



Facultad de Educación  
**Universidad** Zaragoza

# **68500-TRABAJO DE FIN DE MASTER MODALIDAD B**

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English on the Screen: Using Audiovisual Resources in the  
Communicative Classroom

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.	STATE OF THE ISSUE: OVERVIEW .....	2
3.	THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT .....	4
	3.1 Legal Framework and the key competences .....	4
	3.2 Communicative competence .....	6
	3.3 Audiovisual resources in the classroom .....	7
4.	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	8
	4.1 Approaches and methods: Overview.....	8
	4.2 CLIL.....	9
5.	METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED.....	10
	5.1 The use of L1 in the L2 classroom.....	11
	5.2 Communicative approach.....	13
	5.2.1 <i>Communicative classroom</i> .....	14
	5.2.2 <i>Communicative activities</i> .....	16
	5.2.3 <i>Groupings students</i> .....	17
	5.2.4 <i>English skills</i> .....	19
	5.3 Task-Based Language Learning.....	20
6.	PROPOSAL: PAY IT FORWARD PROJECT .....	21
	6.1 Justification .....	21
	6.2 Task description .....	22
	6.2.1 <i>Pre-task</i> .....	24
	6.2.2 <i>Task</i> .....	25
	6.2.3 <i>Post-task</i> .....	27
	6.3 Assessment: Tools and grading criteria.....	29
7.	CONCLUSION .....	30
8.	WORKS CITED.....	32
9.	APPENDIX .....	1
	Appendix I: Pay it Forward (Mimi Leder, 2000) .....	1
	Appendix II: Webquest .....	1
	Appendix III: Example of possible sociogram.....	3
	Appendix IV: final project guidelines .....	4
	Appendix V: written assignment rubric .....	4
	Appendix VI: peer assessment rubric.....	5

Appendix VII: oral presentation rubric (teacher) .....	5
Appendix VIII: webquest rubric .....	6

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of the Information Technologies (IT) and Audiovisual Media (AM) in education is a prominent issue in recent debates about the L2 classroom. Researchers emphasize the drastic changes that the use of these technologies can bring about in the teaching and learning of a foreign language such as English. In fact, IT and AM are technologies that have the potential to make a positive contribution in education settings, since research has shown that the appropriate implementation of the new technologies “allows for a more thorough integration of language, content, and culture than ever before and provides students with unprecedented opportunities for autonomous learning” (Warschauer and Meskill, 2000: 316)

The starting point of this proposal will be my own experience with this kind of materials and the questions that have arisen when they have been implemented in the classroom. My intention is to answer to these concerns by proposing a project where audiovisual resources and students’ cooperative work will be the central parts. Moreover, the guiding principles will be all the ideas I have gathered and the conclusions I have arrived at during this course.

Audiovisual media have a great potential to develop cross-curricular instruction in the L2 classroom while students acquire communicative competence in the foreign language. However, as far as education is concerned, it is really common to use these kinds of resources, for example, as a means to reward the students when they have done something right, when more conventional activities have been completed or when a certain unit has been finished earlier than expected. Once the film has been watched, there is no further reflection about it, nor is it exploited to foster the acquisition of the second language. By means of this project, I would like to change that widespread tendency and try to make the most of it in a way that is coherent with contemporary approaches to L2 acquisition.

By introducing audiovisual resources within the four walls of the classroom, we count with an important advantage: the motivation of students. Nonetheless, from the perspective of the teacher, the ways in which these are used, have to be consistent with the curriculum and with our ideas about how languages are learned. In other words, it is

essential to consider the conceptual framework from the most general to the most specific and practical level of curricular application, that is, not only at a theoretical level, but also all along the implementation process. In this respect, I will be following the principles behind the communicative approach to language teaching and learning, while aiming for the acquisition of the key competences stated in the Aragonese Curriculum, 2007.

On the basis of the above, the main aim of this project will be to propose a term-long task using the film *Pay it forward* (Mimi Leder, 2000) as the starting point, where the students, in groups of four, will have to create a project based on the one put forward in the movie: *think of an idea to change our world*. To be more specific, learners will have to create their projects bearing in mind the idea of one of the characters in the film: the pay-it-forward chain. In other words, they will have to think of something to help other people, while being realistic; for instance, organize a recycling program for their community. At the end of the year, the different groups will defend their proposals in front of the class (which will act as a work council), trying to convince their classmates to carry out the project.

Since this is a term-long task, during the course, different activities related to the final project will be carried out in order to progress in the curriculum and to provide the students with some guidance. All of them will be included in a webquest designed by the teacher. This dissertation consists in an exploration of the theoretical foundations on which to base such a project, a contextualization of the educational determinants, a critical analysis of the methodology adopted and a description in detail of the task along with the conclusions reached.

## **2. STATE OF THE ISSUE: OVERVIEW**

The most innovative endeavors English teachers have undertaken so far, is to integrate media technology in the ELT classroom in order to improve learners' motivation, integrated language skills and create a self-learning environment. From the perspective of L2 teaching, film offers a wide range of alternatives while being a medium which is globally accessible, even in environments where technology is not widely available

(Stempleski and Tomalin, 2001:9). These media can be employed in a variety of ways, from engaging students and stimulating communicative interest to reinforcing linguistic acquisition when combined with exercises that focus on the skills of reading writing, listening and speaking.

Jack Lonergan argues that “video in the classroom offers exciting possibilities for language teaching and learning” (1995:1). A large scale survey conducted by Christine Canning-Wilson (2000:2) illustrated that “students expressed a preference for learning language through the use of videos.” This may be attributed to the fact that “videos contain the same paralinguistic cues which are used in everyday communicative structures” (Lonergan, 1995:11) However, what I have learned from my experience is that when working with video in the classroom, teachers naturally tend to focus on materials specifically prepared for language learners. Whilst dedicated ELT materials may indeed provide examples of target language in context, they are usually non-authentic in terms of their setting, dialogue and plot, and subsequently of little intrinsic interest to today’s viewers. Moreover, in the traditional classroom, students are often expected to interact with more old fashioned tools, such as textbooks. More recently teaching practitioners are searching for increasingly fresh ways to generate student interest in English classes, being the audiovisual resources one of those novelties, since they help the students to “contextualize the language they have learnt” (Çakir, 2006:71).

As may be seen, considerable confidence is placed in the value of audio-visual materials to enhance the learning of foreign languages, yet, as Canning-Wilson notes (2000:1), “there is little empirical data and research to support the proposition that video facilitates in the learning of foreign languages.” Research carried out over the past twenty years shows that there are several limitations to bear in mind. First, many of the research has been carried out with visual aids, but not with actual videos or films; and second, many of those studies were not conducted with random groups that were studying only one foreign language, which may lead to different results. Another weak point would be the long-term effects of using audiovisual resources in the classroom, since they would be difficult to measure.

Nevertheless, in recent years some of these questions have begun to be addressed. However, since there are several techniques for using films on video (vision on/sound off; sound off/vision on; pause/still/freeze-frame control; etc.) the findings can

be applied in limited contexts. For instance, Iva Baltova (1994: 8) claimed that the use of video and sound was more consistent for students' innate perception of the stories than the use of sound only (regular listening), whilst Ruth Bovy (1981: 206) considers that the strategies used by one learner are likely to differ from those used by another learner.

As in many other situations, audiovisual resources should not be seen as the panacea for English learning, because even though they may be a popular tool which offers the learners varied, comprehensible input and a chance to improve the different skills, teachers must not lose sight of the complex process of language acquisition.

### **3. THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT**

#### **3.1 Legal Framework and the key competences**

This proposal targets students of secondary education, and, even though the task that will be further explained in depth is aimed at the upper courses (4°ESO), it could be adapted so as to address other ages and levels.

As has been already pointed out, the Spanish legal framework has to be observed whenever a project of these characteristics is proposed. Both, the National Curriculum as established by the LOE, 2006 (acronym for Organic Law of Education) and the Aragonese Curriculum for Foreign Languages (Orden del 9 de mayo de 2007), prescribe a competence-based curriculum, which means that all the activities carried out during the different courses and stages should be consistent with the eight key competences:

1. Communicative competence
2. Mathematical competence
3. Competence in knowledge and interaction with the physical world
4. Data processing and digital competence
5. Social and civic competence
6. Cultural and artistic competence
7. Learning to learn
8. Autonomy and personal initiative

To be more precise, the proposal of this dissertation will contribute to the development of the *communicative competence* of the learners, since it will be part of the English subject course plan, where the general communicative ability increases by adding new skills and securing the ones already acquired through the mother tongue or other foreign languages. Furthermore, the *learning to learn competence* plays an essential role, because even though the main point of this dissertation is the project proposed above, it is not an isolated task, but a term-long activity, which is regarded as a part of a whole course plan, where every lesson increases overall the communicative competence, providing different resources to improve comprehension and expression. Likewise, this project fosters the ability to interpret reality and will help learners to develop decision-making skills that favor autonomy in language acquisition and use.

The *social and civic competence* is also developed by means of this proposal, because students will have to think about a project that can be helpful for others, contributing thus to their well-being and their ability to value acts of kindness. Moreover, for the learning outcomes of this project, cooperative group work is a key element. In addition, the information that can be found on the net grows larger and larger and a great part of that information is written in English. Hence, knowing this language facilitates the access to the information provided by or available through the information and communication technologies (ICTs). Particularly, in the task designed, *data processing and digital competence* will be developed, since a number of activities encompassed in a webquest will be carried out in the computer's room, where the students will have to search for specific information from diverse sources, such as interviews or webpages in order to obtain certain knowledge about the future project that has to be elaborated and presented by the end of the semester. These kinds of tasks create real and meaningful communicative contexts, which is essential for students. Finally, foreign languages also contribute to the acquisition of *autonomy and personal initiative competence*. More precisely, as has been already said, in order to fulfill the task suggested, students must engage in cooperative work in the classroom, and know how to manage personal resources and social skills.

The Aragonese Curriculum also provides the contents through which these competences will be developed. They are grouped in four blocks, the first two address the communicative skills and the remaining two are focused on the importance of



meaning as the starting point for students to build a conceptual system of the way the language works.

Moreover, this regulation takes into account the guidelines of the Common European Framework of Reference, designed by the Council of Europe (2001:4), which is concerned to improve the quality of communication among Europeans of different language and cultural backgrounds, because better communication leads to freer mobility and more direct contact, which in turn leads to better understanding and closer co-operation. The Council also supports methods of learning and teaching which help young people and indeed older learners to build up 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. In this way, the work contributes to the promotion of democratic citizenship

### **3.2 Communicative competence**

If we want our students to be competent when communicating in a foreign language, we need to provide them with situations that are as similar as possible to those they may face in the future, for, as Tricia Hedge, for example, points out (2000:46), “the goals of ELT have become more concerned with enabling learners to successfully interact with members of other societies.” In order to communicate effectively, the communicative competence must be developed. The characteristics of communicative competence (as opposed to the more limited linguistic competence) affect directly the second language learning and teaching. Tricia Hedge (2000:66), who follows closely the work of other theorists before her, speaks of linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence and fluency.

Linguistic competence, Hedge notes (2000:66), refers to accuracy in syntax and in grammatical forms of the language, as well as correctness of pronunciation and the ability to express the meaning by means of stress, rhythm and intonation. Likewise, it also contemplates the building of a range of vocabulary. However, unlike previous, more structuralist approaches that focused almost exclusively on these features, communicative competence also comprises proficiency in other features of the

language. For Hedge (2000: 66), these include pragmatic competence or the knowledge of the relationship between grammatical forms and functions and the ability to select the appropriate ones according to the topic, listener, etc. as well as the use of stress and intonation to express attitude and emotion. Discourse competence refers to the ability, among other things to take longer turns in discourse, use discourse markers and open and close conversations. Another key element is the competence to take risks using both spoken and written language by means of a range of communication strategies or strategic competence. Finally, Hedge notes that (2000: 56) to be fluent and capable of dealing with the information gap of a real discourse and answering with a reasonable speed in “real-time.” All these features that bring language acquisition closer to real, life-like use can be developed through the use of audiovisual resources.

### **3.3 Audiovisual resources in the classroom**

One of the main advantages of video is that it provides authentic language input. Movies and TV programs are made for native speakers, which means that the input that the students get is authentic (Katchen 2002: 5). Moreover, this sort of materials can convey local or international cultural subjects of interest that make learners use comprehension resources that they have developed through the acquisition of the first language to “predict information, infer ideas, and analyze the world that is brought into the classroom” (Canning-Wilson 2000:3). In real life, people use the language because they have a purpose for doing so; hence, students in the classroom must have a reason for using the language too. By using audiovisual resources, it is easier to foster desire to know more if they are already interested in the piece of information that is being showed in the English lesson (in this case the feature films and the stories told).

Steve Schackne (2002:5) claims that in order to arise that interest, teachers have to spend time generating interest in the introductory part of the exercise, because “interest leads to prediction, prediction based on expectation, and this in turn creates a purpose to confirm or deny predictions and expectations.” For this reason, the first step of this project (which will be explained in depth in the “pre-task” section) will be the film *Pay it Forward* itself, which will give them a reason for engaging with the language and the cultural content, showing them how students from a high school close to Las Vegas, Nevada behave and react when they are asked to do a project similar to

the one they will have to design later. This means that such media will be used as a springboard towards the main objective of this proposal: the acquisition of the key competences stated in the Aragonese Curriculum.

## **4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **4.1 Approaches and methods: Overview**

There have been a number of important methodologies that have influenced teaching and materials production as they changed and developed over the years. All of them tried to achieve the best results or learning outcomes in a given period of time and had universal claims, trying to describe their procedures for all learners around the globe (assuming that a “superior” method benefits all, regardless of how is subjectively perceived). According to H. Douglas Brown (2002: 11), method in this sense, was seen as a generalized, prescribed set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives, or a set of theoretically unified classroom techniques thought to be generalized across a wide variety of contexts and audiences.

However, the concept of method would eventually come under severe attack for its “positivist, progressivist, and patriarchal” view (Pennycook, 1989: 589). Many experts called the conceptual coherence and validity of method into question and lamented over our prolonged preoccupation with the unproductive search for the best method that would be the final answer.

The first of these methods was the Grammar-Translation Method, rooted in the formal teaching of Greek and Latin, which prevailed in Europe for many years. It consisted in learning a language through a detailed study of its grammar. The learner applied the rules of grammar in translating sentences and parts of texts from the mother tongue into the target language and vice versa. Then, a reform movement arose that translated into the so-called Direct Method. The new method ignored translation as a learning technique, refrained from using the learners' native language and, instead, emphasized oral practice and the use of the target language. The demand from language ability triggered by WWII resulted in two decades of research and new ideas on language pedagogy that climaxed with the Audiolingual Method. This new approach to

L2 teaching was rooted on contemporary ideas, on language and psychology, most notably on structuralism and on behaviorism, and it emphasized the oral proficiency by focusing on listening and speaking skills, and paid more attention to curriculum design. However, Audiolingualism, did not shake off the structural emphasis of previous methods and, from the 1960s onwards, it came under attack as, and structural linguistics were replaced by innatist and increasingly humanistic methods (Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response etc.), which were more focused on cognitive theory and the needs and abilities of the individual learner.

The disillusionment with the continuous shift in teaching method had two consequences. Apart from the eventual method renaissance mentioned above, the new tendencies were marked by the attention paid to curriculum design and by the emphasis on the human aspects of language teaching and learning – in this respect, the Modern Languages Project of the Council of Europe would be a determinant factor. The adoption of an increasingly social and semantic view of language learning and the change from an abstract view of language to one that fostered actual users and real-world language use, translated in a series of didactic innovations in Europe, Canada and the United States that promoted a deeper shift from structural to communicative approaches to language teaching and learning. This new framework showed a new concern with classroom management and how the choices made at the level of the class can endorse or curtail language acquisition.

## 4.2 CLIL

Very much in keeping with the Communicative approach is the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), because in a CLIL classroom the learners have to become active participants in their own learning using complex cognitive processes to acquire knowledge. Moreover, like the Communicative approach, CLIL provides a context for L2 use and acquisition. To put it in another way, it is, in the words of Mehisto *et al.* (2008:9) “a dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of content and language with the objective of promoting both, content and language mastery to pre-defined levels.”

Nowadays, the balance between acquisition of content and language has gained a lot of importance, because they complement one another in a natural environment:

non-linguistic contents are developed throughout the use of the foreign language, and the foreign language is developed throughout the contents of another subject. This is the reason why the aim of the task proposed is not going to promote only the acquisition of communicative competence in another language, but also the social and civic competence by raising awareness among the students about the significance of the empathy with other people and the desire to make this world a better place. That is, the focus will be not only on language and actual language use, but also on the raising of social awareness in line with the objectives contained in the article 11.2 of the Aragonese Curriculum, where the cross-curricular contents regarding tolerance education, peace and education for coexistence are set out.

## **5 METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED**

In order to define a clear set of procedures, contents and objectives, a clear methodological framework adapted to the characteristics of the students needs to be followed. The communicative approach will be used as far as possible, always taking the context into account, since there is a need for situation-specific ideas integrated in a general framework in order to respond to language learning and teaching needs, wants and situations, which are numerous and unpredictable (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:28). In other words, a context-sensitive approach will be taken into account that will go from practice to theory, given that as Bonny Norton notes (2000:142), “it is only by understanding the histories and lived experiences of language learners that the language teacher can create conditions that will facilitate social interaction both in the classroom and in the wider community, and help learners claim the right to speak”

This flexibility is also prescribed in the Aragonese Curriculum, and the methodology chosen must address the requirements and needs of all the students, being able to adapt itself not only to the different contexts, but also to the particularities of every single student. Accordingly, the project proposed here is designed with a view to setting up diverse communicative situations and the students will have to cooperate so as to reach agreements and solve problems while coming up with the final proposals. All these communicative situations will be developed in a relaxed atmosphere, which

helps develop positive attitudes towards the language and encourages students to take risks. These principles are also laid down by the Natural Approach, which, as described by Krashen (1985) emphasized a naturalistic use of language in communicative situations. This approach can also said to be closely associated with Krashen's own "affective filter hypothesis" which stated that the more relaxed the students feel, the more benefit from the input they get (Krashen, 1985). In line with this, some aspects of the Natural Approach will be employed in order to further promote acquisition by taking into account affective variables, such as motivation and self-confidence.

### **5.1 The use of L1 in the L2 classroom**

After the Teacher-Practice periods, I have come to realize that during the course and also, during the term-long project like the one proposed here, the use of the mother tongue can be helpful in some occasions, having thus, a place in an English classroom.

However, this view also has its disadvantages, which the teacher should understand, evaluate under the specific teaching context and bear in mind at all times. In secondary education, the main difficulty that may arise during an English lesson is that students may not be able to properly understand or use the target language. Hence, if they know that the teacher will switch to their mother tongue whenever they have a comprehension problem, they may get used to it and will no exert themselves to employing the comprehension and speaking resources they may have. Besides, unlike younger learners, students at this age might feel embarrassed to use another language in front of their classmates. After having considered this, I still believe that the best way of overcoming this barrier is to practice the target language with their English teacher and peers in a stress-free atmosphere. As far as class management is concerned, a common problem with students at this age is the lack of discipline that they sometimes show. When a situation like this arises, teachers normally resort to L1, since it appears to be more effective as far as classroom control and management are concerned (something that I also found myself doing while implementing the learning unit). There is no doubt whatsoever that the main language in the English classroom should be English, but I do not think that teachers should become obsessed with speaking only English. As it has been said before, the use of L1 could be considered on those situations in which it will

not hinder neither the acquisition of the L2 or the development of language learning resources in any way.

There are ample investigations carried out by teachers about their classes, students and programs. The results of these studies show that the approaches rejecting the use of L1 can be sometimes detrimental for students. Auerbach (2000:28) lists five main advantages of the use of the mother tongue in ELT by reviewing some practitioner researches:

- ❖ Using L1 opens classes to learners who know little English.
- ❖ Using L1 attracts underserved populations, such as students who previously dropped out of classes.
- ❖ Using L1 improves retention and progress in English.
- ❖ Using L1 encourages communicative, learner-centered approaches.
- ❖ Using L1 at school supports the cultures of families in which parents do not speak English.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to be objective and see the two sides of the coin, since using L1 in class can make it more demanding for learners (and for teachers) to use the target language in a communicatively competent way. In other words, both, teachers and students may get used to it and thus, as I have said previously, the effort of using English will become bigger. For instance, this habit can lead to the word-for-word translation, which is in fact one of the most common mistakes among non- native users of English. It is for this reason that Luke Prodromou (2000:5) said that “the use of the mother tongue in the classroom is like a drug, although it has therapeutic potential, it can damage our health and may become addictive”.

The role of the mother tongue in second language learning is still the subject of much debate and controversy and, to this day, completely opposite ideas from different scholars reflect this situation. Luke Prodromou (2000: 7) refers to the mother tongue as a “skeleton in the cupboard”, meaning that until recently, the mother tongue in the L2 classroom has been treated as a “taboo” subject. However, I agree more with the metaphor used by Costas Gabrielatos (2001:6), who calls it a “bone of contention”, referring to the fact that there are many differences in opinion over the question and so far, no one has come up with the final answer. It is a grey area where nothing is black or white.

We, as future teachers, should be flexible and reflective about our teaching (before, during and after the lessons), because, depending on the position we adopt in each situation, we will be either supporting or limiting the possibilities of our students both to learn the language and to develop autonomous learning resources. As a result, before teachers have recourse to translation, they have to evaluate other techniques and be certain that they either would fail or are inappropriate for the specific situation at hand. Hence, teachers should not switch to L1 immediately after they notice a lack of comprehension. Instead, they should employ different techniques like demonstration or verbal explanation in order to help their students understand. In line with these principles, if similar problems arise during the implementation of the project, I would recommend, for example, to rephrase in order to produce a comprehensible input for the students, to support the explanations with pictures or even gestures, etc. Herein I am taking the side of Phil Hawks (2001:100) when he says that the “mother tongue should be selective and not seen as just an easy option”. What is more, teachers should be extremely careful when using L1 because, as was noted above, it could hinder the resources to learn a language that students bring to the L2 classroom.

## **5.2 Communicative approach**

Unlike native language learners, second language students vary in age, motivation learning styles and previous language learning experience. That is, unlike the first language, which is the vehicle for communication in a social context, the second language is primarily learned in the context of the classroom, which is characterized by a limited exposure to the target language and the lack of a real need to use it. This is why even though the communicative approach attempts to reproduce in the classroom the conditions that guarantee that the use of the target language mirrors the use outside the classroom (thus preparing the learners for future life-like challenges), we must not forget that the classroom always conditions language use. As a matter of fact, some scholars like Balasubramanian Kumaravadivelu (2006) have called into question the supposed authenticity of CLT as the constraints posed by classroom instruction cannot ensure real life-like communication.

Taking this into account, teachers should prompt communicative situations which are as similar to real life as possible, overcoming – or regardless of – the



limitations imposed by the actual teaching conditions. Hence, for this purpose, a thorough understanding of the characteristics of real communication is necessary before we attempt to set up similar situations in the classroom.

### *5.2.1 Communicative classroom*

As may be seen, the communicative approach has brought about a number of changes that have led to a shift in the type of practice found in the English classroom. Interaction in unpredictable and uncontrolled situations is now encouraged over repetitive use of the language and theoretical issues are made to emerge from some kind of hands-on practice. In this way, cooperation and real comprehension are brought to the fore. It also gives learners the opportunity to work out naturally and start formulating their own questions. Because of this emphasis on interaction, groups and seating arrangements are a key element of the communicative classroom, which is why pair, group and collective activities, with the emphasis on completing the task successfully through communication with others rather than on the accurate use of form, are the driving force. During these activities the roles of both, the teacher and the students, will vary. For instance, some of the roles adopted by the teacher will be to facilitate and then to monitor the outcome of the activities, without unnecessary interruption, and then to provide feedback on the success or otherwise of the communication and, possibly, on the linguistic performance of the learners in the form of post-activity error correction. As for the students, they adopt a wide number of roles during the communicative classroom: self-learner, team member, knowledge manager, etc.

In terms of the organization of the lesson, the classic presentation, practice and production model, where careful input of a particular structure is typically followed by increasingly less controlled and freer practice, is likely to be replaced by a more task-based approach, where elements of linguistic competence emerge from barley controlled, communicative practice ( and not the other way around) That is, learners are given a communicative task which is monitored by the teacher and then their language use while performing the task is fine-tuned by the teacher in a lesson stage which focuses on error correction or on a particular form that is causing difficulties. This is typically followed by a further task-based stage, where the initial task is repeated or a similar task is performed, ideally with a greater degree of linguistic accuracy than during the first attempt.

The kinds of materials employed also change with more emphasis being given to authentic materials, because by using them, students develop in the classroom the skills that they are going to need outside it. That is to say, the materials selected involve language that occurs naturally in communication among native speakers: real newspaper reports, for example, real magazine articles, real advertisements, cooking recipes, horoscopes, etc.

Concerning the four macroskills, all of them (reading, writing, listening and speaking) “have to be considered conjointly as they interact with each other in natural behavior” (Nunan, 1989:22). Inside the classroom, as in real life, most tasks of any complexity involve more than one macroskill. There may be occasions when one is simply listening, reading, speaking or writing to the exclusion of the other. Nonetheless, there are many other situations where a number of skills are interwoven into a complex language activity. There is an emphasis on both receptive skills and productive skills in the communicative classroom. However, it is understood in language acquisition theory that receptive skills (e.g., listening/reading skills) often precede and provide the foundation for productive skills (e.g., speaking/writing skills) even if all skill sets are taught somewhat in a dynamic, integrated fashion. Besides, while productive skills have traditionally been seen as a natural consequence of having learnt the language, in recent years a different approach dominates language teaching and learning. As Susan M. Gass has explained at length (2003), output should be regarded as an exercise in developing skills that can hardly be developed unless the learner is put in that situation. That is, output is now seen as a necessary task to develop communicative competence, and not simply a natural consequence of having learnt the more structural elements of the language.

As Christopher Brumfit noted (1984), unlike the communication envisaged by previous structuralist methods, communicative activities must rest on the unpredictability of language and on a negotiation of meaning, an idea reinforced by H. Douglas Brown, who highlighted the role played by negotiation of meaning and interaction, which, in his own words, are “the heart of communication” (2001:165). In real communicative situations there is, as Narahari S. Prabhu observed (1987), a gap in meaning that we endlessly bridge through the use of language. We receive and send messages, we interpret them and we collaborate to achieve a certain purpose. Moreover, the language used is unpredictable, and it is the speakers who choose the language that

they are going to use ( note that, in methods like Audiolingualism, for example, the language to be used was predetermined by the activities and, even in those cases in which learners engaged in conversation, the language was predictable, so there was no information gap as described by Prabhu or negotiation of meaning).

As I noted above, the classroom differs in a number of ways from the conditions of language use outside the classroom and these should also be taken into account if we want to maximize the acquisition of a second language. The most noticeable difference is the quantity and the quality of input speakers are exposed to in both situations. In this respect, Stephen Krashen's (1985) work is worth mentioning, since students should be given the opportunity to be exposed to input which is comprehensible in order to acquire the second language and, in line with Lev Vygotsky's Zone Proximal Development (1963), a bit beyond the learner's current level of competence. What is more, comprehension (and therefore acquisition) is easier if the topic of the discourse is familiar, because as Gass and Selinker also noted (2008:315), the students bring with them a set of beliefs about the world which allows an easier interpretation of utterances. Is for this reason that, the present project is based on a topic that students of secondary education may be already familiar with and that tends to be a focus of interest and motivation among them: a story developed in a high school from United States, where students with similar concerns as theirs are the main participants.

Similarly, the input will be varied and coming from different sources, not only from the teacher. Needless to say, the use of audiovisual media will make this easier to accomplish, since the input sources can be practically inexhaustible. However, receiving comprehensible input is not enough for the acquisition of a language, since the learners have to produce as well in order to make themselves understood, having thus the necessity to deliver a message, which is known as: pushed output (Swain, 1985: 248). This is why interaction will be the leading thread all along the course and, more specifically along the project. Besides it is a key tool for providing feedback to learners (output gives them the chance to verify their hypothesis when negotiating meaning with the teacher or their peers).

### *5.2.2 Communicative activities*

The activities and tasks designed by the teacher have to aim for the acquisition of the key competences. In order to do so, inside the English classroom the communicative

and social potentials of language have to be promoted, and, as Widdowson notes (1978), language teaching should move away from an emphasis on the “usage” of sentences in isolation to a concern for the “use” of sentence in context. Because of this, this term-long project will be based on the teaching of language in context (a relatively modern film with well-known actors that is based on a real social movement celebrated nowadays all around the world). Furthermore, meaningful interaction will be a key element, giving them a real communicative purpose (for instance, defend a personal project interacting regularly with their groupmates, reflecting on the type of interactions they will engage in outside of the classroom).

The idea is to fulfill some of the necessary conditions to stimulate real communication, which Hall (1995) summarizes as: to have something to communicate; someone to communicate with and some interest in the outcome of communication. Moreover, materials should give students the opportunity to integrate all the language skills in an authentic manner.

### *5.2.3 Groupings students*

In the theoretical framework section, an overview of the different methods and approaches of English Language Teaching has been provided, where it is has been proved that as years went by, the methodologies changed as well. The same happens with the way in which the classrooms are organized. In fact, as Harmer notes (2007: 114) “there is no real limit to the way in which teachers can group students in a classroom, though certain factors such as over-crowding, fixed furniture and entrenched student attitudes may make things problematic.” Before the advent of communicative approaches, instruction used to be teacher-fronted, with all students isolated and facing the teacher, which favored the group rather than the individual and where everyone was forced to work at the same pace. For this reason, many students hardly participated, being the teacher the one speaking most of the time. However, on the other hand, this agreement reinforces the sense of belonging to a group and makes it easier for the teacher to give explanations and instructions.

As teaching became more individualized and communication competence was brought to the fore, seating arrangements changed too, with more emphasis given to pair- and group-work as a way of fostering cooperative a collaborative learning. As a result, as Long underlines (1990), there is an increase in the target language used by the

students, more opportunities to individualize the instructions and a greater motivation for learning. The focus point of CLT, as was already stated, is on meaningful interaction through the use of spontaneous speech during pair and/or group work, where the language is considered a tool for communication which allows mutual comprehension among those who use it. For this reason, several group arrangements have been selected for this project so the students are able to interact with their classmates in different ways: individual activities to develop certain sub-skills in a more deliberate and personal way through the webquest; whole class discussions when presenting the projects, pair and group work in order to design the proposal.

Arranging the groups is not an easy task, since the choices and decisions made depend on many different factors. Harmer (2007) organizes them in terms of:

1. The task: If the teacher wants to explain something or give clarifications, it would be more appropriate to keep the class as a whole group because it would be more effective and a time saver as well. However, if interaction is the central point of an activity, small groups would be the best choice.
2. Variety in sequence: As has been previously mentioned, motivation is a key element in ELT and grouping can help to sustain it. Any activity is not an isolated case, but part of a sequence. This means that the teacher can change the group arrangements making the students rotate in order to provide them with several, and thus, more learning opportunities.
3. Mood: Every context is different and so are the students, which means that depending on how they are or how they feel that day, the group arrangement may vary.

It is essential to be flexible in order to know how to react or cope with some situations that may arise when arranging the groups. Because of this reason, it is important to invest some time to plan those groupings like teachers do when they design every lesson. One of the most important things in the decision making process is to know our learners as much as possible. Taking this into account, I found interesting to consider Harmer's methodology to arrange individual students in pairs or groups (2007: 120):

1. Friendship: It is better to make learners work with people who they get along with.

2. Streaming: Have a mixture of the most outstanding students with the weaker ones. However, it is also interesting to arrange them in terms of level so when monitoring the groups, it is easier to provide them the specific help that they need. Another way of streaming them is in terms of participation, because a group containing less participative students will force them to interact more between them in order to accomplish the task.
3. By chance: This would be the easiest way to group students, since it needs no previous preparation whatsoever. Another advantage of this procedure is that we foster the nature of cooperative work because of its arbitrariness.

#### 5.2.4 *English skills*

As prescribed in the official documents such as the Aragonese Curriculum or the CEFR, and as it has been already mentioned in this document, all the skills have to be practiced in an integrated way. Nonetheless, this is sometimes difficult to achieve, and the activities will be more focused on some of them than on others. Besides, a given individual never has equal mastery of the different skills of the language in question (for example of oral and written skills, or of comprehension and interpretation compared to production skills), something that will result in the teacher selecting a certain type of tasks depending on each situation.

Regarding the proposal of this document, given that the starting point will be a film, it is clear that during its showing, the listening skill will have more prominence, even though English subtitles will be also displayed, which means that the reading skill will be present too. However, final stages of the project writing and speaking skills will be promoted as well, since learners will have to submit a written assignment explaining all the steps followed (based on a guide provided by the teacher) and make an oral defense in groups in front of the class. Nonetheless, it is impossible for teachers to teach their learners all the language they need to know in the short time that they are in the classroom. In addition to teaching valuable new language skills, it is essential that language teaching materials also provide learners with strategies for individual learning, giving them the opportunity to take advantage of the chances to learn the language outside the classroom.

### 5.3 Task-Based Language Learning

In Ellis' words (2003: 9), "if learners are to develop the communicative competence they need to use a second language easily and effectively in the kinds of situations they meet outside the classroom, they need to experience how language is used as a tool for communicating inside it." In order to accomplish this, a task-based approach seems to be the most suitable means, because learners need to elicit samples of language use that are representative of how learners perform when they are not attending to accuracy.

There are a number of approaches regarding task-based instructions that, Peter Skehan (2003) summarizes in four major blocks:

1. Psycholinguistic approach to interaction: It has been highly influenced by Michael Long's (1983, 1989) writings on the role of interaction with respect to the negotiation of meaning, where the interactional adjustments that learners make to address such difficulties serve to induce their interlocutors to modify the input they are providing. That beneficial negotiation of meaning will be led by tasks, although as Aston notes (1986: 132) those requiring a lot of negotiation of meaning may irritate the students and thus, the relevant feedback provided by that negotiation may not be realized
2. Sociocultural approach to interaction: In this case, there is no particular concern with negotiation of meaning. On the contrary, it is assumed that the interest in a task is to allow participants to shape it to their own ends and to build meanings collaboratively that are unpredictable and personal.
3. Cognitive perspectives: These are focused on the psychological processes typically engaged in when learners do tasks. These perspectives explore how performance can be affected by task characteristics and task conditions.
4. Focused tasks: This approach regards tasks as vehicles for learners themselves to set the agenda during interaction, and as a result, obtain feedback at points of interlanguage development that is relevant for them. From such a viewpoint, the tasks: enable but do not predispose the use of a particular structure, they are more effectively conducted if a particular structure is used; and force the use of a particular structure.

For this project, a task-focused approach will be followed, or more precisely, a task-based instruction that enables the use of a particular structure, since it has the advantages of a task-based approach (which is more appropriate for the development of the communicative competence) and at the same time it has the characteristics of a systematic and planned instruction.

## **6. PROPOSAL: PAY IT FORWARD PROJECT**

### **6.1 Justification**

The ability to communicate is known to be the most important goal that communicative language teaching aims to reach. According to Abbs and Freebairn (1981) the ability to communicate consists in being able to operate effectively in the real world, and in order to achieve that purpose, students need plenty of opportunities to practice language in situations which encourage them to communicate their needs, ideas and opinions. The task proposed meets these features, since the learners will have to share their opinions and ideas to reach an agreement about the project and later defend those decisions in front of their classmates.

In order to do this, they will have to interact with each other, something that, as it has been already pointed out, is of the utmost importance, because students can increase their language resources as they listen or read authentic linguistic material (in this, case interviews, forums and official webpages provided by the webquest) and also as they engage in communication with other classmates (Rivers, 1987). Through this interaction, Ellis says (Ellis, 1984:95), “the learner can infer what is said even though the message contains linguistic items that are not yet part of his competence and also when the learner can use the discourse to help him/her modify or supplement the linguistic knowledge already used in production.”

Furthermore, as has been already pointed out in the introduction section, using audiovisual media and ICTs promotes students’ motivation, something that will make them be more focused on the task, which is a key fact, because as Gass and Selinker, 2008: 298) point out, “attentiveness and involvement are necessary for successful communication”. It has been proved that motivation facilitates language acquisition as well, since students with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low



level of anxiety, have a lower affective filter, being those learners thus, better equipped for success in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1985)

It is a well-known fact that audio-visual materials are a great help in stimulating and facilitating the learning of a foreign language. According to Andrew Wright (1976:1), many media and many styles of visual presentation are useful to the language learner. That is to say, all audio-visual materials have positive contributions to language learning as long as they are used at the right time and in the right place. In the language learning and teaching process, learners use their eyes as well as their ears, but their eyes are instrumental in learning. Rivers (1981:399) claims that seeing clearly contributes to the understanding of another culture by providing indirect contact with speakers of the language, through both audio and visual means. This contribution supports the fourth block of contents prescribed in the Aragonese Curriculum: *Sociocultural aspects and intercultural awareness*.

In recent years, the use of video in English classes has grown rapidly as a result of the increasing emphasis on communicative techniques. “Being a rich and valuable resource, video is well-liked by both students and teachers” (Hemei, 1997:45). Students like it because video presentations are interesting, challenging, and stimulating to watch. Furthermore, video shows them how people behave in the culture whose language they are learning by bringing into the classroom a wide range of communicative situations.

## **6.2 Task description**

As is has been previously mentioned, this project proposes a term-long activity prompted by the film *Pay it Forward* (Mimi Leder, 2000) whose objective is to engage the students in a task that can be enriching not only for their competence in the second language, but also for creating positive attitudes towards the target language and the culture and developing self-esteem. What is more, this activity allows students to become a positive force in their community. Its time frame will be the whole course; the viewing of the movie will be the starting point and it will culminate with the personal pay-it-forward-project that students will design in groups of four.

Hereunder, a general outline of the proposal will be provided, followed by an in depth description of every step that should be followed before, during and after the project.

This project will be divided into three main phases:

<b>Pre-task</b>	Viewing of the film <i>Pay it Forward</i> (Appendix I)
<b>Task</b>	Webquest: Learning more about the <i>Pay it forward</i> movement (Appendix II)
<b>Post-task</b>	Final project: Follow the <i>Pay it forward</i> chain

PREPARATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ For this project, students should be warned about the exact idea of what we expect from them and what they should do all along the course, since they may not be used to carrying out tasks of this length.</li> <li>✓ Design a webquest so the students get involved in the <i>Pay it Forward</i> movement and collect helpful information before starting with their own project.</li> <li>✓ Prepare the guidelines of those aspects that we want our students to take into account in their proposals.</li> <li>✓ Provide the students with the assessment rubrics that are going to be used to evaluate their work.</li> </ul>
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The film <i>Pay it Forward</i> will be watched in class during two sessions approximately (123') in original version with English subtitles, and students will be asked to skim the plot and take notes of aspects that they found interesting or that they have not completely understood. Another session will be devoted to a class debate where students will have to share their opinions and discuss any doubt that they might have.</li> <li>✓ Once per week, a whole lesson will be carried out in the computer's room where students in pairs will have to complete an inquiry about the <i>Pay it forward</i> movement in the form of a webquest.</li> <li>✓ Finally, students in groups of four will have to design a project bearing in mind the idea of one of the characters in the film: the pay-it-forward chain and the information collected while completing the webquest.</li> <li>✓ This project will be handed in in paper and further</li> </ul>

	presented orally in front of the teacher and the other students of the groups.
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### 6.2.1 Pre-task

The aim of this first activity is to arouse the students' interest in the topic of the future project, which is a key fact if we want them to be engaged and have a reason to communicate. During the viewing of the film, (two sessions of 50'), students will work in a pattern of individualized learning so as to achieve the learning outcomes stated below. The reason of this class arrangement is that it is likely to be less stressful for students and allows them to fully enjoy the film. Moreover this kind of group arrangement is a "vital step in the development of learner autonomy" (Harmer, 2007:115). Concerning the third session, a whole-class grouping will be adopted in order to involve them in the same activity (a debate), giving them points of common reference to talk about and providing opportunities to bond with each other.

Regarding the timing, one of the disadvantages of working with feature films are their length. In this case, the film lasts 123', which means that two whole sessions of 50' and part of a third one will be devoted to its viewing; leaving the remaining part of the lesson for the debate. Even though this is the time preset, it is difficult to predict the exact amount of time that a task or explanation will last. Moreover, that timing may also be affected by external factors that are not under the teacher's control. For this reason, teachers should be flexible and adapt to any situation that may arise when developing the activity.

<b>Viewing of the <i>Pay it Forward</i> film</b>	<u>Timing:</u> 3 sessions of 50'
<u>Objectives:</u> The aims of this task will be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To skim the plot of the film in order to get the main idea.</li> <li>2. To identify words or expressions which are unfamiliar and write them down.</li> <li>3. To use gestures, body language and nonverbal clues to decipher the role of the characters</li> </ol>	

<p>and their goal.</p> <p>4. To develop and give their opinion about the <i>pay it forward</i> chain.</p>	
<p><u>Materials:</u> <i>Pay it Forward</i> (Mimi Leder, 2000)</p> <p>Producers: Warner Bros, Bel Air Entertainment and Tapestry Films</p>	
<p><u>Procedure:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are explained that they are going to watch the <i>Pay it Forward</i> film and, while doing so, they should take notes because at the end of the course they will have to design from scratch a project based on one idea from a character starring the film.</li> <li>2. The film will be played during two sessions and part of the third one (123'). From the outset, there will be no interruptions, unless the teacher considers it necessary.</li> <li>3. The next lesson will be devoted to a whole group debate where different aspects of the film will be discussed, such as the plot, the different characters, the implications of the idea proposed by the main character and some other facts that may arise during the activity. Moreover, in case of doubts, part of the lesson will be focused on solving any comprehension problems that the students may come up with.</li> </ol>	<p>Group disposals</p> <hr/> <p>Individual work</p> <hr/> <p>Whole class discussion</p>

### 6.2.2 Task

Before starting to design their own projects, students will be given some guidance regarding the topic of their assignment. In order to do so, once per week a lesson will be carried out in the computer's room, where students in pairs will be working on a previously designed webquest.

As it has been already mentioned on previous sections of this dissertation, to make use of varied group arrangements can be very enriching for students, since it provides them with more learning opportunities, which is why this task will be carried out in pairs, as it allows students to interact independently without the necessary guidance of the teacher, although he/she will be monitoring the whole process.

Moreover, cooperation is promoted, which makes the classroom a more relaxed and friendly place (Harmer, 2007: 116). These pairs will be formed following the students preferences previously asked in a one-minute-paper. Nonetheless, the pairs will change every lesson so they can rotate and work with other students. Those rotations will be done in terms of streaming; in other words, mixing the learners depending on their levels. However, the most outstanding students will not be coupled with those who have the lowest level so the former does not have to work below their capacities and the latter one is not discouraged.

As far as the timing is concerned, the task will be carried out during 6 sessions of 50'; that is, one session per each of the four steps of the webquest (Appendix II) previous to the final project design (step 5). Since it is probable that the students do not have enough time to complete each step in one session, a fifth one has been added. As for the sixth session, it is meant to be focused on the posters design (the task described in step 4 of the webquest)

<b>Webquest: learning more about the pay-it-forward movement</b>	<u>Timing:</u> 5 sessions of 50'
<p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <p>The aims of this task will be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To cooperate in pairs to gather the information requested on a webquest about the <i>Pay it forward</i> movement.</li> <li>2. To scan different webpages in order to look for specific information related with the <i>Pay it forward</i> movement.</li> <li>3. To skim several real stories about the <i>Pay it forward day</i> in order to infer the main ideas and capture them in a poster.</li> <li>4. To listen to some interviews with the writer of the novel or the actors performing in the film and infer their attitude towards this movement and their relation with it.</li> </ol>	
<p><u>Materials:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Computer's room</li> <li>-Webquest previously designed by the teacher</li> </ul>	
<u>Procedure:</u>	Group disposals

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The activity will be developed in the computers room. The first session students will be given the explanation on how to use a webquest and what is expected from them in that task.</li> <li>2. During the remaining time of the first session, learners will start answering the questions proposed in the Step 1 in pairs.</li> <li>3. The following three sessions will also be devoted to answer the webquest's questions (steps 2, 3, 4 and 1 in case they did not finished during the previous lesson)</li> <li>4. The fifth session will be carried out on the computers as well so the students are able to finish their research and complete the webquest, since all the activities will count for their final marks.</li> <li>5. Once the webquest in completed, a further session will be added so the students are able to design the posters (Step 4)</li> </ol>	<p>Pair work</p>
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### 6.2.3 *Post-task*

As it has been said before, the project will be carried out all along the course, combining it with the course plan. Because of this, the time spent on the final part (the design of the students' project) will depend on their working pace, which is why the timing will be quite wide (6 months). From the beginning of the course students will be informed about the process and the different steps that they have to follow, providing them with more controlled tasks like the webquest. However, once those activities are finished, they will have the liberty of managing their own time and cooperate with the members of their respective groups so as to complete the assignment. With these sort of tasks, two of the key competences are fostered: *learning to learn* and *autonomy and personal initiative*.

For the final project, students will have to work in groups of four, which provides them with real interpersonal interaction. One of the advantages of this group arrangement is that the number of learners is not so small that members are over-reliant upon each individual (Harmer, 2007: 117). These groups will be formed by two of the pairs that worked together during the webquest tasks (one of the four possible combinations). In order to decide which are the couples to work together, the teacher

will prepare a sociogram (Appendix III), where the students, based on their experience during the previous activities, will write on a piece of paper the partner or partners that they would like to work with and those with whom they would not like to work again. Then, the teacher will be able to make choices about how to pair up the groups.

<b>Final project: follow the pay-it-forward chain</b>		<u>Timing:</u> 6 months approx.
<u>Objectives:</u>		
The aims of this task will be:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To cooperate with the members of the group so as to make decisions or solve possible problems in order to accomplish the task.</li> <li>2. To design a personal project that could be included in the pay-it-forward chain following the guidelines provided in Step 5 of the webquest (Appendix IV)</li> <li>3. To make a Power Point presentation explaining the project to their classmates.</li> </ol>		
<u>Materials:</u>		
-Webquest (so as to consult the guidelines and assessment rubrics for the written assignment and the oral presentations)		
<u>Procedure:</u>		Group disposals
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students gather in groups of four following the methodology described above.</li> <li>2. Using the information gathered throughout the pre-task and task steps (viewing of the film and the webquest activities) they will have to design a project on their own.</li> <li>3. That project will be handed in in form of written assignment taking into account the guidelines provided by the teacher.</li> <li>4. In groups, a Power Point presentation will be prepared and used during an oral presentation where the different groups will describe their project to their classmates and the teacher (who will be evaluating them according to the oral presentation rubric also attached to the webquest</li> </ol>		Group work (4 people)

### **6.3 Assessment: Tools and grading criteria**

“Any language test is a procedure for gathering evidence of general or specific language abilities from performance on tasks designed to provide a basis for predictions about an individual’s use of those abilities in real world contexts” (McNamara, 2000: 11)

It is of the utmost importance to know which our objectives are, so that the appropriate assessment instruments are selected in order to elicit evidence that verifies if our students are able to communicate in the second language. For this project, a number of performances have been planned and interpreted to make claims about the students’ abilities. However, it is difficult to guarantee that in real communicative situations the learners will perform as good or bad as they did during the assessment.

The main task to be evaluated is the final project designed by the students according to a criterion in the real world, more precisely a project, where students have to design a proposal of their own choice in order to help other people of their community. For this matter, three rubrics have been designed, one for the written assignment that the learners will have to hand in at the end of the course (Appendix V) and two further rubrics for the oral presentation, one for the students (Appendix VI) to encourage them to share in responsibility for assessment, in line with McNamara’s proposal (2000), and another one for the teacher (Appendix VII). The intention of this test is to measure the student’s proficiency to derive evidence and see how they would to cope in real life (for instance, when they have to defend a personal project at work). Furthermore, the activities carried out in the webquest will also count for the final mark (Appendix VIII)

Regarding the grading criteria, it has to be taken into account that this dissertation is only a proposal and that it will not be implemented in the classroom, which is why the grading criteria proposed below are just a possibility. However, I consider that establishing grading criteria can make the process of grading more efficient and consistent, which is why I decided to include them in my



proposal. Furthermore, providing these criteria to students can help them perform better and prevent confusion or frustration about their grades.

As has been pointed out above, this project, in the event of putting it into practice, would be part of a whole course plan, which means that all the tasks described on the previous section would be only a fraction of the final mark, which will be composed of other tests and performances. Considering this, the grading criteria followed for this project would be:

GRADING CRITERIA				
<b>Pay it forward project</b>  <b>60%</b>	Webquest	20%		<b>Other possible tests</b>  <b>40%</b>
	Project	40%		
		Written assignment	Oral presentation	
	30%	10%		

## 7. CONCLUSION

Languages are not fixed, but constantly changing, and so are the audiovisual resources, which are an extraordinary source of language in use. Hence, the use of this technology needs to be exploited as much as possible so as to expose foreign language learners to the target language. For that reason, the use of technology and its integration into the curriculum developed by foreign language teachers has gain great importance. Particularly, the use of video has received increasing attention in recent studies on technology integration into teacher education curricula (Özkan, 2002:1). Still, teachers should encourage the learners to watch the films actively, by using the supplementary materials, such as worksheets prepared by him/her or supplied with the films. Furthermore, the learners should participate in the activities, if possible, or elaborate projects in the target language like the one proposed in this dissertation.

Moreover, it is of the utmost importance that we, as future teachers, promote autonomous learning and personal initiative, because learning is a never ending process.

Hence, learning strategies are a key element for learners, because they help them to consciously control how they learn so that they can be efficient, motivated, and independent language learners (Chamot et al. 1999). This is the reason why this project provides the students with autonomy in order to carry out a term-long project, giving them the opportunity to organize themselves. Moreover, teachers are no longer the only source of information, which means that they are not anymore the only source of knowledge, but helpers that guide the students in their process of constructing the knowledge and develop the competence in L2 use. In other words, all the sources available to foreign language teachers are only a means to improve language competence, not an end in themselves. Bearing this in mind, the audiovisual media are thus, only one of those options. However, due to their variety, to introduce them in the communicative classroom can be very enriching but also very challenging, because these media should not be used simply to entertain the students whilst filling up class time (something that happens regularly in secondary education). Instead, they should be employed “discretely, for specific and concentrated periods of class time” (Canning-Wilson, 2000:4) during which “learners should be actively engaged” (Lonergan, 1995:6) and should be integrated with other activities.

This project is just one of the almost inexhaustible options available to move forward to the acquisition of the key competences that the students are going to need in the future and to achieve a successful learning, because, as Ellis put it (2003:10), “the goal of theory and research in SLA is not to direct teachers how to teach, but rather to advance a number of “provisional specifications” that teachers can try out, adapting them to their own particular teaching context.”

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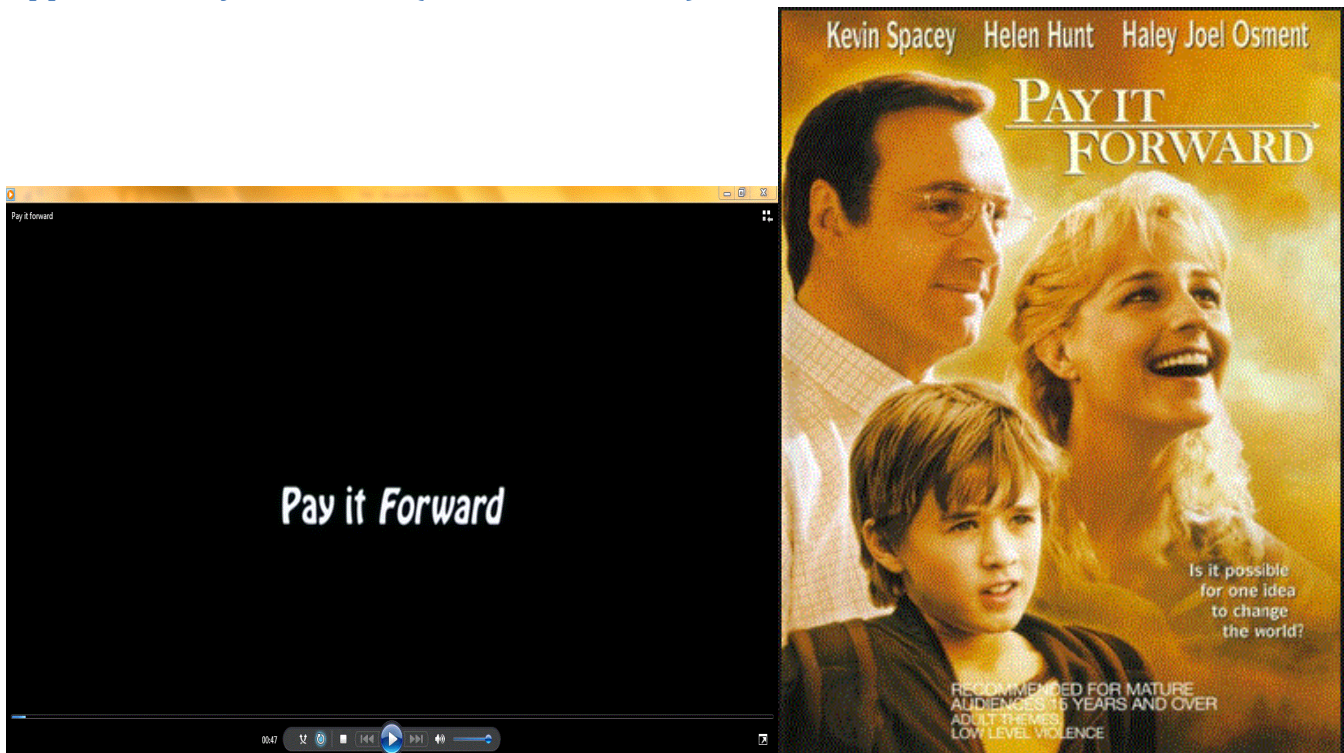
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## 9. APPENDIX

### Appendix I: Pay it Forward (Mimi Leder, 2000)



### Appendix II: Webquest

**PAY IT FORWARD**

Dream big... start small

1. INTRODUCTION  
2. TASK  
3. PROCESS  
4. EVALUATION  
5. CONCLUSIONS  
6. WORKS CITED

SOMETIMES THE SIMPLEST IDEA CAN MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE.

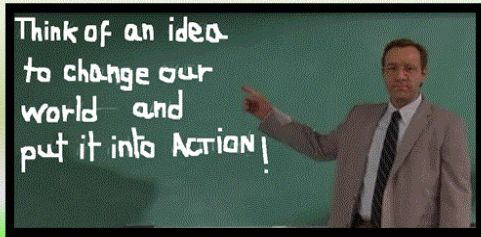
PAY IT FORWARD  
HAVE YOU HEARD?

## 1. INTRODUCTION

What if the world is just a big disappointment?

Unless...

You take the things you don't like about this world and flip them upside down. You can start that TODAY!



## 2. TASK

Your Invitation to Pay it Forward

Your task will be to think of a project in small groups of four that could be included in the *Pay it forward chain*, like the one we saw on the film.

Remember that at the end of the semester you and your group will have to present your idea and convince everyone to carry out your proposal

## 3. PROCESS



Even though you are working in groups, first you will have to do some research on your own to get familiar with the *Pay it forward movement*. Then, in pairs, your job will be to put together all the information collected:

1. Investigate how did the *Pay it forward day* started.
2. What are the rules if you want to participate
3. Select 3 inspiring real stories
4. What have other schools around the world done?
5. Design your own proposal

## STEP 1

How did the *Pay it Forward day* started?

Each partner will investigate two of the resources provided. After exploring the Web pages individually, get back together in pairs and answer the questions below

### RESOURCES

- ✓ Who founded the *Pay it Forward day*?
- ✓ Is the movement based on a previous event? A film? A novel? Someone in particular?
- ✓ What do the actors in the film think about this?
- ✓ Who is Catherine Ryan Hyde? Has she something to do with this movement?

Catherine Ryan Hyde, a lucky novelist:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLxEMN-N-Kuc>

Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt and Haley Joel Osment  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wi-FaogSM>

Have you met Blake Beattie?  
<http://www.blakebeattie.com/aboutUs.php>

About the day  
<http://payitforwardday.com/>

## STEP 2

Get familiar with the rules and participate!

Now that you know about the existence of this day, explore several webpages to figure out which are the rules and sort of things you can do for this day. Assign each partner two different websites and get together to answer the questions below:

### RESOURCES:

- ✓ What is the concept of this day?
- ✓ How can you get involved?
- ✓ What do you have to expect in return?
- ✓ What kind of things or favors can you do?

Weekend notes:  
<http://www.weekendnotes.com/how-to-celebrate-pay-it-forward-day/>

Kind activities:  
<http://payitforwardday.com/media/articles/>

Join whenever you want:  
<http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/>

<http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/how-to-get-involved/>

## STEP 3

Do you like what others do?

Read through some real stories that people have done for others and select the three that you liked the most in order to answer the following questions in pairs

### RESOURCES:

- ✓ Why did you select those stories in particular?
- ✓ What was the reaction of the people who received the favor?
- ✓ Would you have reacted the same way?
- ✓ Would you have done it differently? How?

Moving stories:

<http://fox2now.com/2013/02/07/pay-it-forward-mother-son-feed-hundreds-of-kids-in-jeffco/>

<http://payitforwardday.com/inspire-me/inspiringvideos/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orz0Xmx6b3g>

<http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-stories>

## STEP 4

### What acts of kindness do schools carry out?

It is time for you and your pair to check what other students like you have done in their schools. Perhaps you come up with an idea to your project but...be careful! You cannot use exactly the same one

Each member of the pair has to read individually at least 3 experiences from different schools all around the world. Then, you will select four from those six stories and advertise them in the school by creating a poster where the main idea of each experience will be written to inspire other students

#### RESOURCES:

<http://payitforwardday.com/get-involved/schools-universities/participating-schools/>

[http://payitforwardday.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/PIFD\\_Schools\\_Kit\\_2012.pdf](http://payitforwardday.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/PIFD_Schools_Kit_2012.pdf)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McD\\_P92UtMc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McD_P92UtMc)

## STEP 5

### Now it's your turn!



Now that you are already familiar with the movement, let's check how far you can get. In the same groups of four, you have to create your own proposal for the *Pay it forward day*.

Before you start designing, check the guidelines [\[here\]](#) for the written assignment.



## 4. EVALUATION

All along the process, you will be evaluated according to some criteria which will be encompassed in two different rubrics, one for the different [webquest](#) activities and another one for the [final project](#).

Moreover, the [oral presentation](#) of your proposal will also count for the final mark and remember that your peers will be evaluating you as well according to the following [criteria](#)



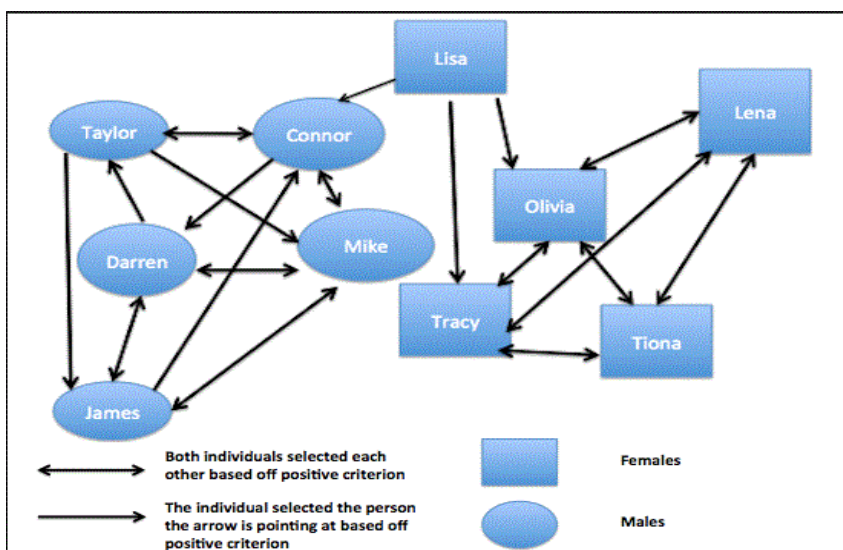
## 5. CONCLUSION

"Acts of kindness change people: small acts of kindness change people in a small way and big acts of kindness can change the course of a person's life entirely. But big or small...I have never seen it fail"

Catherine Ryan Hyde



### Appendix III: Example of possible sociogram



## Appendix IV: final project guidelines

1. Front cover of the document

2. Table of contents

3. Introduction:

*A few sentences describing the assignment giving a sense of what the project involves*

4. Purpose:

*Describe in the aim of your proposal. What do you want to achieve. Why is it interesting*

5. Contextualization:

*Where would be the project carried out. In which conditions*

6. Description of the proposal

7. Advantages and drawbacks

8. Final conclusion

9. Works cited

10. Appendix

## Appendix V: written assignment rubric

CATEGORY	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Adequate (2)	Needs improvement (1)
1. Ideas and development	The paper is clear and focused. It is developed in depth and counts with convincing arguments	The paper is quite clear and focused. It is well developed and counts with some arguments	The paper is partially clear. It is somewhat developed and counts with a couple of arguments	The paper is not clear. It does not show any development and lacks convincing arguments
2. Word choice and terminology	The document counts with well-chosen words to convey the argument in a clear, precise, highly readable way	The document counts with words that are accurate and make the argument clear	Most words in the document are reasonably accurate and make the argument clear on a general level	The document counts with words that are inappropriate for topic and purpose
3. Participation in preparation and presentation	Always willing and focused during group work and presentation.	Usually willing and focused during group work and presentation.	Sometimes willing and focused during group work	Rarely willing and focused during group work and presentation
4. Achievement of purpose	Purpose is clearly established and effectively sustained.	Purpose is clearly established and generally sustained	Purpose is established but may not be sustained.	Purpose is vaguely established and may not be sustained.
5. Imagination and creativity	Choices demonstrate insight and powerfully enhance the project	Choices demonstrate thoughtfulness and completely enhance project	Choices demonstrate awareness and acceptably enhance the project	Choices demonstrate little awareness and do not enhance the project.

Appendix VI: peer assessment rubric

FINAL PROJECT'S PRESENTATION PEER ASSESSMENT						
GROUP MEMBERS	Gave an interesting introduction	Presented clear explanation of the topic	Presented information in acceptable order	Maintained the interest of the class	Spoke clearly, correctly, distinctly and confidently	Maintained the interest of the class
Group 1						
Group 2						
Group 3						
Group 4						
Group 5						

Appendix VII: oral presentation rubric (teacher)

CATEGORY	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Adequate (2)	Needs improvement (1)
1. Organization	It is well organized, moving from general topics to specific details; provides a good explanation of the work.	It is usually well organized, moving from general topics to specific details; provides a quite good explanation of the work	It is somewhat disorganized and provides too much detail without giving a good explanation of the work.	It is disorganized and deals completely with details without providing a broad explanation of the work.
2. Volume and inflection	Speech was clear and with an appropriate volume and inflection	Speech was quite clear with an almost appropriate volume and inflection	Speech was not very clear but comprehensible.	Speech was not clear with unsuitable volume and inflection
3. Participation in preparation and presentation	Always willing and focused during group work and presentation.	Usually willing and focused during group work and presentation.	Sometimes willing and focused during group work	Rarely willing and focused during group work and presentation
4. Achievement of purpose	Purpose is clearly established and effectively sustained.	Purpose is clearly established and generally sustained	Purpose is established but may not be sustained.	Purpose is vaguely established and may not be sustained.
5. Arguments and viewpoints	Convincing communication of character's role, feelings and motives	Competent communication of character's role, feelings and motives	Adequate communication of character's role, feelings and motives	Limited communication of character's role, feelings and motives
6. Audience interest	The audience was highly interested during the whole performance	The audience was interested almost during the whole performance	The audience was not very interested during part of the performance	The audience was not interested in the performance
7. Visual aids	Contains visual aids that help audience understand work; visuals are easily understood	Contains visual aids that somewhat help audience understand work; visuals are, in general terms, easily understood	Contains few or inadequate visual, being poorly used in making points	Contains no visual aids or visual aids are so poorly constructed as to be worthless.
8. Imagination and creativity	Choices demonstrate insight and powerfully enhance role play	Choices demonstrate thoughtfulness and completely enhance role play	Choices demonstrate awareness and developing acceptably enhance role play	Choices demonstrate little awareness and do little to enhance role play

Appendix VIII: webquest rubric

CATEGORY	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Adequate (2)	Needs improvement (1)
Focus and organization	Clearly describes the main idea, develops a thoughtful understanding, and shows commitment to the activity	Describes the main idea, develops a quite thoughtful understanding and shows certain commitment to the activity	Describes part of the main idea and develops a superficial understanding	Does not describe the main idea, or develop a thoughtful understanding.
Organizational content	Information is clearly written in a logical sequence and is well organized	Information is more less clearly written in a quite logical sequence and well organized	Information is ambiguous in areas and lacks clarity and organization, in multiple areas	No organization, no logical sequence to thoughts and opinions. Thoughts and opinions tend to ramble.
Research	Excellent use of research used throughout writing. Detailed facts from research are found throughout writing	Adequate evidence to support the use of research. Facts from research can be found in multiple areas of writing.	Minimal evidence to support use of research in writing. Only a few words from research are present in writing.	No evidence to support use of research in writing.
Use of internet(links provided)	Successfully uses suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance	Usually able to use suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance	Occasionally able to use suggested internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance	Needs assistance or supervision to use suggested internet links and/or to navigate within these sites

