, within an English as a Foreign Language classroom, the teacher could use realia (real objects or books) and social routines (cultural practices) as meaningful learning tools. It is important to note that language itself is both the goal and the means of learning in the EFL classroom. Vygotsky argued that when students talk while carrying out an activity, their speech acts as a cognitive tool that supports the thinking process, i.e., engaging in a dialogue while doing an activity is far more effective than working in silence. Vygotsky states, "children solve practical tasks with the help of their speech, as well as their eyes and hands" (1978, p. 26). For this reason, pairing students to carry out activities enables them to interact, share ideas and even resolve any possible doubts that may arise during the learning process.

In summary, Vygotsky's social constructivism emphasizes the importance of guided support in learning and social interaction in the learning process. Teachers are responsible for designing activities within the students' Zone of Proximal Development, so that, with appropriate assistance, students are able to achieve new goals and therefore, grow and develop cognitively. These fundamental principles established by Vygotsky are clearly reflected in the implementation of the didactic unit, as social interaction is strongly encouraged through pair and group activities.

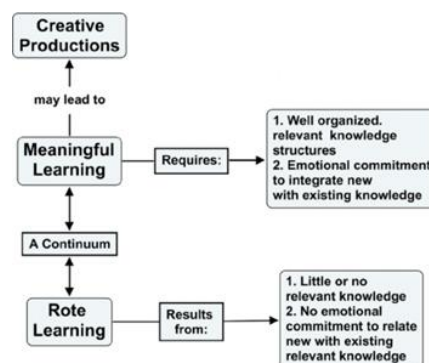
2.3 Ausubel's Theory of Meaningful Learning

"The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly" (Ausubel, 1968, p. 6). Ausubel emphasizes that learning is meaningful only when new information can be related to the learner's prior knowledge.

In contrast, rote memorization involves memorizing isolated information that is not connected to existing knowledge. To address this, advance organizers serve as tools designed to help learners integrate new information with their prior knowledge. As Adhikari (2020) explains, “the advance organizer is a tool or mental learning aid to help students integrate the new information with their existing knowledge, leading to a "meaningful learning" as opposed to the rote learning (memorization)”.

Figure 3

A key idea in Ausubel’s learning theory is that new learning can vary from very rote to highly meaningful [Diagram]



Note. Adapted from *The Origins of the Concept Mapping Tool and the Continuing Evolution of the Tool*, by J. D. Novak & A. J. Cañas, 2006, *The Origins of the Concept Mapping Tool and the Continuing Evolution of the Tool*. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/A-key-idea-in-Ausubels-learning-theory-is-that-new-learning-can-vary-from-very-rote-to_fig1_220586592

In addition, Ausubel contrasted meaningful learning with pure discovery learning. According to Bryce and Blown (2023, p. 4580), “sometimes the knowledge acquired is successfully assimilated, resulting in what he termed meaningful learning. Sometimes the integration is weak leaving students to rote learn as an alternative, a term that many teachers and teacher educators use to this day, though with subtle differences in emphasis.”. In other words, instead of rejecting discovery learning, Ausubel acknowledged its effectiveness in certain situations. However, he argued that, in most cases, it is less effective than structures, because meaningful instruction based on the integration of new information with prior cognitive structures.

Ausubel advocated meaningful learning as a counter to the ages-and-stages paradigm in recognition of children's capacity to learn at an earlier age than previously thought, provided that new learning was based on what children already knew. In order to optimize learning he created the construct of advance organizers which primed the child's cognitive systems to be prepared to receive new information. (Bryce and Blown 2023).

In other words, this implies teacher-guided learning, in which the teacher prepares and presents content and activities in such a way that students can learn them meaningfully. As Ausubel explains:

If the new learning material (for example, the Darwinian theory of evolution) is entirely unfamiliar to the learner, the organizer might include whatever established and relevant knowledge presumably exists in his cognitive structure that would make Darwinian theory more plausible, cogent or comprehensible. (1968, p. 132).

To promote this type of learning, he introduced a number of teaching strategies such as *advance organizers*¹. These organizers are presumed to activate cognitive structures at a higher level under which the new information may be categorized.

The function of the organizer is to provide ideational scaffolding for the stable incorporation and retention of the more detailed and differentiated material that follows in the learning passage, as well as to increase discriminability between the latter material and similar or ostensibly conflicting ideas in cognitive structure. In the case of completely unfamiliar material an expository organizer is used to provide relevant proximate subsumers. (Ausubel, 1968, p. 148).

So, in a situation where new material is unfamiliar, an organizer is used to provide proximate subsumers. In practice, in an EFL classroom, the teacher might begin the lesson with a brainstorming in Spanish (the students' L1), which is then connected to an English text on the same topic that was previously discussed in the brainstorming. This introductory activity—brainstorming as an advance organizer—serves as a *mental hook* that helps make the English text easier to understand and, therefore, more meaningful for the students.

¹ Introductory materials or resources provided by the teacher before the learning process begins, designed to help students connect new content with their prior existing knowledge.

Through the application of Ausubel's Theory of Meaningful Learning (1968), students' existing prior knowledge is always activated and utilized when introducing new content. In the secondary education context, students typically have a solid foundation in English, as they have studied it for several years. Therefore, teachers should take advantage of this prior knowledge before presenting new concepts. In this way, linking new content to what students already know ensures that students do not perceive it as isolated or random content.

Regarding techniques based on meaningful learning, Joseph D. Novak, a student of Ausubel, developed the idea of the *concept map*:

Novak and Gowin's (1984) research into human learning and knowledge construction led to the development of Concept Maps: a graphical tool that enables anybody to express their knowledge in a form that is easily understood by others. Concept Maps are a graphical two-dimensional display of knowledge that is comprised of concepts (usually represented within boxes or circles), connected by directed areas encoding brief relationships (linking phrases) between pairs of concepts. These relationships usually consists of verbs, forming propositions or phrases for each pair of concepts. (Cañas et al., 2006).

Through the use of concept maps, new content is not learned in isolation, but rather takes place within the student's mental structure, becoming linked to their prior knowledge. In conclusion, Ausubel's Theory of Meaningful Learning (1968) emphasizes the idea that, in order to teach effectively and ensure long-lasting learning, instruction must start from the student's prior knowledge. This translates into the use of activities such as brainstorming or preliminary discussions before introducing new information. In the case of *Citizens of the World*, several activities have been designed to promote meaningful learning, so that students not only listen to the new content, but also understand and remember it over time, thereby contributing to the development of Intercultural competence.

2.4 Cooperative Learning

The theory of cooperative learning, developed by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, is an educational approach “in which students work in small groups to help one another master academic content or carry out group projects” (Slavin, 2002, p.115).

Johnson & Johnson (1999) described five basic elements that must be present for an activity to be considered cooperative:

- Positive interdependence: “the perception that we are linked with others in a way so that we cannot succeed unless they do” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p.70-71). The group is structured in such a way that their work benefits you, and your work benefits them, creating a team that shares both success and failure. Positive interdependence can be fostered through the use of rewards to promote teamwork and eliminate the tendency for only one student to do all the work, since success requires the effort of all group members.
- Individual accountability: “individual accountability exists when the performance of each individual student is assessed and the results are given back to the group and the individual” (Johnson & Johnson 1999, p.71). Although it is a group project, each member is responsible for contributing as much as possible. To ensure that every member is actively participating, the teacher can give each student an individual test or assign individual tasks within the group project.
- Face-to-face promotive interaction: “individuals promote each other’s success by helping, assisting, supporting, encouraging, and praising each other’s efforts to achieve” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 71). Group members must engage in dialogue in which they support and help one another to understand new information and resolve doubts. Johnson & Johnson (1999) emphasize the importance of group members sitting together and communicating face-to-face, as this *promotive interaction* greatly enhances learning.
- Social skills: “contributing to the success of a cooperative effort requires interpersonal and small group skills” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 71). Grouping students into teams does not automatically lead to cooperation; therefore, it is necessary to explicitly teach

teamwork skills such as leadership, communication, decision-making, and problem-solving, so that students can effectively apply them during group work.

- Group processing: “group processing exists when group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 71). For example, the teacher can pose a series of questions for students to reflect on, such as, *What could we do better next time?* or *What did we do well as a teamwork?*

In an English as a foreign language classroom, multiple cooperative strategies can be applied. First, Meng (2010) proposes the jigsaw method as an effective way to improve reading comprehension. Lai and Wu (2006) explain that this learning method is group-based. Each student in a team is assigned a specific task. Students from different groups who share the same task come together to form an *expert group*, in which they discuss and solve the task. Once completed, they return to their original group, where each member shows their findings, and the group discusses and integrates the information shared by all members. This cooperative learning method incorporates the five basic elements mentioned previously:

- Positive interdependence, as each member becomes an expert on a topic
- Individual responsibility, since each member is responsible for understanding and completing their task
- Face-to-face interaction, through collaborative discussions
- Social skills, necessary to listen to and support each other
- Group processing, once the group project is completed, students reflect together.

Secondly, Think-pair-share can also be implemented in EFL classrooms. According to Aprianti & Ayu (2020, p. 13), Think-Pair-Share technique is one of the cooperative learning strategies that promote student involvement in the classroom. This strategy makes students engaged in in-class activities such as discussions and provides opportunities to share their ideas with others.

In this cooperative strategy, the teacher poses a thought-provoking question that encourages individual reflection. Students first think about the question on their own and its answer. Then, they discuss their ideas with a partner sitting next to them. After exchanging opinions and

reflections in pairs, they share their thoughts with the rest of the class. TPS provides an opportunity for students to work in groups toward a common goal, increasing their own and others' understanding in a safe environment to make mistakes (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

According to Arias (2017), working in groups strengthens the teaching-learning process, allowing students to develop key competencies, abilities, and skills. In this type of strategy, each group member is assigned a specific subtask, which guarantees individual accountability and commitment. These projects ensure that the work is not completed by just one student, but rather through collaborative effort, with all group members working together toward a common good: the team's success.

In summary, Johnson and Johnson's cooperative learning approach provides structured strategies based on peer interaction aimed at maximizing learning outcomes. In *Citizens of the World*, cooperative learning is a key element, as most activities are carried out in small groups of three students. Through group work, learners can share their ideas, practice the foreign language, and support one another throughout the learning process.

2.5 The Action-Oriented Approach of the CEFR

Currently, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) plays a fundamental role in foreign language teaching, particularly in Europe:

The CEFR has played and continues to play an important role in making this vision of Europe a reality. Since its launch in 2001, the CEFR, together with its related instrument for learners, the European Language Portfolio (ELP),² has been a central feature of the Council of Europe's intergovernmental programmes in the field of education, including their initiatives to promote the right to quality education for all. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 11).

The CEFR establishes the action-oriented approach, whereby students are regarded as "social agents" who use language to act in the world. "The CEFR takes an innovative stance in seeing learners as language users and social agents" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 29). Furthermore, this approach promotes "seeing language as a vehicle for communication rather

than as a subject to study” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 29), i.e., language is viewed as a process that allows students to carry out real-life tasks with a specific purpose.

According to the CEFR (2020), foreign language learning must aim to equip learners with the ability to act in real-life situations. As a result, this paradigm has introduced assessment criteria based on real-world communicative abilities and a set of language skills. These criteria are structured into a scale of proficiency levels, ranging from A1 (basic user) to C1 (proficient user).

Figure 4

CEFR Common Reference Levels [Diagram]



Note. From *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – Companion Volume* (p. 36), by Council of Europe, 2020, Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>.

As the CEFR (2020) states, implementing the action-oriented approach in the classroom has several implications. In other words, considering learners as social agents entails:

- Students must be actively involved in their own learning process.
- Recognition of the social nature of learning and of foreign language use (i.e., the interaction between social and individual dimensions in the learning process).
- Use of the target language in the classroom—not only to learn about the language, but also to learn how to use it effectively.
- Allowing learners to use a range of linguistic resources when needed.
- Engagement collaborative tasks with a specific purpose.

Within this action-oriented approach, it is essential to highlight the teacher’s role. Although the focus is on fostering learner autonomy, the teacher remains a key facilitator who provides

linguistic input, resources, or support only when necessary. As stated by the Council of Europe (2021, p. 2), “learners decide how to accomplish the task/project; teachers provide language input, resources, and support to class, group, or individuals as required. There is a focus on autonomy.”.

In the case of *Citizens of the World*, an example of an action-oriented project would be the creation of an “Expo Week,” in which students simulate an international exhibition where each group represents a different country. Once they had selected their country, students would research its traditions, history and culture, and prepare an oral presentation, with classmates and teachers as the audience. As a result, each day of the week would be devoted to a different group presenting a different country. Through this project, students engage in reading (while the research phase), writing (by creating a brochure representing the country), speaking (during the oral presentation), and intercultural learning (as they are expected to respectfully represent the culture they have researched and listen to the presentations of their peers).

This project positions students as social agents, since they act as cultural mediators between the countries they have previously explored and the audience. According to the CEFR (2020), this is a clear example of action-oriented learning, as it establishes a realistic communicative scenario and culminates in a cooperative final project.

2.6 Intercultural Communicative Competence and Hall’s Cultural Iceberg Model

It is essential to distinguish between cultural competence and intercultural competence. According to Byram (1997, p. 71), the former refers to “the ability of people to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture,” while the latter takes language teaching into account and focuses on “the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language”:

In Byram’s (1997) view, a person who has developed ICC is able to build relationships while speaking in the foreign language; communicates effectively, taking into consideration his own and the other person’s viewpoint and needs; mediates interactions between people of different backgrounds, and strives to continue developing communicative skills. (López-Rocha, 2016, p. 107).

Intercultural Communicative Competence has been analyzed by numerous scholars. For example, according to Guilherme (2000), Intercultural Communicative Competence is “the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” (p. 297). In other words, ICC does not only involve linguistic proficiency in the foreign language, but also requires the development of the ability to establish effective and meaningful interactions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Following these definitions by different authors, it is useful to consider the model proposed by Sercu et al. (2005), who conceptualizes ICC as a three-dimensional construct. This model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding ICC as a complex and dynamic set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for interacting successfully with people from different cultural contexts.

Figure 5

Sercu et al.'s (2005) Components of Intercultural Competence [Table]

Knowledge	Skills/behaviour	Attitudes/traits
• Culture specific and culture general knowledge • Knowledge of self and other • Knowledge of interaction: individual and societal • Insight regarding the ways in which culture affects language and communication <i>Savoirs</i>	• Ability to interpret and relate <i>Savoir-comprendre</i> • Ability to discover and/or interact • Ability to acquire new knowledge and to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction • Meta cognitive strategies to direct own learning <i>Savoir-apprendre</i> <i>savoirs-faire</i>	• Attitude to relativize self and value others • Positive disposition towards learning intercultural competence <i>Savoir-être</i> • General disposition characterized by a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one's own <i>Savoir-s'engager</i>

Note. Adapted from *High School Teachers' Perceptions of the Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching (ICLT) Model Applied in Language Classrooms: A Case Study of a Vietnamese High School*, by T. N. T. Hanh & Q. N. H. Quan, 2021, *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Sercu-et-als-2005components-of-Intercultural-Competence_tbl1_355476004.

In the case of *Citizens of the World*, this didactic unit is explicitly designed to foster the development of ICC, aiming to shape culturally aware and globally competent individuals. To achieve this, it includes multiple contextualized communicative activities that promote research, reflection, and engagement with other cultures. Through the use of various methodologies such as cooperative learning or Task-Based Learning, students are encouraged

to face situations where they must apply various skills such as comparing, contrasting, and adopting different perspectives.

During the development of these activities, attitudes of respect, empathy, and openness towards other cultures and peers opinions' are constantly promoted. In this way, this didactic unit not only develops linguistic skills but also fosters values, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that enable students to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Regarding the educational context and how to implement this competence in the classroom, “one of the most significant problems is that, perhaps without realizing it, we can reinforce stereotypes because, instead of promoting ICC, we often focus exclusively on language as a means of communication, while the context in which that communication takes place, and which gives meaning to the messages, is often relegated to the background” (López-Rocha, 2016). This statement highlights the importance of moving beyond a purely linguistic approach to also focus on implicit cultural elements. In this regard, Edward T. Hall’s iceberg model of culture is a valuable tool, as it illustrates how the visible aspects of a culture —such as food, music, language or literature, etc —represent only the tip of the iceberg, while values, beliefs, gestures, etc. form its submerged foundation.

The concept of the cultural iceberg was coined in 1976 by Edward T. Hall, who suggested that culture is analogous to an iceberg in that only about 10% of the iceberg is visible at any given time and that a large part of it is hidden beneath the surface. Culture has components that are external facing or above the surface and visible, and the majority of culture, about 90%, is hidden below the surface. (BC Council for International Education, 2020).

Figure 6

The Cultural Iceberg [Diagram]



Note. Adapted from *The Cultural Iceberg: Hall's Analogy for Approaching Intercultural Understanding*, by British Columbia Council for International Education, 2020. <https://bccie.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/cultural-iceberg.pdf>.

Therefore, understanding the cultural iceberg enables students to realize that culture goes beyond surface-level elements; that is, there are invisible components that are deeply rooted and give meaning to the behavior and communication style of each culture. Integrating this model into the didactic unit encourages students not only to investigate visible elements, but also to explore and value the hidden ones, challenging stereotypes and simplistic views. In this way, Hall's iceberg model becomes a pedagogical tool for promoting the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the English as a Foreign Language classroom in a meaningful and engaging manner.

DIDACTIC UNIT

3.1 Educational context

3.1.1 The educational institution

The didactic proposal presented below is contextualized within a semi-private Catholic school located in the city of Palencia, in the autonomous community of Castile and León. The institution is situated in the city center, providing families easy access to its facilities. Its exceptional location, surrounded by public parks such as “Parque de la Huerta de Guadián” and “Salón Isabel II,” offers students an enriching environment for their personal and academic development.

The school’s main objective is to create participatory educational communities through projects that allow students to develop their talents, promote their curiosity, creativity, teamwork, and perseverance. In fact, it has been recognized by UNICEF as a Reference Centre for Education in Children’s Rights, highlighting its commitment and responsibility to building inclusive and egalitarian educational environments based on respect and tolerance.

The school implements various educational programs that strengthen its pedagogical approach and educational values. Some of them are *el Plan de Lectura*, el proyecto Erasmus +, el Plan de Acción Tutorial, el Plan de Atención a la Diversidad, el Plan de Convivencia y el Plan de Bilingüismo. The latter is currently applied only at the primary level and aims to enhance students’ knowledge and use of the English language from an early age. In other words, foreign languages—particularly English—are strongly present throughout the institution. In short, Santo Ángel School is a very spacious and well-resourced educational institution that provides all the necessary facilities to ensure students’ comfort and academic growth, as well as to carry out the implementation of numerous interdisciplinary projects.

This didactic unit has been implemented in this school in Palencia. However, it has been designed with a flexible and adaptable structure, open to modifications according to the characteristics of each educational context, which allows for its implementation in any secondary school classroom. Its objectives and activities are closely aligned with the current

curriculum, as they are structured around the key competencies established by the Real Decreto 217/2022 of March 29. In addition, the promotion of intercultural competence, active participation, respect, and inclusion guarantees its relevance in both homogeneous and heterogeneous classrooms, as it results in meaningful learning and the development of globally competent citizens.

3.1.1 The classroom and its characteristics

Regarding the classrooms and their characteristics, both in Primary and Secondary Education, there are two groups per academic year (e.g., 1º A and 1º B). Not all classrooms are the same size; for instance, the classrooms for 1st year of ESO are larger than those for 3rd year. The seating arrangements vary greatly from one group to another. For example, in 3º B, students are seated in pairs or trios, while in 3º A, they are seated individually.

For most of the activities that will be carried out during the implementation of the didactic unit, a computer and a projector are needed to project different images or videos. However, this is not a problem since all classrooms are equipped with a traditional blackboard, a digital whiteboard, a projector, and a computer.

The classroom in which this didactic unit has been implemented consists of 18 students. These students, who belong to the 3rd year of Secondary School, are between 14 and 15 years old. It was a very active, curious, and participative group, with a positive classroom atmosphere. There were no disruptive students and, in general, the group demonstrates a relatively homogeneous academic level, classified as medium-high. For this reason, the implementation of the didactic unit and the execution of various activities was smooth and effective.

The implementation of *Citizens of the World* within this specific educational context has proven particularly meaningful, as the classroom includes students with diverse cultural backgrounds. For instance, among them, there are a Colombian student and another of Asian descent. Both students arrived in Spain at a young age so, they have an excellent command of the Spanish language. Additionally, there is a student who, although Spanish by origin, spent eight years living in Abu Dhabi. His high level of English and experience of Arab culture have

enriched classroom activities. This multicultural classroom aligns with the aims of the present didactic unit, which seeks to promote mutual respect and foster intercultural awareness.

In summary, having a class composed of students from diverse backgrounds offers a unique opportunity to enrich the teaching and learning process. This cultural diversity fosters values such as empathy and respect and enhances the development of intercultural competence. Therefore, it is essential to harness this potential by adapting methodologies and activities to create an inclusive and participatory learning environment, where a positive classroom climate prevails and all students feel valued and respected.

3.2 Justification

Nowadays, education is strongly influenced by globalization, cultural diversity, and ongoing social, communicative, and technological changes. As a result, foreign languages have become a fundamental way to ensure effective communication. In addition, by learning foreign languages, students are able to develop competences that enable them to act critically in a diverse and constantly evolving society. For this reason, learning a foreign language, in this case English, must adopt a communicative approach that fosters cultural interaction, empathy, respect, diversity, and social commitment.

The Boletín Oficial de Castilla y León (BOCYL, 2022) states that today's society is immersed in a globalized world where the use of foreign languages facilitates communication between individuals from different countries, thereby promoting sociocultural enrichment and giving rise to a broad view of the cultural, scientific, and technological world. Within this educational context, education is responsible for preparing individuals to face diverse situations and providing them with tools that allow them to communicate fluently and effectively with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

The current educational context requires a reconsideration of the traditional approach to foreign language teaching. That is to say, student training should not focus solely on the

mere learning of linguistic knowledge but should go a step further by integrating this knowledge with skills that enable learners to manage real-life communicative situations. Therefore, both current educational regulations and the existing European reference frameworks emphasize the relevance and importance of a competence-based educational system—one that combines linguistic knowledge with social skills and critical reflection in order to prepare students to face future possible challenges and difficulties.

The Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE, 2020) states that education for sustainable development and global citizenship includes education for peace and human rights, international understanding, and intercultural education. This vision is directly aligned with the idea of integrating Intercultural Competence into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, as one of its many benefits is the promotion of respect and empathy towards cultural diversity.

In the autonomous community of Castile and León, the Decreto 39/2022 emphasizes that the subject of English as a Foreign Language in Compulsory Secondary Education has Its main purpose is to enable students to learn basic communication skills in the foreign language, as well as to develop and enrich their intercultural awareness. For this reason, in response to these needs and in alignment with such regulations, *Citizens of the World* was designed to address these educational requirements. It is aimed at students in the 3rd year of Compulsory Secondary Education and is structured into two learning situations: *Crossing Cultures* and *From Understanding to Action*. Each of these situations comprises a variety of activities that promote the development of students' Intercultural Communicative Competence. Moreover, they encourage learners to reflect on cultural stereotypes, to learn how to interact respectfully with individuals from around the world, and to actively participate in classroom discussions, thus improving the quality of their oral contributions.

In summary, this didactic unit has been designed to respond to the educational needs of a context marked by globalization, cultural diversity, and the necessity of preparing students to face current global challenges with responsibility and commitment. Furthermore, by integrating linguistic content with interculturality-based activities that require real-life

communication, this proposal becomes a valuable and useful tool for ensuring meaningful learning for students in the 3rd year of ESO.

3.2.1 Curricular justification

Regarding curricular aspects, this didactic unit has been conceived taking into account the contents in Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, which modifies the Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación (LOMLOE); and the Real Decreto 217/2022, de 29 de marzo, which establishes the organization and the minimum teaching requirements of Compulsory Secondary Education. In addition, it has also been considered the Real Decreto 310/2016, de 29 de julio, that regulates the final evaluations of Compulsory Secondary Education and Bachillerato, as well as the Decreto 39/2022, de 29 de septiembre, which enacts the ordination and curriculum of Compulsory Secondary Education in the Community of Castilla y León. Moreover, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2020) has also been taken into consideration.

Citizens of the World will be implemented in the third trimester of the academic year, with the aim of helping students explore and gain a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and the importance of developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in an increasingly globalized world. By the end of the course, they will be able to interact in English with greater intercultural awareness, showing respect and curiosity towards different cultures. The sessions are scheduled to take place on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:20 to 11:10 am.

As already mentioned in the section devoted to the classroom and its characteristics, the class would be made up of eighteen students, mainly between 14 and 14 years of age. Although some of the proposed activities will require individual, autonomous work, the majority of them have been designed to be undertaken in groups of 3 students. Therefore, there will be six groups, fostering interaction and collaboration among peers.

On the one hand, this didactic unit aims to develop several key competencies, including literacy competence, multilingual competence, digital competence, cultural awareness and expression, personal, social, and learning to learn competence, as well as civic competence. On the other hand, regarding the specific competences addressed in this unit, emphasis has been put on competences 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.

Regarding the type of syllabus, the present didactic unit is formed by a two-fold type of syllabus. First, a situational syllabus based on a set of contextualized learning situations that allow students to develop various competencies based on real-life situations. The first learning situation is made of 4 sessions (*“First steps beyond borders”*, *“Guessing cultures, building bridges”*, *“Breaking stereotypes”*, and *“Walking in their shoes”*) and the second is made of 3 (*“Our global Goals, our voice”*, *“Voices that inspire”*, and *“Our intercultural Manifesto”*). And, second, a procedural syllabus centered on Task-Based Learning (TBL). This syllabus emphasizes the performance of real communicative activities as a means of learning the foreign language, encouraging the functional use of English in contexts relevant to the students. The proposed activities are not limited to the practice of isolated linguistic structures but seek to develop communicative skills through active participation, problem solving and cooperation. Thus, students not only learn English, but also use it as a tool to explore the world, build knowledge, and act in a committed and critical manner.

3.2.2 Didactic justification

In the didactic justification applied in this didactic unit, the teacher provides learners with a safe learning environment where they can express themselves in the foreign language with confidence. To achieve this, it is essential to create a positive classroom climate based on respect, empathy, and assertive teaching. In this context, attention to diversity plays a key role, ensuring that all students feel part of the group and have equal learning opportunities.

In the 3rd year of ESO class, there were no students with educational needs, i.e., no specific adaptations had to be made. However, this didactic unit is designed with a flexible and open-to-change character so that if there were any students with special needs, they could receive a specific adaptation appropriate to their case. For example, in the case of a student

with ADHD, they would assume more active roles to favor their concentration and participation.

The didactic approach of the unit is based on principles such as meaningful learning, which allows students to transfer newly learned knowledge to their reality, thus favoring a natural assimilation according to their pace. As Ausubel (1968, p. 6) stated, “the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows”. Furthermore, the didactic unit incorporates cooperative learning strategies, where students interact through teamwork, oral presentations, and multimedia activities. According to Johnson & Johnson (2016, p. 3), “cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning”.

In addition, teaching is structured around Vygotsky’s concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), facilitating learning through peer-to-peer interaction. According to Shabani, Khatib & Ebadi (2010, p. 238), “the ZPD was understood by Vygotsky to describe the current or actual level of development of the learner and the next level attainable through the use of mediating semiotic and environmental tools and capable adult or peer facilitation”. To this end, working groups have been strategically formed, ensuring that each team includes both students with higher levels of proficiency in the content and those who need special support, thus allowing for effective and enriching collaboration.

3.3 Objectives of the didactic proposal

Citizens of the World, designed for students in the third year of Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO), aims primarily at developing and promoting Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) within the subject of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In other words, this didactic proposal, divided into two learning situations, seeks to integrate both linguistic and intercultural dimensions in response to the needs and challenges that arise as a result of living in a globalized, diverse, and constantly changing world.

As previously mentioned, there is an urgent need to renew the traditional approach to foreign language teaching. Therefore, this unit has been designed to address this existing need, offering a framework in which students not only learn linguistic knowledge but also develop social skills, engage in critical thinking, and grow as citizens committed to the world.

To achieve this, the proposal is grounded in active and innovative methodologies that emphasize student participation, teamwork, cooperation, and meaningful learning. The objectives of this present didactic unit are structured into three categories: general objectives, specific objectives, and attitudinal objectives.

3.3.1 General objectives

Starting with the general objectives of the didactic unit, these objectives guide the progression of the activities across the sessions:

- To foster the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): by the end of the didactic unit, students should be able to communicate effectively in diverse contexts and situations, showing respect for existing cultural differences.
- To integrate linguistic and cultural dimensions in the learning of English as a foreign language: students are expected not only to learn linguistic content but also to respect and appreciate cultural diversity.
- To develop linguistic skills in the foreign language: throughout the sessions of the two learning situations, students will engage in activities that enhance oral comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, mediation, and peer interaction.
- To encourage active participation and critical thinking: across the seven sessions, the teacher will be in charge of creating a positive classroom climate where students feel safe, comfortable and confident to engage actively in discussions and reflect on relevant topics.
- To link foreign language learning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): in sessions 5 and 6, students will participate in activities that connect English language learning with the SDGs.

3.3.2 Specific objectives

Secondly, the specific objectives guide the development of the seven sessions and contribute to the achievement of key competences:

- To identify and analyze cultural elements from different countries: in activity 2 (*Describing pictures*) of session 2, students will examine cultural aspects represented in images projected by the teacher.
- To critically compare and contrast aspects of other cultures with their own: in activity 3 (*Same, Same but Different*) of session 1, students will compare cultural similarities and differences between the characters involved.
- To use a variety of grammatical structures appropriately: in activity 2 (*Describing pictures*) of session 2, students will apply a range of grammatical structures to describe images clearly and accurately.
- To participate actively in group work and discussions: in activity 2 (*Brainstorming*) of session 1, students will respond to the teacher's questions on culture, sharing knowledge and opinions with their peers.
- To write texts in the target language: in activity 3 (*Flying imagination*) of session 4, students will write an imaginative letter describing their experience in another country, as if they were migrants.
- To reflect on what has been learned and its real-life application: in activity 5 (*Warm-down*) of session 1, students will reflect on new concepts they have learned, any doubts they may have, and how the knowledge could be applied in real-life situations.
- To use digital tools to research cultural aspects: in activity 4 (*Get Manifesto started*) of session 6, students will use computers or tablets to begin drafting their manifesto, which they will later present in session 7.
- To apply learned knowledge in a final task and present it: in the final task (session 7), students will create and present a manifesto that demonstrates their understanding and learning from the previous sessions.
- To assess both their peers' work and their own: using assessment rubrics provided by the teacher, students will be encouraged to evaluate both their classmates' contributions and their own work in an objective and reflective manner.

3.3.3 Attitudinal objectives

One of the essential aspects of this didactic unit is education in values. Values such as respect and empathy are closely connected to the intercultural approach. Therefore, several attitudinal objectives have been established, which students are expected to strive towards:

- To adopt an open-minded attitude towards other cultures: students should not only take interest in their own culture but also show curiosity and willingness to learn about different ways of life from their own.
- To promote respect and empathy towards cultural diversity: students must demonstrate respectful and empathetic behavior towards all cultures, avoiding discriminatory or negative attitudes and valuing the existing cultural richness.
- To commit to social improvement: students are expected to become socially engaged individuals who are willing to participate in action-oriented projects connected to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- To develop critical thinking skills: students must be able to think critically about stereotypes, misinformation, and fake news.
- To value English as a tool for communication: students should appreciate English as a powerful means of international communication that helps break down barriers between people from different backgrounds.

In conclusion, the objectives of *Citizens of the World* respond to an inclusive and respectful vision of English language teaching. Through these objectives, this didactic unit not only aims to teach English but also to shape students into human beings who embody strong values and are capable of interacting with, understanding, and respecting cultural diversity. Furthermore, it encourages students to actively involve themselves in improving the society in which they live.

3.4 Legal framework

The didactic unit *Citizens of the World*, designed for students in the 3rd year of Compulsory Secondary Education in a school located in the autonomous community of Castile and León, is framed within the current educational model based on competence development, attention to diversity, and the holistic education of students. These principles are established in the Ley Orgánica 3/2020 (LOMLOE) (p. 122870-122871), which is the current national educational legislation in Spain. Furthermore, the Real Decreto 217/2002, de 29 de marzo, puts these principles into practice by establishing a curriculum grounded in key competences, all of which are essential for the formation of global citizens and for the design of the didactic unit.

This legal framework is further supported by international reference documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2020) which promotes an action-oriented approach and emphasizes the importance of developing linguistic, sociolinguistic, and intercultural skills to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

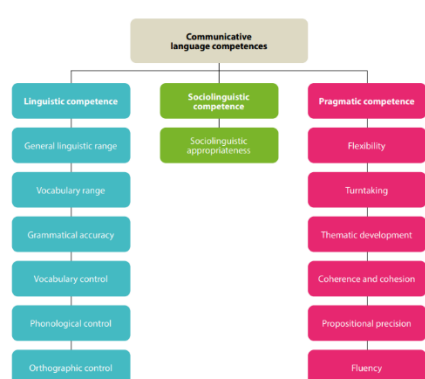
Currently, education is based on key competences that enable individuals to achieve personal fulfillment, lead sustainable lives, and access employment, among other goals (European Commission, 2019). These key competences are understood as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In line with this framework, the European Schools emphasize the importance of integrating these competences into curriculum design and everyday teaching practice, arguing that the European Reference Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning “sets the context for the development of key competences for lifelong learning” (European Schools, 2018, p. 3). This alignment ensures that educational systems across Europe prepare students for both academic success and lifelong learning in diverse and constantly evolving societies.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2020) refers to and describes various communicative competences that are essential for foreign language learning in educational settings. It also introduces different approaches that incorporate insights

from psychology and socio-politics. Traditionally, language teaching has relied on approaches that refer exclusively to linguistic competences. However, according to the CEFR (2020), communicative competence must be supported by linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence. These three competences are not independent; rather, they are closely interrelated.

Figure 7

Communicative Language Competences [Diagram]



Note. Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – Companion Volume* (p. 129), by Council of Europe, 2020, Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>

Taking these into account, it can be stated that communicative competence does not focus solely on the learning of linguistic, lexical, phonological and orthographic aspects. It also includes the social and cultural use of language (sociolinguistic competence) and refers mainly to the learner's ability to use language properly and effectively in context (pragmatic competence) (CEFR, 2020).

In Spain, Compulsory Secondary Education is regulated by the Ley Orgánica 3/2020 (LOMLOE, 2020), which amends the LOE (Ley Orgánica de Educación) of 2006. This reform introduces a pedagogical approach based on key competencies, equal opportunities, and inclusive education. As a result, the LOMLOE (2020) recognizes schools and classrooms as

diverse spaces and affirms students' right to an inclusive and high-quality education, adapted to the individual needs of each student.

In relation to this perspective, current legislation places special emphasis on attention to diversity and equality of opportunities for all students. In such a way, educational institutions are required to adopt the necessary measures to ensure the prevention of learning difficulties and to address the needs of each student. These measures must be implemented by educational institutions with the aim of enabling all students to achieve the educational goals of the stage and to develop the key competences established by the LOMLOE (2020).

These principles are further specified in the Real Decreto 217/2022 de 29 de marzo, which establishes the minimum teaching requirements for Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO). This Real Decreto (Art. 2) incorporates the eight key competencies recommended by the Council of the European Union of May 22, 2018. These key competences are:

- Literacy competence
- Multilingual competence
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering
- Digital competence
- Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn competence
- Civic competence
- Entrepreneurial competence
- Competence in Cultural Awareness and Expression

To ensure the effective implementation and assessment of these key competences, the Real Decreto 217/2022 (Art. 11.2) organizes these competences around the exit profile of the students at the end of basic education, ensuring a progressive, effective and real situation-oriented learning process. This exit profile establishes which key competences a student must learn and develop once they have finished their basic education. Furthermore, Article 12.2 establishes that teachers are in charge of planning learning situations that allow students to develop both key competences and specific competences.

In practice, *Citizens of the World* is structured around two contextualized learning situations (*Crossing Cultures* and *From Understanding to Action*), making up a total of seven sessions. The activities proposed throughout the unit allow students to develop communicative skills, use the foreign language in real-life situations and collaborate in teams with their peers. In the case of this didactic unit, several key competences are addressed in depth, including: literacy competence, multilingual competence, digital competence, personal, social and learning to learn competence, civic competence, and competence in cultural awareness and expression, all of them included in the students exit profile (Real Decreto 217/2022, Art. 11.2).

The Real Decreto 217/2022 (Art. 5) highlights the importance of meaningful learning for the proper development of competencies. This implies that learning content must be relevant and contextualized to the students' reality, thereby facilitating comprehension and internalization of the content. According to Nsyengula et al. (2024) "Implementation of competence-based education requires innovative teaching methodologies that actively engage learners and develop higher-order thinking skills".

Therefore, a competence-based education that is connected to the real world fosters the development of skills that contribute to students' personal and academic growth, resulting in learning that is more motivating, relevant and long-lasting. The activities proposed in this didactic unit, grounded in meaningful learning, are designed to integrate global issues with students' interests. Through them, students use the foreign language as a tool to explore current topics such as the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) and cultural diversity, thus enabling students to apply content learned in real contexts.

Moreover, thanks to the use of diverse methodologies and inclusive pedagogical strategies, the activities are accessible to all students in the 3rd year of Compulsory Secondary Education, regardless of their needs or difficulties. This ensures that every student at this educational stage can be involved, engaged, and make progress in the activities proposed by the teacher. Consequently, this is a flexible and open didactic unit, adaptable to different educational levels and classroom contexts.

This approach, which attributes to the subject of English a value as a communication tool with a social dimension, is reinforced at the regional level by the Decreto 39/2022, de 29 de septiembre, which establishes the organization and curriculum of Compulsory Secondary Education in the community of Castilla y León. This Decreto adapts the minimum teaching requirements established in the Real Decreto 217/2022 published in the Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE, 2022). That is to say, the Decreto 39/2022 provides a detailed account of the key competences, specific competences, content and assessment criteria for each subject and school year.

The European guidelines concerning the exit profile of students at the end of the Compulsory Secondary Education are clearly reflected in the Spanish educational legislation, both at the national and regional levels. In this regard, the Ley Orgánica (LOMLOE, 2020) establishes, among the objectives of Compulsory Secondary Education, the importance of promoting the development of students' abilities to understand and express themselves in one or more foreign languages appropriately.

In particular, the Real Decreto 217/2022, de 29 de marzo, which regulates the structure and minimum teaching requirements of Compulsory Secondary Education, emphasizes that competence in linguistic communication, closely linked to language use and communicative interaction, contributes to enriching students' linguistic repertoire. Furthermore, it underlines the relevance of plurilingual competence, since the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with this subject help to enhance students' plurilingual and intercultural repertoires.

In addition, the Decreto 39/2022 establishes that one of the specific competences of the foreign language subject in the stage Compulsory Secondary Education consists in expanding and using personal linguistic repertoires across different languages, while critically on how these languages function and becoming aware of one's own strategies and knowledge, in order to respond more effectively to specific communicative needs.

Spanish educational legislation also provides a solid foundation that gives to the Secondary Education stage a socially-oriented purpose, beyond the mere development of academic competences —such as linguistic skills in the case of foreign language learning. In this sense, the LOMLOE (2020) states that one of the essential purposes of this stage is to universalize the knowledge and competences that enable all students to learn throughout life and facilitate their full social and labor participation. This vision is complemented by the law's assertion that basic education in Spain has a dual objective: on the one hand, to promote students' personal development, and on the other, their social integration. According to Article 4.4 of the LOMLOE (2020), the goal is to provide students with the knowledge and competences necessary for their personal development, for solving situations and problems in different areas of life, as well as to develop their socialization, continuing their educational journey and actively participating in the society in which they will live.

The Decreto 39/2022 also incorporates the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in the subject of first foreign language (English). The CEFR (2020) is the European standard that establishes the levels of linguistic competence (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), guiding foreign language instruction towards real-life communication through different types of activities (production, reception, interaction, and mediation). In fact, this Decreto 39/2022 explicitly mentions that the curricular elements of the foreign language are aligned with the CEFR (2020) and adapted to the maturity and developmental stage of the students during Compulsory Secondary Education. Consequently, for Compulsory Secondary Education, the achievement indicators are established in accordance with the CEFR (2020) proficiency scale, ensuring that the teaching of English as a foreign language in the 3rd year promotes the development of communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading, interacting and writing), with students expected to reach a proficiency level of A2/B1.

The influence of the CEFR (2020) can be observed in the classroom through the use of communicative methodologies and plurilingual and intercultural competence, both fundamental pillars of the CEFR approach. In fact, within the key competences established by the Decreto 39/2022, plurilingual competence requires students to develop the ability to value the linguistic and cultural diversity in society, with the aim of fostering democratic coexistence. These principles are directly aligned with the Intercultural Communicative Competence on

which this didactic unit is based. Each session is designed to help students develop linguistic fluency, interact in diverse cultural contexts using the foreign language, and acquire values such as empathy and respect.

3.5 Methodology

The didactic unit *Citizens of the World* is based on a participative and active methodology, with a main focus on the holistic development of the students. Following the pedagogical principles established by the LOMLOE (2020) and Decreto 39/2022, it adopts a competency-based and action-oriented approach. Thus, the teaching-learning process is conceived as meaningful learning, in which students are the protagonists of their learning process; in other words, they take a leading role and actively construct their own knowledge through interaction and engagement with their environment.

3.5.1 Task-Based Learning

One of the main methodologies employed in this unit is Task-Based Learning (TBL). Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) “offers students material which they have to actively engage in the processing of in order to achieve a goal or complete a task” (Anandan & Mahalakshmi, 2016, p. 1824). By proposing activities that require opinion-sharing and decision-making, this methodology fosters active student involvement. As a result, it enhances students’ intrinsic motivation and facilitates the long-term retention of learned knowledge.

Through this approach, the use of the foreign language is promoted as an essential vehicle for communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and task completion. These tasks are contextually designed within two learning situations that integrate linguistic content with intercultural competence, fostering critical thinking, global awareness, respect, and empathy. In this way, the foreign language is not merely treated as an object of study, but rather as a tool for action. Furthermore, the implementation of this methodology allows for a more flexible approach to teaching, since it adapts to the students’ pace, level, and individual characteristics, thereby responding to their specific needs.

3.5.2 Cooperative learning

In addition, this didactic unit incorporates another methodological strategy: cooperative learning. This methodology promotes interaction among students, encouraging them to share knowledge and responsibilities, while also improving their social skills. According to Johnson & Johnson (2018, p.3), “cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning”. Throughout the seven sessions of the didactic unit, students will have to complete various tasks, most of them in groups of three. Organizing students into small working groups fosters active listening, mutual respect, and the ability to appreciate the ideas and opinions of others.

The implementation of active methodologies must be integrated with a variety of didactic strategies, as this enriches the teaching-learning process. In *Citizens of the World*, several strategies are used, including:

- Guided discussions (activity 4, session 1), which foster fluency in the foreign language and respectful interaction among students.
- Simulations of real-life communicative situations (activity 3, session 4), which allow students to put their language skills into practice in meaningful and real contexts.
- Cultural text analysis (activity 3, session 4), which combines the learning of linguistic structures and content with critical thinking on the realities of other cultures.
- Oral presentations (final task, session 7), which strengthen communicative competence and confidence in speaking in the foreign language.

These didactic strategies ensure that the development of the sessions is dynamic and fluid, since a variety of activities are carried out, both individually and in groups. The diversity of strategies promotes the development of communicative competence, fluency in the foreign language, Intercultural Communicative Competence, and respect for cultural diversity—all of which are essential in shaping students as critical and engaged global citizens committed to today’s world.

Likewise, this unit incorporates the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on several occasions. For instance, in the final task (intercultural manifesto), students

are required to use digital tools such as *Canva* or *Power Point*. These platforms allow them to create a visually engaging and original presentation of their manifesto, incorporating text, images, transitions, and other elements that make their message clearer, more appealing, and easier to understand. The integration of digital tools also fosters information management skills and digital literacy.

As for the didactic resources used, the teacher combines both digital materials (videos, the book *Same, Same but Different*, images, etc.) and printed resources (flashcards, evaluation rubrics, etc.). The combination of these different formats stimulates student interest and motivation and facilitates comprehension by providing multiple means of representation — especially beneficial for students who may need additional support or explanations.

Additionally, the methodologies employed throughout the didactic unit include spaces for learner self-regulation. At the end of most sessions, students complete a “warm-down” activity—an opportunity for metacognition, in which they reflect on what they have learned, evaluate their progress, identify any doubts, and consider aspects they did not understand. These moments encourage student autonomy and help to develop the key competence of learning to learn.

Finally, as mentioned in the didactic justification section, the methodologies adopted also follow an inclusive perspective. That is, they are open to incorporating diversity-oriented measures if any student requires them, ensuring that everyone can meaningfully participate in the activities proposed by the teacher.

In summary, the implementation of diverse methodologies, didactic strategies, and teaching resources reflects an innovative, active, and collaborative teaching-learning process. It promotes an approach to foreign language teaching that goes beyond linguistic content, enhances academic outcomes, and helps to build an inclusive, supportive, and culturally respectful classroom environment.

3.6 Description of the sessions

3.6.1 General framework of the didactic unit

Stage: Compulsory Secondary Education	Level: 3 rd year of secondary education	Time: 7 sessions, each session lasts 50 minutes
Stage aims: a, b, c, d e, i, j, l		
Key competences Literacy competence Multilingual competence Digital competence Competence in cultural awareness and expression Personal, social, and learning to learn competence Civic competence	Specific competences 1, 2, 3, 4, 6	
Contents A (3, 14, 17) B (2, 3) C (1, 3, 4)	Assessment criteria 1.2, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 6.1, 6.3	

Learning situations

1. Crossing cultures
2. From understanding to action

Activities per session

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Session 7
<i>“First steps beyond borders”</i>	<i>“Guessing cultures, building bridges”</i>	<i>“Breaking stereotypes”</i>	<i>“Walking in their shoes”</i>	<i>“Our global Goals, our voice”</i>	<i>“Voices that inspire”</i>	<i>“Our intercultural Manifesto”</i>

Attention to diversity

- None of the students.

3.7.2 Session schedule (for each session)

Session 1	
Specific competences 1, 2, 3, 6	Achievement indicators Express orally, with clarity and fluency, aspects of daily life using simple expressions and structures with contextual support and showing a cooperative attitude. Participate actively in a discussion about different cultures, expressing opinions and background knowledge in a clear and respectful manner, showing openness to cultural diversity. Read and understand the content of “Same, same but different”, identifying similarities between the characters, people from different cultures and reflecting critically on one’s own and others’ identities. Collaborate in an orally classroom debate, using appropriate language and showing respect and active listening towards others’ ideas when reflecting cultural similarities and differences. Participate in the final reflection of the session expressing learning, impressions or doubts in a simple and respectful way, using basic structures and showing interest in the learning process itself.
Contents (subject and cross-disciplinary) Subject content:	Activities
	ACTIVITY 1 (ROUTINE): Chitchatting

A. Communicative functions of common use appropriate to the communicative environment and context: greeting and saying goodbye, introducing and introducing oneself; describing people, objects, places, phenomena and events; comparing people, objects or situations; placing events in time; placing objects, people and places in space; asking for and exchanging information on everyday matters; giving and asking for instructions, warnings, advice and orders; offering, accepting and refusing help, propositions or suggestions; partially expressing liking or interest and emotions; describe present situations and habitual actions; narrate past events, (punctual, habitual or interrupted); express future events; express intentions, forecasts and plans in the future; express opinion, possibility, ability, obligation, prohibition and advice; express simple arguments; express conditions; express uncertainty and doubt; express certainty,	ACTIVITY 2 (INTRODUCTION): Brainstorming
	ACTIVITY 3 (REINFORCEMENT): <i>Same, same but different</i>
	ACTIVITY 4 (REINFORCEMENT): From pages to opinions
	ACTIVITY 5 (WARM-DOWN ACTIVITY): Warm-down
	ACTIVITY 6 (ROUTINE): Passport to culture

deduction, conjecture and promise. C. 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. Cross-disciplinary content: Peer cooperation Audiovisual communication Education for a proactive school coexistence, oriented to respect for diversity as a source of wealth	
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Session 2	
Specific competences	Achievement indicators
1, 2, 3	Express orally, with clarity and fluency, aspects of daily life using simple expressions and structures with contextual support and showing a cooperative attitude. Describe diverse images orally using guided structures and specific vocabulary related to cultural diversity, constructing meaningful sentences and showing respect for cultural differences.

	Participate actively in a cooperative guessing game describing cultural aspects of different countries using appropriate vocabulary and expressions, demonstrating, active listening, respect for turn-taking and a collaborative attitude. Participate in the final reflection of the session expressing learning, impressions or doubts in a simple and respectful way, using basic structures and showing interest in the learning process itself.
Contents (subject and cross-disciplinary) Subject content: A. Communicative functions of common use appropriate to the communicative environment and context: greeting and saying goodbye, introducing and introducing oneself; describing people, objects, places, phenomena and events; comparing people, objects or situations; placing events in time; placing objects, people and places in space; asking for and exchanging information on everyday matters; giving and asking for instructions, warnings, advice and orders; offering, accepting and refusing help, propositions or suggestions; partially expressing liking or interest and emotions; describe present	Activities
	ACTIVITY 1 (ROUTINE): Chitchatting
	ACTIVITY 2 (REINFORCEMENT): Describing pictures
	ACTIVITY 3 (REINFORCEMENT): Association game
	ACTIVITY 4 (WARM-DOWN ACTIVITY): Warm-down
	ACTIVITY 5 (ROUTINE): Passport to culture

situations and habitual actions; narrate past events, (punctual, habitual or interrupted); express future events; express intentions, forecasts and plans in the future; express opinion, possibility, ability, obligation, prohibition and advice; express simple arguments; express conditions; express uncertainty and doubt; express certainty, deduction, conjecture and promise. C. 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. Cross-disciplinary content: Peer cooperation Education for a proactive school coexistence, oriented to respect for diversity as a source of wealth	
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Session 3	
Specific competences 2, 3, 4, 6	Achievement indicators Express orally, with clarity and fluency, aspects of daily life using simple expressions and structures with contextual support and showing a cooperative attitude. Reflect on the message of a video and participate in a guided discussion expressing opinions, experiences and emotions using basic structures in the foreign language showing respect empathy and critical thinking. Participate in a cooperative guessing game describing cultural aspects of different countries using basic vocabulary and expressions showing active listening and respect for turn-taking. Reformulate cultural stereotypes into respectful statements adding real information showing cooperation during the group interaction. Participate in the final reflection of the session expressing learning, impressions or doubts in a simple and respectful way, using basic structures and showing interest in the learning process itself.
Contents (subject and cross-disciplinary) Subject content: A. Communicative functions of common use appropriate to the communicative environment	Activities
	ACTIVITY 1 (ROUTINE): Chitchatting
	ACTIVITY 2 (REINFORCEMENT): Don't put people in boxes

and context: greeting and saying goodbye, introducing and introducing oneself; describing people, objects, places, phenomena and events; comparing people, objects or situations; placing events in time; placing objects, people and places in space; asking for and exchanging information on everyday matters; giving and asking for instructions, warnings, advice and orders; offering, accepting and refusing help, propositions or suggestions; partially expressing liking or interest and emotions; describe present situations and habitual actions; narrate past events, (punctual, habitual or interrupted); express future events; express intentions, forecasts and plans in the future; express opinion, possibility, ability, obligation, prohibition and advice; express simple arguments; express conditions; express uncertainty and doubt; express certainty, deduction, conjecture and promise. B. Commonly used strategies to identify, organize,	ACTIVITY 3 (REINFORCEMENT): Stereotypes fact-checking
	ACTIVITY 4 (REINFORCEMENT): Rewriting stereotypes
	ACTIVITY 5 (WARM-DOWN ACTIVITY): Warm-down
	ACTIVITY 6 (ROUTINE): Passport to culture

retain, retrieve and creatively use linguistic units (lexis, morphosyntax, sound patterns, etc.) from the comparison of languages and varieties that make up the personal linguistic repertoire. C. 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. Cross-disciplinary content: Peer cooperation Audiovisual communication Education for a proactive school coexistence, oriented to respect for diversity as a source of wealth	
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Session 4	
Specific competences 1, 2, 4, 6	Achievement indicators Express orally, with clarity and fluency, aspects of daily life using simple expressions and structures with contextual support and showing a cooperative attitude. Analyze the structure of a migration letter identifying vocabulary and expressions related to emotions adaptation and cultural shock. Write a migration letter of at least 120 words following the formal structure of a letter, using vocabulary and expressions related to emotions adaptation and cultural differences showing empathy and creativity.
Contents (subject and cross-disciplinary) Subject content: A. Communicative functions of common use appropriate to the communicative environment and context: greeting and saying goodbye, introducing and introducing oneself; describing people, objects, places, phenomena and events; comparing people, objects or situations; placing events in time; placing objects, people and places in space; asking for and exchanging information on everyday matters; giving and	Activities
	ACTIVITY 1 (ROUTINE): Chitchatting
	ACTIVITY 2 (REINFORCEMENT): Reading testimonies
	ACTIVITY 3 (REINFORCEMENT): Flying imagination
	ACTIVITY 4 (ROUTINE): Passport to culture

asking for instructions, warnings, advice and orders; offering, accepting and refusing help, propositions or suggestions; partially expressing liking or interest and emotions; describe present situations and habitual actions; narrate past events, (punctual, habitual or interrupted); express future events; express intentions, forecasts and plans in the future; express opinion, possibility, ability, obligation, prohibition and advice; express simple arguments; express conditions; express uncertainty and doubt; express certainty, deduction, conjecture and promise. C. 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. Cross-disciplinary content: Peer cooperation Education for a proactive school coexistence, oriented to respect for diversity as a source of	
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wealth	
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Session 5	
Specific competences 1, 2	Achievement indicators Express orally, with clarity and fluency, aspects of daily life using simple expressions and structures with contextual support and showing a cooperative attitude. Read and understand short descriptions of actions related to the Sustainable Development Goals, match them with the corresponding goals using basic expressions in the foreign language showing awareness of global issues and a respectful attitude during group interaction. Prepare a short group presentation defending a chosen Sustainable Development Goal giving at least three reasons using the foreign language showing critical thinking.
Contents (subject and cross-disciplinary) Subject content: A. Communicative functions of common use appropriate to the communicative environment	Activities
	ACTIVITY 1 (REINFORCEMENT): Chitchatting
	ACTIVITY 2 (REINFORCEMENT): Bridging actions with Goals

and context: greeting and saying goodbye, introducing and introducing oneself; describing people, objects, places, phenomena and events; comparing people, objects or situations; placing events in time; placing objects, people and places in space; asking for and exchanging information on everyday matters; giving and asking for instructions, warnings, advice and orders; offering, accepting and refusing help, propositions or suggestions; partially expressing liking or interest and emotions; describe present situations and habitual actions; narrate past events, (punctual, habitual or interrupted); express future events; express intentions, forecasts and plans in the future; express opinion, possibility, ability, obligation, prohibition and advice; express simple arguments; express conditions; express uncertainty and doubt; express certainty, deduction, conjecture and promise. B. Commonly used strategies to identify, organize,	ACTIVITY 3 (REINFORCEMENT): Mission: Defend your Goal!
	ACTIVITY 4 (ROUTINE): Passport to culture

retain, retrieve and creatively use linguistic units (lexis, morphosyntax, sound patterns, etc.) from the comparison of languages and varieties that make up the personal linguistic repertoire. C. 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. Cross-disciplinary content: Peer cooperation Education for a proactive school coexistence, oriented to respect for diversity as a source of wealth	
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Session 6	
Specific competences 2, 3	Achievement indicators Express orally, with clarity and fluency, aspects of daily life using simple expressions and structures with contextual support and showing a cooperative attitude. Watch Malala’s speech and write down at least three key ideas related to human rights or education and participate in the class discussion linking the content to at least one Sustainable Development Goal. Create an original manifesto about interculturality expressing ideas and opinions clearly using vocabulary and expressions worked on in class showing cooperative attitude critical thinking and respect.
Contents (subject and cross-disciplinary) Subject content: A. Communicative functions of common use appropriate to the communicative environment and context: greeting and saying goodbye, introducing and introducing oneself; describing people, objects, places, phenomena and events; comparing people, objects or situations; placing	Activities
	ACTIVITY 1 (ROUTINE): Chitchatting
	ACTIVITY 2 (REINFORCEMENT): <i>He named me Malala</i>
	ACTIVITY 3 (BOOSTER CLASS): Get Manifesto started
	ACTIVITY 4 (ROUTINE): Passport to culture

events in time; placing objects, people and places in space; asking for and exchanging information on everyday matters; giving and asking for instructions, warnings, advice and orders; offering, accepting and refusing help, propositions or suggestions; partially expressing liking or interest and emotions; describe present situations and habitual actions; narrate past events, (punctual, habitual or interrupted); express future events; express intentions, forecasts and plans in the future; express opinion, possibility, ability, obligation, prohibition and advice; express simple arguments; express conditions; express uncertainty and doubt; express certainty, deduction, conjecture and promise. B. Commonly used strategies and tools for self-assessment, co-assessment and self-repair, analog and digital, individual and digital. Cross-disciplinary content: Audiovisual communication	
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Peer cooperation Education for a proactive school coexistence, oriented to respect for diversity as a source of wealth	
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Session 7	
Specific competences 1, 2, 3, 4, 6	Achievement indicators Present an original manifesto about interculturality expressing ideas and opinions clearly using vocabulary and expressions worked on in class showing cooperative attitude critical thinking and respect.
Contents (subject and cross-disciplinary) Subject content: A. Communicative functions of common use appropriate to the communicative environment and context: greeting and saying goodbye, introducing and introducing oneself; describing people, objects, places, phenomena and events; comparing people, objects or situations; placing	Activities
	ACTIVITY 1 (BOOSTER CLASS): Our intercultural Manifesto
	ACTIVITY 2 (ROUTINE): Passport to culture

events in time; placing objects, people and places in space; asking for and exchanging information on everyday matters; giving and asking for instructions, warnings, advice and orders; offering, accepting and refusing help, propositions or suggestions; partially expressing liking or interest and emotions; describe present situations and habitual actions; narrate past events, (punctual, habitual or interrupted); express future events; express intentions, forecasts and plans in the future; express opinion, possibility, ability, obligation, prohibition and advice; express simple arguments; express conditions; express uncertainty and doubt; express certainty, deduction, conjecture and promise.

- B. Commonly used strategies to identify, organize, retain, retrieve and creatively use linguistic units (lexis, morphosyntax, sound patterns, etc.) from the comparison of languages and varieties that make up the personal linguistic repertoire.

C. 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. Cross-disciplinary content: Audiovisual communication Peer cooperation Education for a proactive school coexistence, oriented to respect for diversity as a source of wealth	
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3.7.3 Schedule for each activity

<u>Activity 1</u> <u>Session 1</u>		
Title: Chitchatting	Type: Routine	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students are sitting in their common places, and they interact with each other from their seats.		Resources: Inflatable ball
Description of the activity This activity consists of a mini game to be carried out routinely at the beginning of each class. Its aim is to start the session in a dynamic, motivating and participative way, using a ball as an interactive and playful resource. During this activity, the teacher asks a short and simple question that all students are capable of answering, for example, “what is your favorite subject?”. After posing the question, the teacher throws the ball to a student, who then answers it. That is, the student who receives the ball, is in charge of answering the question. Once they have responded, the student asks a new question and throws the ball to another classmate, who then answers and continues the cycle. This process continues until 4 or 5 students have participated. The activity is conducted as a whole-group dynamic. Although only a few students actively speak, all learners are expected to follow the conversation, as they may be called on at any time. The main objective of this activity is to break the ice and begin the session with a fun activity that fosters a relaxed classroom atmosphere, while encouraging spontaneous oral expression in the foreign language. It also helps to create a positive learning environment, in which the use of the foreign language becomes natural, and where peer interaction, cooperation, and values such as respect, participation and active		

listening are promoted.

In addition, this type of activity contributes to the development of the students' communicative competence and helps reduce the stress and anxiety that some students suffer when speaking in the foreign language.

<u>Activity 2</u> <u>Session 1</u>		
Title: Brainstorming (cultures)	Type: Introduction	Timing: 10 minutes
Classroom management: Firstly, in pairs then, as a whole-class.		Resources: No special resources needed.
Description of the activity This brainstorming activity invites students to share their knowledge, opinions, ideas and experiences related to different cultures. The teacher, acting as a facilitator, poses several open-ended questions, for example, “What do you know about cultural diversity?”, “Have you ever had contact with people from other cultures?” or “Which culture do you find most interesting and why?”. The activity is divided in two phases. First, students reflect and exchange ideas in pairs (5 minutes). This format encourages all students to participate, especially those who are less confident speaking in front of the whole class. Then, each pair one idea to share in a whole-class discussion (5 minutes), promoting a collaborative exchange of ideas and viewpoints.		

During the brainstorming, the teacher assumes the role of guide and moderator, proposing topics and suggesting questions, listening attentively, and avoiding intervening with opinions or personal answers. In this way, the protagonism falls on the students, fostering independent.

The main objective of this activity is to activate the students' previous knowledge about cultural diversity and to generate an environment of critical reflection. In this way, critical thinking and active listening are encouraged and oral expression in the foreign language is developed, contributing to the creation of a positive classroom climate in which respect for others' opinions is upheld.

<u>Activity 3</u> <u>Session 1</u>		
Title: <i>Same, same but different</i>	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students are divided into small groups (3 people each group).		Resources: Projector and a screen to display the story <i>Same, Same but different</i> .
Description of the activity After brainstorming about the different cultures existing in the world, an activity focused on the reading of the story <i>Same, Same but Different</i> will be carried out. The objective of this reading is for students to read, understand and reflect on the similarities and differences between people from different cultures, promoting an inclusive and respectful vision of cultural diversity. That is to say, it is a compare and contrast activity in which the contrastive approach is promoted.		

To carry out this activity, the teacher will project the story onto the digital whiteboard. The read-aloud technique will be used; however, the turn of each student will be selected by the teacher, meaning that all students must remain attentive as they will not know when they will be called upon to read. Once the story has been read, students will be allowed to ask the teacher about any vocabulary or structures they do not understand. After clarifying all doubts, students will have to reflect in small groups to prepare the following activity.

Through the story of the two protagonists, students will practice their reading comprehension in English, as well as the development of critical thinking, analytical skills and reflection on their own and other people's identities. *Same, same but different* will allow students to identify commonalities between seemingly different cultures, reinforcing the idea that despite external differences, there are shared emotions, values and characteristics among all human beings.

In summary, this activity contributes to the development and integral formation of the students, since at the same time, they are working on linguistic content, and affective, ethical and social aspects. In this way, it promotes the development of literacy competence, competence in cultural awareness and expression, and personal, social and learning to learn competence.

<u>Activity 4</u> <u>Session 1</u>		
Title: From pages to opinions	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 10 minutes
Classroom management: Students are divided into small groups (3 people each group).		Resources: No special resources needed.

Description of the activity

After the group reading and reflection of the story *Same, same but different*, the teacher will establish a guided discussion in which the students will share the ideas and emotions that the story evoked in them. To conduct this activity, students will continue in the same groups as the previous activity. The goal is to create a dialogue-based environment in which each student feels free to express their opinion in a reasoned and respectful manner. In fact, this activity is carried out in small groups rather than as a whole-class discussion, since students tend to feel more comfortable sharing their ideas and speaking in the foreign language when working in smaller groups.

The teacher will pose open-ended questions (see Appendix 7.1), such as: “What does *Same, same but different* mean to you?”, “How can we learn from people who are different from us?” or “In what ways are people from different countries similar?”. Students will discuss these questions in their small groups, while the teacher goes around the groups to offer support and clarify any doubts or misunderstandings.

Asking open-ended questions encourages students to reflect beyond the literary content, allowing them to connect the content of the story to their own thoughts, values and personal experiences.

Through this activity, students’ Intercultural Communicative Competence is promoted, along with their critical thinking, respect for others and active listening to their peers’ ideas. It also fosters meaningful learning, where students take an active role in constructing their own learning.

<u>Activity 5</u> <u>Session 1</u>		
Title: Warm-down	Type: Warm-down activity	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students remain seated in small groups; the teacher approaches each group briefly to facilitate the reflection and address doubt.		Resources: No special resources needed.
Description of the activity At the end of the session, the teacher will conduct a short oral activity based on a guided and shared reflection about the knowledge learned during the session. This activity has a double purpose: on the one hand, to consolidate and reinforce the content learned during the previous activities and, on the other hand, to create a positive work environment where any possible doubts can be addressed in a supportive way. To encourage more inclusive and active participation, students remain in the small working groups and the teacher briefly interacts with each group asking reflective questions, for example, “what is a new thing you have learned today?”, “was there anything that surprised you?” or “do you have any questions or something that is still unclear?”. This format makes it easier for students to contribute, specifically those who are less confident speaking. In addition, the teacher may mix techniques, for example, collecting anonymous written reflections to ensure that all students have participated. This activity aims to make students reflect and become aware of their learning and progress, as well as to favor the creation of a positive and safe classroom climate, in which all students feel valued, listened to and comfortable expressing their opinions or asking questions. At the same time, these types of activities stimulate the development of metacognitive strategies, as they are guided to reflect on their own		

learning.

<u>Activity 6</u> <u>Session 1</u>		
Title: Passport to culture	Type: Routine	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students are sitting in their respective places.		Resources: Passports and stamps
Description of the activity At the end of each session, as a routine activity and motivational complement of the didactic unit, a dynamic will be carried out in which students aim to collect seven intercultural stamps. In this activity, each student will receive a “passport to culture” (see Appendix 7.1), which they must keep throughout the whole unit. This passport contains seven pages, one for each session and a corresponding stamp (see Appendix 7.1). At the end of each session, the teacher will evaluate student’s behavior according to a set of criteria: respect for peers and their opinions, use of English in oral interactions, active participation, active listening and collaborative attitude. If the student meets these criteria, they will receive a stamp. Each stamp has a different design that reflects the content of the session, making the experience more attractive and meaningful for the students. The final goal of this routine is to get the seven stamps corresponding to the seven sessions of the unit. At the end of the unit, students who complete their passport will receive a “Citizens of the world” diploma, as a recognition for their commitment, effort and positive attitude.		

This dynamic fosters student motivation, respect for classmates and diversity of opinions, and a positive classroom attitude, in alignment with the values addressed throughout the seven sessions of the unit.

Moreover, this activity contributes to the development of Personal, social, and learning to learn competence, as well as Civic competence by promoting values of respect, global citizenship and cooperation, through a meaningful and playful perspective.

The last two minutes of the last activity of each session will be used for this activity.

<u>Activity 1</u> <u>Session 2</u>		
Title: Chitchatting	Type: Routine	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students are sitting in their common places, and they interact with each other from their seats.		Resources: Inflatable ball.
Description of the activity This activity consists of a mini game to be carried out routinely at the beginning of each class. Its aim is to start the session in a dynamic, motivating and participative way, using a ball as an interactive and playful resource. During this activity, the teacher asks a short and simple question that all students are capable of answering, for example, “what is your favorite		

subject?”. After posing the question, the teacher throws the ball to a student, who then answers it. That is, the student who receives the ball, is in charge of answering the question. Once they have responded, the student asks a new question and throws the ball to another classmate, who then answers and continues the cycle. This process continues until 4 or 5 students have participated.

The activity is conducted as a whole-group dynamic. Although only a few students actively speak, all learners are expected to follow the conversation, as they may be called on at any time.

The main objective of this activity is to break the ice and begin the session with a fun activity that fosters a relaxed classroom atmosphere, while encouraging spontaneous oral expression in the foreign language. It also helps to create a positive learning environment, in which the use of the foreign language becomes natural, and where peer interaction, cooperation, and values such as respect, participation and active listening are promoted.

In addition, this type of activity contributes to the development of the students’ communicative competence and helps reduce the stress and anxiety that some students suffer when speaking in the foreign language.

<u>Activity 2</u> <u>Session 2</u>		
Title: Describing pictures	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 20 minutes
Classroom management: Students are gathered in pairs.		Resources: Projector and a screen to display pictures on slides.

Description of the activity

After having worked on the basic vocabulary related to cultural diversity in the previous session, the teacher proposes an oral activity in which students put into practice what they have already learned by describing images. In other words, the teacher projects an image that represents something characteristic of a culture and, in pairs, the students describe the image.

To facilitate the description, students will be provided with an index card (see Appendix 7.3) with various linguistic structures, e.g., “In this picture, I can see...”, “There is.../there are...”, “They are wearing...”, “They might be from...”. In addition, the worksheet will also include specific vocabulary to be used in the descriptions, for example “customs”, “traditions”, “clothing”, “heritage”, “language”, ‘food’ or “religion”.

The main objective of this activity is to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence, as well as to reinforce oral production in English as a foreign language. Students practice grammatical structures while reflecting on diverse cultural aspects, developing empathy and respect for other cultures and ways of life.

Also, this activity promotes curiosity, detailed observation, active participation and respect for cultural diversity. Furthermore, working on oral expression in a contextualized way promotes meaningful learning in an inclusive classroom climate.

<u>Activity 3</u> <u>Session 2</u>		
Title: Association game	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students work in pairs, sitting face to face; each pair interacts independently.		Resources: Projector and a screen to display pictures on slides.
Description of the activity This activity is an oral and cooperative game, designed to reinforce vocabulary and cultural knowledge. Students work in pairs, taking turns to play the role of the “describer” and the “guesser”. The activity is conducted in pairs to encourage participation from all students. Moreover, pair work supports peer scaffolding because students help each other, promoting meaningful interaction. The teacher projects on the screen a representative image of a country (monument, traditional dish, festivity...). Only one student in each pair is allowed to see the image, while the other student must face away from the screen. After each round, students switch roles and repeat the activity with a new image. This activity aims to promote communicative competence, in a dynamic and fun context. At the same time, intercultural competence is promoted, as students reflect on the characteristics of the different countries, valuing both differences and similarities. At the same time, skills such as cooperation, active listening, respect for the right to speak and the ability to transmit information in a brief and clear way are put into practice. In addition, by carrying out this activity as a “game”, it favors the creation of a positive environment that encourages spontaneous participation by the students, making the shyest students feel encouraged to participate and collaborate.		

<u>Activity 4</u> <u>Session 2</u>		
Title: Warm-down	Type: Warm-down activity	Timing: 10 minutes
Classroom management: Students are gathered in pairs, remaining seated in their usual places.		Resources: No special resources needed.
Description of the activity At the end of the session, the teacher will conduct a short oral activity based on a guided and shared reflection on the knowledge learned during the previous activities. This activity has a double purpose: on the one hand, to reinforce and strengthen the content covered in the session and, on the other hand, to provide a positive work environment to solve possible doubts that may have arisen during the session. The activity will be carried out in pairs, allowing each student to reflect and share with a peer. The teacher poses simple questions, for example, “what is a new thing you have learned today?”, “was there anything that surprised you?” or “do you have any questions or something that is still unclear?”. This activity aims to make students reflect and become aware of their learning and progress, as well as to favor the creation of a positive and safe classroom climate, in which all students feel valued, listened to and comfortable expressing their opinions or ask questions. At the same time, these types of activities stimulate the development of metacognition, that is to say, the development of the students’ capacity to reflect on their own learning.		

In the final two minutes, the teacher will stamp each student's passport as a form of symbolic recognition for their progress and good behaviors, reinforcing motivation.

<u>Activity 1</u> <u>Session 3</u>		
Title: Chitchatting	Type: Routine	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students are sitting in their common places, and they interact with each other from their seats.		Resources: Inflatable ball
Description of the activity This activity consists of a mini game to be carried out routinely at the beginning of each class. Its aim is to start the session in a dynamic, motivating and participative way, using a ball as an interactive and playful resource. During this activity, the teacher asks a short and simple question that all students are capable of answering, for example, “what is your favorite subject?”. After posing the question, the teacher throws the ball to a student, who then answers it. That is, the student who receives the ball, is in charge of answering the question. Once they have responded, the student asks a new question and throws the ball to another classmate, who then answers and continues the cycle. This process continues until 4 or 5 students have participated. The activity is conducted as a whole-group dynamic. Although only a few students actively speak, all learners are expected to follow the		

conversation, as they may be called on at any time.

The main objective of this activity is to break the ice and begin the session with a fun activity that fosters a relaxed classroom atmosphere, while encouraging spontaneous oral expression in the foreign language. It also helps to create a positive learning environment, in which the use of the foreign language becomes natural, and where peer interaction, cooperation, and values such as respect, participation and active listening are promoted.

In addition, this type of activity contributes to the development of the students' communicative competence and helps reduce the stress and anxiety that some students suffer when speaking in the foreign language.

<u>Activity 2</u> <u>Session 3</u>		
Title: Don't put people in boxes	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 10 minutes
Classroom management: Students work in pairs.		Resources: Projector and a screen to see the video.
Description of the activity During the activity, the teacher projects a video called "Don't put people in boxes", a short film that shows how people can connect and have things in common when prejudices are ignored and social barriers are broken. The purpose of this activity is to get students to reflect on stereotypes, prejudices and social labels.		

Before projecting the video, the teacher asks some initial questions to activate students' reflection and critical thinking, for example, "do you think we judge others too quickly? And why?".

After watching the video, the teacher will pose a few questions such as "what surprised you the most?", "have you ever felt like people were putting you in a box?", or "how do you feel watching the video?". In pairs, students have to answer these questions, sharing their ideas and feelings

The aim of this pair-discussion is to get students to reflect, share their experiences and express their emotions. Therefore, this activity is very enriching both pedagogically and personally, as students express themselves in the foreign language in a meaningful context while strengthening their critical thinking and developing values such as inclusion, respect and empathy.

<u>Activity 3</u> <u>Session 3</u>		
Title: Stereotypes fact-checking	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students are divided into pairs or small groups (3 people).		Resources: Worksheet with the stereotypes and countries for each group

Description of the activity

Once the video has been viewed and discussed, the teacher proposes an activity in which students work on the real stereotypes faced by some cultures. Students are divided into pairs or groups of 3, and each group is assigned a worksheet (see Appendix 7.4). On the left side of the sheet is a list of stereotypes, and on the right side is a list of countries.

The activity consists of reading the stereotypes on the left side and associating them with the culture to which the stereotype is attributed. During the development of this activity, the students will communicate in the foreign language and use expressions such as “I am not sure but...”, “In my opinion....”, “I think this stereotype belongs to...”, “Maybe this stereotype comes from....”.

Once the worksheet is completed and a stereotype is assigned to each culture, each group shares their answers, argues them and expresses their opinion about those stereotypes. The teacher will ask questions such as “do you think these stereotypes are true? Or not “, “have you heard them before” or “how do stereotypes affect the way we see people?”.

The objective of this activity is to make students realize that appearances and stereotypes are deceiving, as sometimes people have a wrong perception of people or cultures. In this way the values of empathy, respect and inclusion are fostered while promoting Intercultural Communicative Competence and critical reflection.

<u>Activity 4</u> <u>Session 3</u>		
Title: Rewriting stereotypes	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students are divided into pairs or small groups (3 people).		Resources: No special resources needed.
Description of the activity After having related each stereotype to a country and reflected on it, the teacher proposes a “transformation” activity, that is to say, the students have to reformulate these stereotypes into objective, neutral or positive and respectful sentences, so that they manage to eliminate prejudices. Also, if they consider it necessary, they can add real information to enrich the sentence or be more precise. The activity will be carried out in the same pairs or small groups as the previous activity, encouraging teamwork, cooperation, interaction between them, group reflection and active listening. Once the activity is completed, students share the reformulated stereotypes they have created with the whole class. After that, the teacher established a brief reflection which encourages students to critically analyze the stereotypes discussed and to question those stereotypes that appear in their everyday life.		

<u>Activity 5</u> <u>Session 3</u>		
Title: Warm-down	Type: Warm-down activity	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students work in pairs.		Resources: No special resources needed.
Description of the activity At the end of the session, the teacher will carry out a brief activity based on reflection on the knowledge learned during the session. This activity has a dual purpose: on the one hand, to reinforce and consolidate the content learned during the previous activities and, on the other hand, to create a positive working environment in which students can address any doubts that may have arisen during the session. During the activity, students will work in pairs and write a short paragraph (60-70 words) reflecting on what they have learned, what stood out to them the most or what they found particularly interesting. This activity aims to make students reflect and become aware of their learning and progress, as well as to favor the creation of a positive and safe classroom climate, in which all students feel valued, listened to and comfortable to express their opinions or ask questions. At the same time, these types of activities stimulate the development of metacognition, that is to say, the development of the students' capacity to reflect on their own learning. In the final two minutes, the teacher will stamp each student's passport as a form of symbolic recognition for their progress and good behaviors, reinforcing motivation.		

<u>Activity 1</u> <u>Session 4</u>		
Title: Chitchatting	Type: Routine	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students are sitting in their common places, and they interact with each other from their seats.		Resources: Inflatable ball
Description of the activity This activity consists of a mini game that will be developed routinely at the beginning of the class. Its purpose is to start the session in a dynamic, motivating and participative way, using a ball as a playful resource. During this activity, the teacher asks a short and simple question, so that all students know how to answer it, for example, “do you like living in Palencia? Would you prefer to live in another city?”. Once the question has been transmitted, the teacher throws the ball to the student he/she wants to answer. That is, the student who receives the ball is in charge of answering the question. Once answered, he/she asks a new question and throws the ball to a classmate to answer it, and so on, until 4 or 5 students have participated. The main objective of this activity is to break the ice and start the session with a fun activity to generate a relaxed atmosphere, while developing their spontaneous oral expression in English. It also promotes a positive classroom environment, in which the use of the foreign language is normalized, interaction and cooperation among classmates is encouraged and the values of respect, participation and active listening are reinforced.		

In addition, this type of activity contributes to the development of the students' communicative competence and helps to reduce the stress and anxiety that some students suffer when they have to express themselves in the foreign language.

<u>Activity 2</u> <u>Session 4</u>		
Title: Reading testimonies	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Students are sitting in their common places, and they interact with each other from their seats.		Resources: The testimony itself.
Description of the activity To carry out this activity, the teacher will hand out to each student a testimony of a person (see Appendix 7.5) who has emigrated to another country. In this letter, the protagonist tells his parents about his experience in the host country, for example, what his experience has been like, the difficulties he has encountered in terms of language, what he has learned, his emotions and feelings, the culture shock... The teacher has different students read the letter aloud, so that everyone must be paying attention. Once read, the teacher will ask if there are any vocabulary words or structures that they do not understand. After the teacher makes sure that all students have understood the content of the letter, they analyze the structure and expressions used in a letter, for example, the initial greeting, the parts that make up the letter or the farewell.		

The objective of this activity is for students to read, analyze and understand the structure of a letter, the language used, the vocabulary, and the expressions, so that they will be able to write one in the next activity.

<u>Activity 3</u> <u>Session 4</u>		
Title: Flying imagination	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 30 minutes
Classroom management: Individually.		Resources: No special resources are needed.
Description of the activity After having read the testimony of a young migrant in the previous activity, the students have to write their own imaginary letter as if they were migrants. For this activity, the teacher suggests a situation: <i>Imagine that you have had to move to another country to be able to work because there are no job offers in your country. Write a letter to your parents or a friend telling them about your experience, your feelings, what the new culture is like, what surprised you, what you miss about your culture....</i> The teacher will remind the students that they have to follow some rules: the letter has to have a minimum of 120 words, and at the same time, it has to follow the formal structure of a letter (structure seen and analyzed in the previous activity). The objective of this activity is that they develop their creativity and are able to put themselves in the shoes of a person who has migrated to another country, in such a way that empathy, solidarity and understanding for other people are encouraged. Also, they put into practice their		

written expression in English as a foreign language in a real situation.

In the final two minutes, the teacher will stamp each student's passport as a form of symbolic recognition for their progress and good behaviors, reinforcing motivation.

<u>Activity 1</u> <u>Session 5</u>		
Title: Chitchatting	Type: Routine	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students are sitting in their common places, and they interact with each other from their seats.		Resources: Inflatable ball
Description of the activity This activity consists of a mini game to be carried out routinely at the beginning of each class. Its aim is to start the session in a dynamic, motivating and participative way, using a ball as an interactive and playful resource. During this activity, the teacher asks a short and simple question that all students are capable of answering, for example, “what is your favorite subject?”. After posing the question, the teacher throws the ball to a student, who then answers it. That is, the student who receives the ball, is in charge of answering the question. Once they have responded, the student asks a new question and throws the ball to another classmate, who then answers and continues the cycle. This process continues until 4 or 5 students have participated. The activity is conducted as a whole-group dynamic. Although only a few students actively speak, all learners are expected to follow the		

conversation, as they may be called on at any time.

The main objective of this activity is to break the ice and begin the session with a fun activity that fosters a relaxed classroom atmosphere, while encouraging spontaneous oral expression in the foreign language. It also helps to create a positive learning environment, in which the use of the foreign language becomes natural, and where peer interaction, cooperation, and values such as respect, participation and active listening are promoted.

In addition, this type of activity contributes to the development of the students' communicative competence and helps reduce the stress and anxiety that some students suffer when speaking in the foreign language.

<u>Activity 2</u> <u>Session 5</u>		
Title: Bridging actions with Goals	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 15 minutes
Classroom management: Gathered in groups of 3 people.		Resources: Worksheet with a little description of each SDG (Sustainable Development Goals)
Description of the activity To carry out this activity, the teacher divides the students into groups of 3 people. Each group will have a worksheet (see Appendix 7.6) that is divided into two parts. On the left side, there are several descriptions of actions of the Sustainable Development Goals (for instance, “ensure that girls and boys go to school”), and on the right side, there is a list of the official names of the SDGs (“Quality Education”).		

The activity consists of reading the descriptions in groups and associating them with the corresponding SDG. In order to do this, the students have to discuss among themselves, using the foreign language. For example, some expressions they can use are: “Let's read this again to make sure”, “do you agree?”, “I think this one matches Goal 2” or “it's about school, so it must be Goal 4”.

Once all groups have finished, the teacher asks each group for their answers. After each group has shared their answers and reflections, the teacher projects the card with the solutions and explains the meaning of the SDGs, that is to say, what they are, what they are for, why they were created...

Through this activity, written comprehension, teamwork and decision making are encouraged. In addition, they interact with each other using the foreign language and become socially and globally aware from a critical perspective.

<u>Activity 3</u> <u>Session 5</u>		
Title: Mission: Defend your Goal!	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 30 minutes
Classroom management: Gathered in groups of 3 people.		Resources: Worksheet of SDGs.
Description of the activity After the explanation of the SDGs, in the groups of the previous activity, the teacher presents a new activity: each group must choose which SDG they consider to be the most important. Once chosen, they have 10-15 minutes to prepare a mini oral presentation of 2-3 minutes in which		

they have to explain why they have chosen that SDG.

In the first 10-15 minutes, students should choose the SDG they consider most important, give at least 3 reasons for their choice and organize the presentation in such a way that all members of the group participate. It is mandatory that everyone speaks during the presentation.

The objective of this group activity is that they are able to make decisions together, express their opinions, work cooperatively and organize ideas against the clock. Once again, they have to use their critical thinking to justify their choice. In addition, these types of communicative activities are key for students to lose stage fright and establish a functional relationship with English as a foreign language.

In the final two minutes, the teacher will stamp each student's passport as a form of symbolic recognition for their progress and good behaviors, reinforcing motivation.

<u>Activity 1</u> <u>Session 6</u>		
Title: Chitchatting	Type: Routine	Timing: 5 minutes
Classroom management: Students sit in their usual places, and they interact with each other from their seats.		Resources: No special resources are needed.

Description of the activity

This activity consists of a mini game to be carried out routinely at the beginning of each class. Its aim is to start the session in a dynamic, motivating and participative way, using a ball as an interactive and playful resource.

During this activity, the teacher asks a short and simple question that all students are capable of answering, for example, “what is your favorite subject?”. After posing the question, the teacher throws the ball to a student, who then answers it. That is, the student who receives the ball, is in charge of answering the question. Once they have responded, the student asks a new question and throws the ball to another classmate, who then answers and continues the cycle. This process continues until 4 or 5 students have participated.

The activity is conducted as a whole-group dynamic. Although only a few students actively speak, all learners are expected to follow the conversation, as they may be called on at any time.

The main objective of this activity is to break the ice and begin the session with a fun activity that fosters a relaxed classroom atmosphere, while encouraging spontaneous oral expression in the foreign language. It also helps to create a positive learning environment, in which the use of the foreign language becomes natural, and where peer interaction, cooperation, and values such as respect, participation and active listening are promoted.

In addition, this type of activity contributes to the development of the students’ communicative competence and helps reduce the stress and anxiety that some students suffer when speaking in the foreign language.

<u>Activity 2</u> <u>Session 6</u>		
Title: <i>He named me Malala</i>	Type: Reinforcement	Timing: 20 minutes
Classroom management: Firstly, students are sitting in their usual places. Then, they work in pairs.		Resources: Technological resources to reproduce the video on the screen.
Description of the activity In this activity, the teacher projects a video of a speech called <i>He named me Malala</i>. Most students probably do not know who Malala is, so at the beginning of the activity, the teacher briefly introduces Malala to contextualize her speech. For example, the teacher says that she is a Pakistani activist who as a child was attacked by the Taliban for defending the right of girls to go to school. However, she survived and continued her life fighting for human rights. In fact, she received the Nobel Peace Prize. Once the figure of Malala is introduced, the teacher projects her speech (from minute 4:04 to minute 11:00). While watching the video, the teacher asks the students to write down in their notebooks the most important ideas or aspects that catch their attention. After that, in pairs, students have to share the ideas that they have written down. Once they finished their pair-discussion, the teacher starts a brainstorming activity asking them some questions like: “what was Malala’s main message?”, “what ideas or phrases from her speech did you find inspiring?” or “how does her story make you feel?”. Also, to relate it to the previous session, the teacher asks “which SDG(s) do you think she was talking about? Why?”. Then, students have to relate the SDGs to Malala’s speech, for example, SDG 4.		

The objective of this activity is for students to understand the message of Malala’s speech, that is, to improve their listening comprehension while identifying the relationship with the SDGs, content seen in the previous session.

<u>Activity 4</u> <u>Session 6</u>		
Title: Get Manifesto started	Type: Booster class	Timing: 25 minutes
Classroom management: Gathered in groups of 3 people.		Resources: Computers or tablets.
Description of the activity Once all the activities of the previous sessions have been completed, the teacher explains what the final task consists of. Throughout the previous sessions, they have been doing activities that will help them to include in their manifesto, for example, the essential values that need to be in place for a respectful coexistence between cultures, cultural stereotypes and the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, during this activity, students will have 25 minutes to create their manifesto, for example, they can use <i>Canva</i> to do it. In the manifesto, students should include: the title of the manifesto, three values that they consider essential to exist in a respectful coexistence between cultures, two stereotypes that they want to break or with which they do not agree, an SDG that represents their manifesto and, finally, an inspirational quote from a relevant figure, for instance, Malala. Also, the teacher will give them an example of a manifesto (see Appendix 7.7).		

In the final two minutes, the teacher will stamp each student's passport as a form of symbolic recognition for their progress and good behaviors, reinforcing motivation.

<u>Final activity</u> <u>Session 7</u>		
Title: Our intercultural Manifesto	Type: Booster class	Timing: 5-7 minutes each group
Classroom management: Gathered in groups of 3 people.		Resources: Projector and a screen to display their manifestoes.
Description of the activity In this final task, the students will have to present their manifestos in groups of 3 people. The presentation should last 5 to 7 minutes, and it is mandatory that all members of the group participate in the oral presentation. They will have to create a manifesto that will be evaluated according to criteria established in a rubric, for example, one of the criteria would be originality. In addition, each manifesto will be evaluated both by the teacher and by the students, therefore, at the beginning of the session each student will be given an evaluation rubric, so that at the end of each presentation they can evaluate the group that has presented. As for the oral presentation, the teacher will have previously told them that naturalness, the use of expressions and vocabulary expressed in class and clarity will be valued very positively. This manifesto will be the result of the reflective and cooperative process that has been carried out during the activities of the previous six		

sessions. At the same time, it will be a visual product and an oral intervention in which all the members of the group have to defend their ideas and opinions about cultural diversity, values, stereotypes and respect in an intercultural coexistence.

In the final five minutes, the teacher will stamp each student's passport and give them the diploma as a form of symbolic recognition for their progress and good behaviors.

Assessment

The present didactic unit, *Citizens of the World*, is formed by a two-fold type of syllabus, which responds to the methodological and curricular principles established by the LOMLOE (2020) and Decreto 39/2022 of Castilla y León. On the one hand, it includes a situational syllabus, organized around two learning situations —*Crossing Cultures* and *From Understanding to Action*— which contextualizes students' learning within real communicative and sociocultural situations. On the other hand, it incorporates a procedural syllabus, based on task-based learning, which implies that assessment focuses on what students are able to do with the language in meaningful situations and functional contexts.

In relation to this structure, the assessment of the didactic unit is based on a competency-based, formative, and holistic approach, in accordance with the methodological principles established by the LOMLOE (2020) and the Decreto 39/2022 of Castilla y León. This approach values the development of each student's key and specific competences, provides continuous feedback to support reflection on their progress, and considers all dimensions of learning—not only content—, considering students as integral beings. Thus, by assessing students through this approach, the focus is not only placed on the final product but also on the learning process and each student's individual evolution.

In summary, the assessment of all sessions within this didactic unit will be continuous, formative, and integrative. The teacher will assess students through direct observation and the systematic collection of data throughout the seven sessions. To carry out the assessment, this didactic unit makes use of a range of continuous assessment tools. These instruments will take into account not only the completion of the final task (manifesto) but also students' daily performance and active participation during the seven sessions. Assessment will be conducted through various rubrics for teacher assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment. Each rubric will include the specific assessment criteria to be considered in the evaluation process.

Assessment will be carried out according to the following percentage distribution:

- Positive and collaborative attitude in the classroom: 20% of the final grade.
- Manifesto: 35% of the final grade (15% corresponding to the elaboration of the manifesto and 20% to its presentation during the final session).
- Diploma achievement: 15% of the final grade.
- Migration letter (session 4): 20% of the final grade.
- Peer assessment (session 7): 10% of the final grade

CONCLUSION

Considering all the ideas previously analyzed, this dissertation affirms that fostering intercultural communication competence (ICC) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom contributes significantly to the creation of a motivating, inclusive, and equitable learning environment. Furthermore, the design of didactic units grounded in reflection and active methodologies aligns foreign language teaching with the requirements of current education legislation. For this reason, the didactic unit *Citizens of the World* has been designed, based on cooperative learning and task-based learning, while also promoting critical thinking among students.

This dissertation presents a thorough theoretical and legal framework that supports the integration of ICC in the EFL classroom in secondary education. On the one hand, regarding the theoretical framework, the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence has been analyzed through Byram's model. This model emphasizes the urgent need to move beyond the development of linguistic competence alone, highlighting the importance of also fostering sociocultural and critical competences. In addition, the dissertation has explored the key role that motivation and active participation of students play in the process of learning a foreign language. On the other hand, regarding the legal framework, both European standards (CEFR) and national legislation (LOMLOE, Real Decreto 217/2022, and Decreto 39/2022) demonstrate the relevance of promoting cultural awareness among students.

Taking into account all the aforementioned aspects, a didactic unit entitled *Citizens of the World* was designed for students in the 3rd year of secondary school. This didactic unit aims to promote students' critical thinking, foster peer interaction, enhance oral expression, and encourage the development of values such as empathy and respect towards individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

5. 1 Limitations

As with any research study, this dissertation presents limitations that must be acknowledged in order to interpret and analyze the results appropriately. First and foremost, the most significant limitation was the lack of time. Out of the seven planned sessions, only four could be implemented due to limited practicum time and various school-related interruptions such as exams and holidays. As a result, it was not possible to carry out all the proposed activities or to fully address the intercultural content. This limitation also led, on some occasions, to the shortening of discussions and activities.

Also, this study was conducted with a single group (3rd B of secondary school), which constitutes a limited sample size that restricts the analysis of the results. Furthermore, the data obtained reflects the specific characteristics and educational context of that particular group, and therefore the results cannot be extrapolated to other secondary school classes.

Lastly, the assessment tools used were limited to two opinion surveys and qualitative observations gathered throughout the four sessions. Although these surveys provided valuable results for drawing initial conclusions, they did not allow for an in-depth measurement of students' long-term development of communicative competence.

5.2 Improvements

Once the limitations have been identified, several improvements can be proposed for future implementations. Firstly, an evident enhancement would be to carry out all seven sessions of the didactic unit. This would allow for the observation of its impact on students' attitudes and mindset. Moreover, more in-depth discussions and reflections could be held, thereby enriching students' learning and oral expression.

Secondly, it would be advisable to involve a larger number of students from different educational, economic, and sociocultural backgrounds. This would provide a broader perspective on the effectiveness and impact of the didactic unit.

Lastly, to obtain more comprehensive results, it would be beneficial to use a wider range of assessment tools, for example, incorporating qualitative methods such as learning journals would allow for monitoring students' progress even after the completion of the didactic unit.

5.3 Results

As mentioned above, the didactic unit was partially implemented, with the first four sessions being carried out. However, these four sessions proved sufficient to extract relevant data, as two surveys, one before and one after the implementation, were conducted to measure changes in student attitudes.

On the one hand, the initial survey, conducted before the implementation of the didactic unit, revealed a high level of demotivation among students. Approximately 75% of them indicated that they felt “little” or “not at all” motivated during English lessons. Most students stated that the lessons were focused on grammar, vocabulary, and isolated exercises. In fact, more than 80% of the students reported that they rarely participated in discussions or role-playing activities, leading to monotonous, boring, and repetitive lessons.

On the other hand, the survey conducted after the implementation of the first four sessions showed a completely different situation. More than 90% of the students reported feeling motivated by the use of active methodologies during the lessons. Furthermore, almost all the students agreed that it was the first time engaging in a discussion using the target language, which made the lesson more dynamic and promoted meaningful learning.

In summary, comparing both surveys shows strong evidence that the implementation of the didactic unit had a positive impact on the students. Initially, there was apathy, indifference, disinterest, and lack of motivation. However, after the intervention, there was a positive shift in classroom atmosphere, as the students displayed an attitude of motivation, interest, and respect toward both their peers and the proposed activities by the teacher.

In conclusion, this dissertation has enabled a deeper understanding of the essential role that Intercultural Communicative Competence plays in an EFL classroom. Integrating this competence into educational contexts not only responds to the needs of today's society but also enriches the learning process itself, transforming the classroom into a space for intercultural encounter.

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Appendix

Appendix 7.1: activity 4 session 1 (questions about *Same, same but different*).

- What does *Same, same but different* mean to you?
- How can we learn from people who are different from us?
- What message do you think the author wants to share through this story?
- In what ways are people from different countries similar?
- What cultural differences can you identify between Kailash and Elliot?
- What things do Elliot and Kailash have in common?
- What can we do to make others feel included, even if they have different customs or way of life?

Appendix 7.2: activity 6 session 1 (passport and stamps)

Passport



Stamps



Appendix 7.3: activity 2 session 2 (index card)

**INDEX CARD: DESCRIBING
A CULTURAL IMAGE**

**LINGUISTIC
STRUCTURES**

- There is/there are... _____
- In this picture I can see... _____
- This could represent
the culture of... _____
- They might be from... _____
- This tradition is related
to... _____
- They are wearing... _____
- This reminds me of... _____

VOCABULARY

- Customs _____
- Traditions _____
- Traditional dress _____
- Language _____
- Beliefs _____
- Festivals _____
- Values _____
- Symbols _____
- Food _____

Appendix 7.4: activity 3 session 3 (worksheet about stereotypes)



STEREOTYPES FACT-CHECKING

Worksheet

Stereotypes

- They are cold and emotionless
- They eat insects
- They are lazy and sleep during the day
- They are obsessed with robots
- They are obsessed with punctuality
- They all eat burgers and are overweight

Countries

- Spain
- United States
- Japan
- Sweden
- Italy
- Germany

Appendix 7.5: activity 2 session 4 (example letter)

Dear parents,

I hope you are well. I miss you so much. It's been two months since I moved to Japan, and I wanted to tell you how things are going.

At the beginning, it was very hard. I didn't understand the language very well, and I felt lonely. The weather is colder than at home, and everything is very different. People here are more reserved, they hardly ever talk. At first, I thought they didn't like me, but now I understand it's just their way of being respectful with people.

Regarding the school, it is very different too. The classes are smaller, and the teachers expect us to work in an autonomous way. I'm getting used to it, and I've even made one friend from my class. They help me with the language and sometimes we go to a bar after school.

I really love the fact that buses arrive on time and everything works well. I've learned to be more independent.

Please don't worry about me. I'm okay.

With all my love,

John

Appendix 7.6: activity 2 session 5 (worksheet of SDGs)

Name:
Class:

WORKSHEET SDGS

- Read the action descriptions on the left column.
- As a group, match each description with the correct Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) from the list on the right.
- Discuss your choices using English.

Action description	SDG (write number and name)
Ensure that girls and boys go to school	
Reduce the amount of food we waste	
Promote peace and justice in all countries	
Make cities safer and more sustainable	
Reduce inequalities between rich and poor countries	

Appendix 7.7: activity 4 session 6 (example of a manifesto)

MANIFESTO FOR A BETTER WORLD

THREE ESSENTIAL VALUES FO RESPECTFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN CULTURES

- Empathy: understanding and respecting the feelings and perspectives of others
- Tolerance: accepting differences in beliefs, customs, and ways of life
- Equality: treating all people fairly regardless of race, gender, or religion

TWO STEREOTYPES THAT WE WANT TO BREAK

"People from certain countries are lazy": We believe every individual is different, and hard work is not defined by nationality

"Women have no voice in important decisions": We support equal opportunities for men and women

SDG THAT REPRESENTS OUR MANIFESTO

4

QUALITY
EDUCATION

"Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world" - Malala

Peer Evaluation: *Citizens of the World* presentations

Group number: _____

Group members: _____

GROUP	CONTENT	ORGANISATION	CREATIVITY	SPEAKING SKILLS	OVERALL IMPRESSION	FINAL COMMENTS
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Appendix 7.9: teacher's evaluation rubric.

1	2	3	4
Does not produce clear and coherent texts suited to the context, format, nor tools used for the description of the cultural images, stereotypes, and the letter.	Produces more or less clear and coherent texts suited to the context, format, and uses few tools for the description of the cultural images, stereotypes, and the letter.	Produces clear and coherent texts properly suited to the context, format, and uses a wide variety of tools for the description of the cultural images, stereotypes, and the letter.	Produces exceptionally clear and coherent texts, fully suited to the context and format, demonstrating an excellent use of a wide variety of tools for the description of the cultural images, stereotypes, and the letter.

Does not describe images, expresses opinions or suggestions clearly, either orally or in writing with clarity and in digital contexts; exchanges information related to interculturalism appropriately.	Describes cultural images and expresses few opinions or suggestions orally or in writing with not much clarity and in not all digital contexts; exchanges few information related to interculturalism appropriately.	Describes cultural images and expresses some opinions or suggestions orally or in writing with some clarity and in a few digital contexts; exchanges convenient information related to interculturalism appropriately.	Describes cultural images and expresses considerable opinions or suggestions orally or in writing with good clarity and in all digital contexts; exchanges valuable information related to interculturalism appropriately.
Does not plan, participate nor collaborate actively, in situations of cultural interest that are close to the learner's experience, showing initiative, empathy and respect.	Slightly plans, participates and collaborates passively , in situations of cultural interest that are close to the learner's experience, showing scarce initiative, empathy and respect.	Somewhat plans, participates and collaborates a bit actively, in situations of cultural interest that are close to the learner's experience, showing some initiative, empathy and respect.	Effectively plans, participates, and collaborates actively in situations of cultural interest that are close to the learner's experience, demonstrating strong initiative, empathy, and respect.
Does not select, organize nor use accurate strategies for establishing fluent oral communication, simulating a real-life situation adapted to the context of cultures.	Selects, organizes and uses improper strategies, and does not establish fluent oral communication, impeding the simulation of a real-life situation adapted to the context of cultures.	Selects, organizes and uses some strategies for establishing somewhat fluent oral communication, simulating a real-life situation adapted to the context of cultures.	Selects, organizes and uses completely accurate strategies for establishing correct and fluent oral communication, simulating a real-life situation entirely adapted to the context of cultures.

Does not create a manifesto, using digital tools collaboratively with their peers in safe environments.	Creates a manifesto, using few digital tools without collaborating with their peers and blocking the creation of safe environments.	Creates a manifesto, using some digital tools collaborating with their peers in safe environments.	Creates an original manifesto, using a variety of digital tools enthusiastically collaborating with their peers in safe environments.
Does not use resources, neither physical nor digital to develop the activities.	Uses few digital and physical resources to develop activities with difficulties .	Uses some physical and digital resources appropriately to develop the activities and facilitates communication in intercultural situations.	Effectively uses a wide variety of physical and digital resources to develop the activities and enhances communication , engaging fully and respectfully in intercultural situations.