
TRABAJO FINAL DE MÁSTER [MODALIDAD A]

Máster en Profesorado de
Educación Secundaria
Obligatoria, Bachillerato,
Formación Profesional y
Enseñanzas de Idiomas,
Artísticas y Deportivas

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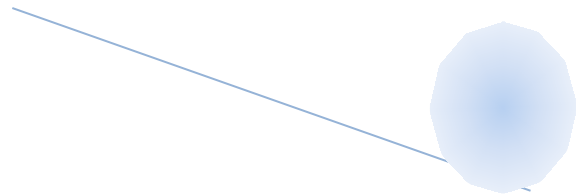
JUNE, 2013



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PROLOGUE

The present dissertation corresponds to the TFM, which closes the period dedicated to the Fourth Edition of the “Máster Universitario en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanzas de Idiomas, Artísticas y Deportivas”, offered by the University of Zaragoza in the school year 2012-2013.

The structure of this dissertation accurately follows the provided guidelines in the teaching guide¹. The dissertation is structured in four sections.

1. *Introduction*: This section aims at making an approach to the teaching occupation after doing some literature review and hand in hand with the experience in an education centre, according to the internship projects I, II and III.
2. *Project selection and justification*: this section will be addressed to the justification of the chosen projects for the realization of this TFM which will be analysed in the following section.
3. *Critical reflection on the projects*: In this section, the already selected projects will be subject of inquiry, and connections and similarities between them will be established.
4. *Conclusions and future proposals*: This last section will reflect the drawn conclusions resulting from the analysis process. Furthermore, the future prospects for this profession would be commented from a personal viewpoint, as a future aspirant to be incorporated to the field of education. This section, which represents the corollary of this project, has a double purpose: it represents the finishing touch to this formative stage and it also establishes a critical and reflective standpoint about my personal conception of the prospects built around the teaching occupation.

¹ See [s.n.]. Trabajo fin de Máster (68500) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013. [Consulted: 14th May 2013]
<<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68500/index11.html>>

This dissertation aims at, on the one hand, providing a reflection on the knowledge and skills acquired in the Master and, on the other hand, at opening a path for a long-life learning process and reflection about the different issues related to education.

I. REFLECTION ON HOW THE TEACHING PROFESSION IS INSERTED IN THE CURRENT SOCIETY

["Teachers are the key actors in whatever strategy which aims at launching the development of the society and economy"]

(Reding, V. (2004) Euridyce)

Currently, there is a widespread debate among European politicians concerning how to offer high quality education to the youth. The profession profile and the appeal interest of the teaching occupation have an outstanding place in the dialectic about education in Europe. Since the Modern School Movement emerged more than a hundred years ago, politicians have been making attempts to continuously adapt Educational systems to the society's new necessities and the evolution and development of knowledge.

As a consequence of the acceleration of social, economic and technological changes, the expectations for an innovative education have disseminated during the last thirty years. These expectations have had a huge impact in the vast majority of the Educational systems and particularly, in their actors and actresses, who perform in the teaching and learning process. That is, the teachers. Innovations, as seen in the subject *"Evaluación e innovación docente e investigación educativa en el ambito de la especialidad de inglés"* are related to the organization of the learning process, the curriculum and management and administration of educative centres. As a result of it, the first decade in the XXI century represents a key period in educational politics.

European educational systems need to adapt both to the knowledge society demands and to the need of improving the level and quality of the different occupations. Therefore, the increase of efficacy and equity of education is a prior interest for the European politicians.

However, to effectively accomplish their task, they have to face some risks and pitfalls: the scarcity of teachers, the aging of the profession and the emotion of the teaching occupation being underrated, which negatively affect the quality of

education in several ways. For sure, teachers play an essential role to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

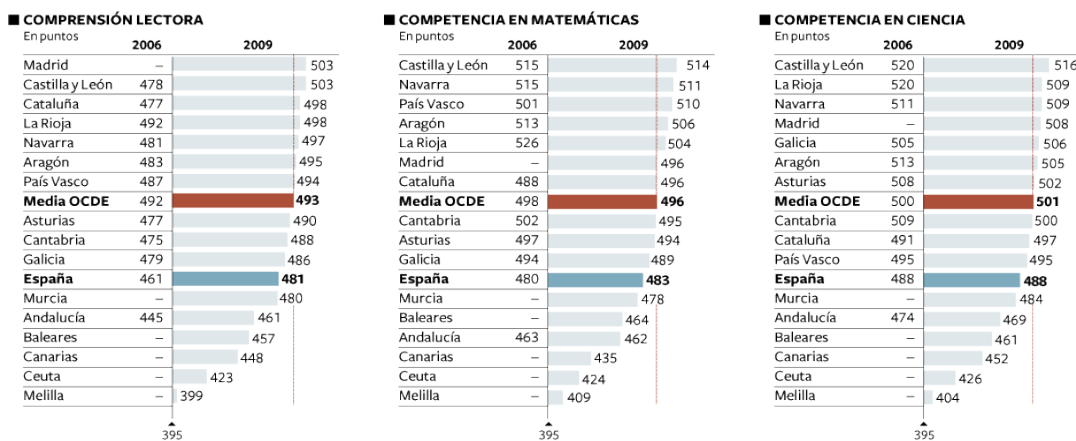
With reference to Eurydice² (2004), three are the arduous tasks educational authorities must cope with: Firstly, succeed in attracting a sufficient number of teachers to take the initial academic training; secondly, to plan and organize this initial academic training in a way that eases the required skills for the teaching profession in order to achieve already established quality standards. Lastly, to offer competitive enough working conditions to sustain teachers' motivation all throughout their professional career. It can be read between the lines that for most politicians in educational matters, it is a never ending challenge to have a sufficient number of competent and motivated teachers during their careers. For this reason, there is a special emphasis in the improvement of the initial academic training and in the working conditions.

In last few years, Europe has passed new laws in an attempt to homogenize education between European countries; a clear example is the European Common Framework for Languages (2002). Nevertheless, there are still noticeable differences among countries' teaching methods and styles. Numerous studies and researches place their focus of attention in Finland, owing to their academic success and teaching policy. Unfortunately, moving to the case of Spain, figures are not so optimistic. According to the PISA report³ (2010), Spain is the European country with the highest rate of individuals between 15 and 29 years old who neither study nor work. What is more, according to this PISA report, Spain does not reach the average mark established by the OCDE (see chart 1.1)

² EURYDICE (2004) *La profesión docente en Europa: perfil, tendencias y problemática. Informe IV. El atractivo de la profesión docente en el s.XXI* Vol 3. Bruselas: Eurydice

³ INSTITUTO DE EVALUACIÓN. (2011). *PISA-ERA 2009 Programa para la Evaluación Internacional de los Alumnos. OCDE. Informe español*. Ministerio de Educación: Madrid. Extraído de <http://www.mecd.gob.es/dctm/ievaluacion/internacional/informe-espanol-pisa-era-2009.3.pdf?documentId=0901e72b80d5a81e>

Chart 1.1: Results of the PISA report in Spain



Fuente: PISA 2009. Programa para la Evaluación Internacional de los Alumnos OCDE. Informe español. Ministerio de Educación. EL PAÍS

Our society is changing, and so are doing the current generation’s prospects about the future, as expressed in one of the document “*tiempo de transformación*”⁴, approached in the subject “*Interacción y convivencia en el aula*”⁵, It is undeniable that nowadays, students consider the acts of studying and learning a waste of time without any utility. They are too often used to sitting in a desk and listening to six hours of theory which has no connection with reality and no linked practice. Then, they must sit exams and wait for a grade which will determine whether they are apt or not. Students find no relevance and/or utility to what is taught at schools. They think what they learn is not useful for real life, that is has no utility for their lives. Even more, they are witnessing how people with excellent qualifications fail in finding a job. Consequently, they are realizing that high qualifications do not grant a labour future, and provided that it does, this future will not be as good as they expected. Due to the aforementioned, this master places most of its weigh in teaching strategies to motivate students. For instance, the subjects of “*Procesos de enseñanza- aprendizaje*”⁶ and “*Interacción y convivencia en el aula*” provide tips, clues and keys for so doing, as they are more than concerned with the need of motivating students.

⁴ IZCOVICH, M. (2005) *Tiempo de transformación*. Madrid: Editorial síntesis

⁵ See [s.n.]. *Interacción y convivencia en el aula*(68502) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013. <<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/ asignaturas/68502/index11.html>

⁶ See [s.n.]. *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje* (68503) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013. <<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/ asignaturas/68503/index11.html>

Because of this, going to school becomes a duty for most students, which has an effect on their behaviour and motivation. After some research on this topic for the subject "*Prevención y resolución de conflictos*"⁷ I found that, in the past few years, there have been several reports of assaults to teachers in different high schools. During the school year 2011-2012, the number of assisted teachers has risen up to 3.3352, as indicates the "Defensor del pueblo"⁸. Approximately, the 42% of the phone calls in all Autonomies correspond to Secondary teachers. The most impressive piece of information is that some parents were the aggressors. In spite of the fact that there is high desire in the coordination between families and school centres concerning educative matters to achieve the same goals together, it seems that between families and centres a big gap has been created. Besides, this figures and data lead to think that discipline is no longer what it used to be. Furthermore, according to Guerrero, A.⁹ (1996), an author whose works were the basis of the subject "*Contexto de la actividad docente(sociología de la educación)*"¹⁰ there is certain reluctance between parents to comply with their parental roles; they are neglecting their function of educators. They require teachers to carry out that role, a function for which they have not been trained. Teachers complain about this new task, arguing and asserting it is not part of their commitment.

In addition to this new and unexpected function, teachers must face much more troublesome issues; due to the appalling hardship Spain is now undergoing and enduring, many fields and sectors have suffered spending cuts, being the most affected the Health and Educational sectors. As for education, the Annual Educational System report¹¹ (2012) remarks that in 2010-2011, the number of

⁷ See [s.n.]. *Prevención y resolución de conflictos (68508)* [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013. <<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68508/index11.html>

⁸ EL DEFENSOR DEL PROFESOR. *Informe del Defensor del Profesor sobre la conflictividad en las aulas durante el curso 2011-2012* Extraído de <http://www.eldefensordelprofesor.es/>

⁹ GUERRERO SERÓN, A. (1996). *Capítulo 5: Las funciones sociales de la educación*. En Guerrero Serón, A. (1996) *Manual de Sociología de la Educación* (pp. 103-117). Editorial Síntesis: Madrid

¹⁰ See [s.n.]. *Contexto de la actividad docente (68501)* [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013. <<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68501/index11.html>

¹¹ CONSEJO ESCOLAR DEL ESTADO (2012). *Informe 2012 sobre el estado del sistema educativo. Curso 2010_2011*. Ministerio de Educación: secretaría general técnica. Subdirección General de Documentación y Publicaciones

practicing teachers was of 683.975. Unluckily, in the year 2012 the Minister of Education, Jose Ignacio Wert, announced staff cutbacks, with 100.000 teachers being fired¹². He claimed that it would suppose a saving of 4.000 million euros per year. However, these figures are not realistic. In addition to this, this occupation has also suffered wage cuts. It all has a negative impact in teacher's motivation, as witnessed during the three internship periods (Prácticum I, II and III)¹³.

With regard to teachers' motivation, it must be said that they are always snowed under work. According to the Centre of Sociologic Research¹⁴, in 2013, the 62, 4 % of Spaniards think teachers are demotivated. Among their commitments, teachers must transmit knowledge and values and help students learn by themselves, create thinkers and even citizens. Nonetheless, many teachers regard it as impossible. It has been announced by the newspaper El Mundo¹⁵ (16th April, 2013) that the new education minister plans to increase the number of students per class in a 20%, what doubtlessly will have a great impact in: 1) The amount of time teachers can dedicate to each student, hindering the quality of education due to this students' negligence .2) Teachers' increment of work. 3) Possibility of teachers' stress arousal. Hence, teachers find themselves unable to effectively supply each student's needs and interests and carry out their duties.

More and more, teachers are demanded to become researchers. They are asked to come up with solutions to diminish the alarming figures of academic

¹² SÁNCHEZ DE LA NIETA, A. (2012, 17 de abril) .Ajustes de educación. ¿Un despido de 100.000 profesores. Recuperado el 30 de abril de 2013 de <http://www.intereconomia.com/noticias-gaceta/sociedad/un-despido-100000-profesores-20120417>

¹³ See [s.n.]. Prácticum I : Integración y participación en el centro y fundamentos del trabajo en el aula(68504) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013.

<<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68504/index11.html>

-Prácticum II: Diseño curricular y actividades de aprendizaje en Lenguas Extranjeras-inglés. (68616) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013.

<<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68616/index11.html>

-Prácticum III: Evaluación e innovación de la docencia e investigación educativa en Lenguas Extranjeras-inglés (68635) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013.

<<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68635/index11.html>

¹⁴ ANÓNIMO (2013, 11 de marzo) Según el centro de investigaciones sociológicas, el 62,4% de los españoles cree que los profesores están poco motivados. Recuperado el 14 de mayo de 2013 de http://www.teinteresa.es/educa/espanoles-cree-profesores-motivados_0_880713765.html

¹⁵ DÍEZ SOTERO, P (2013, 16 de abril).Educación propone subir un 20% el número máximo de alumnos por clase. El Mundo, p. Recuperado el 14 de mayo de 2013 de <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/04/15/espana/1334517724.html>

failure. Furthermore, they are demanded to reflect on new teaching methods to increase students' motivation, being task-based and project-based teaching the most acclaimed options, as an effort to connect the knowledge to be taught with the real world; In other words, to make the learning process relevant and useful for what students will find once being part of the society. But, how are teachers supposed to cope with all these tasks? The bureaucracy does not help either. It is not the time they spend on thinking about new teaching alternatives, it is also the time they waste creating the documents which reflect their teaching plan. For such reason, a course book seems to be the ideal choice, as everything had previously being planned and created by publishers. All they have to do is follow that course book and let students get bored. The same problem can be found in the school's bureaucracy; as learnt in the subject "*Contexto de la actividad docente*" with the help of Bernal's work (2006) "*Comprender nuestros centros educativos*¹⁶", by law (LOE, 2006), each centre has to have certain compulsory documents which must be reviewed each year. Reality unveils that although many centres compile them, they are not truly necessary and their writing becomes a waste of time. Teachers are part of the staff who designs those documents, what takes time from what really deserves it, improving the quality of education.

The last aspect to comment on is the training teachers receive. Some years ago, a person who had a career on whatever field could become a teacher in three months by enrolling the CAP course. Three years ago, it changed. A great concern in training competent teachers sprang. Resulting from this concern, this course known as "CAP" disappeared, giving place to a one year master. However, the problem is that teachers are not trained for reality, for what they will truly find at centres; that is, there is little resemblance between theory (what trainee teachers learn) and praxis (what really happens and takes place at schools).

Owing to all the aforementioned aspects, anyone cannot doubt about the extremely urgent necessity to change the basis of the educational system in Spain.

¹⁶ BERNAL, J.L. (2006) *Comprender nuestros centros educativos*. Zaragoza: Mira

However, the new law that has been approved and will be applied in a short term, LOMCE, does not seem to be a satisfactory solution.

II. JUSTIFICATION OF PROJECTS' SELECTION

This second section aims at providing a description as well as a justification for each of the chosen projects to subsequently make a thorough analysis concerning the existing relationship between them.

For this dissertation, only two projects have been selected which were made during the second term of this Master. These two projects are:

1. Unit of work :*"Houses of the future"*
2. Innovative project: *" Teaching Spanish as a foreign language for immigrants: creation of a magazine following a task-based methodology"*

With reference to the **unit of work**, a compulsory task for the subject "Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del ingles"¹⁷ it must be said that it was implemented in the second grade of the IES Ramón Pignatelli during the internship period "practicum II". Its choice is justified due to the following reasons:

- ❖ It follows a task-based methodology as an attempt to use real materials and a communicative approach, in order to practise real oral and written language, avoiding the use of text books. Hence, it was designed following a practical and global approach where all skills are integrated and tackled in every session.
- ❖ All the unit of work is coherent; sessions make a chain and all of them refer to houses and the future, a topic students are already familiarised with. Therefore, it intends to provide meaningful learning, appealing to students' previous knowledge and experiences and making them aware of how the different

¹⁷ See [s.n.]. Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del ingles (68564) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013. <<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68564/index11.html>

contents tackled in this unit are related, by providing models. (Ausubel, Novak, Hanesian ,1983)¹⁸

- ❖ Cooperative, group and pair work are the basis of this unit of work. In order to practice real language in real contexts, students had to work in groups and use the English language as their communication tool. There were also whole group tasks, for instance, the negotiation of classroom rules as an attempt to involve students in formulating norms and rules. (Dörnyei, 1994; 2001)¹⁹. Students were arranged in groups bearing in mind their different levels. As a result, groups were heterogeneous so that no one gains the upper hand when making contests. Using these kinds of arrangements is beneficial to foster the social and interpersonal competence.
- ❖ It has motivation as one of its foundations. According to Tapia, A. (2005)²⁰ and Dörnyei, Z. (2001)²¹ a good teacher needs to be able to attract students' interest and sustain it throughout the learning process. Hence, this unit of work intends to provide new information which is relevant and useful as well as tasks which are a challenge for students, in to supply their needs for achievement and self-efficacy (Dörnyei, 1994; Tapia, 2005) which could be achieved through scaffolding. Scaffolding *"is a process of 'setting up' the situation to make the child's entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role the students as he becomes skilled enough to manage it"* (Wood , Bruner J & Ross ,1976)²²
 - There is no final exam yet a final task to be evaluated in which all the contents seen throughout the unit of work need to be applied. This final

¹⁸ AUSUBEL, D. P., NOVAK, J. D., HANESIAN, H. (1983): *"Psicología educativa. Un punto de vista cognoscitivo"*. México. Trías Ed.

¹⁹ DÖRNYEI, Z. (1994) *Motivation and motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom*. The Modern Language Journal, Vol. 78 No 3 (autumn, 1994) pp 273-284

DÖRNYEI, Z. (2001) *Motivational strategies in the Language classroom*. Cambridge: CUP

²⁰ TAPIA, A. (2005). *Factores del entorno que facilitan la motivación por aprender* in TAPIA, A (2005) *Motivar en la escuela, motivar en la familia*. (pp 96-189) Madrid: Morata

²¹ DÖRNYEI, Z. (2001) *Motivational strategies in the Language classroom*. Cambridge: CUP

²² WOOD D, BRUNER J & ROSS G (1976) *The role of tutoring in problem-solving*. Journal of scaffolding children's talk and learning 18 Child Psychology and Psychiatry 17/2: 89-100

outcome has the 50% of the weight in the final mark. Moreover, each session has been thought in a way that marks and/or grades can be extracted from each of the tasks. Therefore, students have more opportunities to success in their learning process and feel more comfortable with evaluation. The aim is to lower students' anxiety towards evaluation and feedback and to gain self-confidence (Dörnyei, 1994). A low affective filter is desirable in the learning process (Krashen, 1982)²³. Consequently, evaluation is continuous and formative. Punishing students is not the aim of this unit of work whatsoever, but make them crave for learning this target language and feel their efforts are praised.

- Students are told what the final outcome of each task should be but not the way in which it should be done. In other words, students have freedom to choose the path that suits best their learning styles. (James, Gardner, 1995; Wollfolk, 1999)²⁴
- All tasks aim at promoting thinkers and at enhancing students' creativity. It is undeniable that in most cases, students are not active participant of their learning process. They are more than used to being commanded, always told what to do and how, hindering their creativity, imagination and reflection capacities. Thus, tasks go little far beyond their possibilities (i +1) (Bruner, 1973²⁵; Krashen, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978²⁶; Dörnyei, 1994; Tapia, 2005) so that students have a clear established goal to reach.
- Students' comments and suggestions are always taken into account, as we desire active them to be active participants of their learning process. (Ausubel, 1982²⁷; Bruner, 1988²⁸) In both groups, a letterbox called "Suggestions; Can I help you" was installed so that students can introduce

²³ KRASHEN, SD. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon

²⁴ JAMES, W.; GARDNER, D. (1995). "Learning styles: Implications for distance learning". *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 67.

²⁵ BRUNER, J. (1973) *Beyond the information given*. New York: Norton

²⁶ VYGOTSKY, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

²⁷ AUSUBEL, D. P., NOVAK, J. D., HANESIAN, H. (1983): "*Psicología educativa. Un punto de vista cognoscitivo*". México. Trías Ed.

²⁸ BRUNER, J. (1988) *Desarrollo cognitivo y educación*. Madrid: Morata.(selección de textos por Jesús Palacios)

comments regarding anything they consider is worth mentioning. As a result, lessons are not fixed yet can be slightly modified in order to respond to the students' interests and needs.

As regards the **innovative project** for the subject "Enseñanza del español como lengua de aprendizaje para alumnado inmigrante"²⁹ it has been designed as an attempt to teach all kinds of texts genres following a practical approach and avoiding the use of the text book. Its choice is justified by the following principles:

- ❖ It responds to one of the current social concerns, the amount of immigrant students in Spanish schools. Due to the lack of funds, many centres have been forced to quit the services rendered by the administrations for this sort of students, as I could prove during the internship project. Consequently, these student's needs are neglected, abandoning them to their fate.
- ❖ According to Ignasi Vila (2004)³⁰, one of the main authors in this subject, the adolescence is a life stage which entails biological, social and psychological changes, with a great affective component. In the case of foreign or immigrant students, moving to another country means having internal duels and grieves. In most of the cases, there is a cultural crash. These students have to decide whether to renounce to their cultural origins and believes and adopt that's of the hosting country or, on the contrary, refuse to adopt that hosting country's culture and maintain theirs. That is to say, these students have to reconstruct their identity.
- ❖ In order to respond to the aforementioned concern, some of the ideas conveyed in the article "*Claves para seleccionar un itinerario constructor de identidades en el proceso de acogida y aprendizaje del español como segunda lengua*" (Calvo, 2011)³¹ have been taken as a reference. The design and creation of a school magazine consisting of different and varied sections can

²⁹ See [s.n.]. Enseñanza del español como lengua de aprendizaje para alumnado inmigrante (68599) [en línea]. [Zaragoza]: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2012-2013.

<<http://titulaciones.unizar.es/asignaturas/68599/index11.html>

³⁰ VILA, I. (2004). *Lengua, escuela e inmigración*. Conferencia inaugural de las IV Jornadas sobre Interculturalidad. Centro de profesores de Ejido. El Ejido (Almería). 28 de mayo

³¹ CALVO, V. (2011). *Claves para seleccionar un itinerario constructor de identidades en el proceso de acogida y aprendizaje del español como segunda lengua*. Ocnos,7,123-135. ISSN: 1885-446X

make profit of the cultural diversity found in a group. It could be a useful resource to help immigrant students reconstruct their identity by the means of literacy. Quoting Bruner (2002:85)³² *“through the means of narration we create and recreate identity, the self is a product of narration”*. For such reason, the literary discourse allows the teenagers put emotions at a distance, identify with characters and open him/herself to other worlds.

- ❖ The best way to acquire a language, as expressed in the article *“Integrating language and content: lessons for immersion”* (Genesse, 1994)³³ is by linguistic immersion. Immigrant students do not necessarily need to leave their reference groups to learn Spanish; they can do it through immersion. Besides, this idea is in agreement with one of the principles established in the current legislation (LOE, 2006: 17164)³⁴ *“La equidad, que garantice la igualdad de oportunidades, la inclusión educativa y la no discriminación y actúe como elemento compensador de las desigualdades personales, culturales, económicas y sociales, con especial atención a las que deriven de discapacidad”*
- ❖ Immersion provides many perks if it is done with correctness. To that end, it is necessary to create a real communicative context within the classroom, in this case, the creation of the magazine, with the aim of informing. In this sense, language becomes the tool to express both content and meaning. Students need freedom to experiment with the language without the fear of being constantly evaluated. Due to this last reason, a task based methodology seems to be the perfect methodology to approach the magazine. In these terms, the magazine would be the final outcome students have to produce, which is also divided into different smaller tasks. There are lots of leading figures in the teaching field who support this working methodology (Ellis, R. 2003³⁵; Larsen Freeman, D. 2000³⁶; Larsson, J. 2001³⁷; Richards, J. 2006³⁸;

³² BRUNER, J. (2002). *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

³³ GENESSE, F. (1994) *Integrating Language and Content: Lessons from Immersion*. NCRCDLL Educational Practice Reports, Centre for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence, UC Berkeley

³⁴ LEY ORGÁNICA 2/2006, DE 3 DE MAYO, DE EDUCACIÓN

³⁵ ELLIS, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford, New York: Oxford Applied Linguistics. [ISBN 0-19-442159-7](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022268903001597).

Estaire, S. 2010³⁹, Martín Peris, E. 2000⁴⁰; 2004⁴¹; 2008⁴²) According to their ideas, a “task” implies a final outcome which could not be simply linked to the acquisition of a language, yet the language acquisition can occur during the realisation of the task. Tasks also favour meaningful learning, as they integrate background knowledge students may have as well as appealing to their experiences, as well as enhancing their creativity and imagination. Even more, the content tasks dealt with are related to students’ interests and their close surrounding environment. Nonetheless, the best advantage this methodology offers is that language is approached globally and that takes into account students’ different learning styles, giving them freedom to choose the one which suits them best in order to accomplish each proposed task.

- ❖ The different sections the magazine may include need to be negotiated with students, to respect the competences of autonomy and self-initiative and learning to learn. The aim is that all sections appeal to students’ interests, as I have already mentioned. Even more, through the creation of the different section, all sorts of texts are tackled. Students can relate each type of texts with those texts they find in the different areas. In other words, by providing different models, students can retrieve the main characteristics of each of them and reflect on how those texts are related with other texts for academic purposes.

³⁶ LARSEN FREEMAN, D (2000) *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press

³⁷ LARSSON, J. (2001) *Problem-based learning: A possible approach to language education?*

³⁸ RICHARDS, J. (2006) *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge: CUP

³⁹ ESTAIRE, S. (2010) *Principios básicos y aplicación del aprendizaje mediante tareas*. Revista de didáctica español como lengua extranjera, ISSN-e 1885-2211. Nº 12, 2011

⁴⁰ MARTÍN PERIS, E. (2000). *Textos literarios y manuales de enseñanza de español como lengua extranjera*. Coruña: Universidade da Coruña.

⁴¹ MARTÍN PERIS, E. (2004) *¿qué significa trabajar con tareas comunicativas?* In redELE 2004 <http://www.mec.es/redele/revista/martin.shtml>

⁴² MARTÍN PERIS, E. (2008) *Diccionario de términos clave en ELE*: Madrid: Instituto Cervantes-SQUEL

- ❖ In the creation of this magazine, teachers can make profit of the diverse cultures and languages mingled in the classroom as an enriching element. As I have mentioned, immigrant students urge to reconstruct their identity. In these terms, students would not be asked or forced to abandon their cultures. On the contrary, they will be asked to, by the means of using Spanish, make us part of them.
- ❖ Finally, another principle which justifies the creation of this magazine is the intercultural education. Teresa Aguado, Inés Gil and Patricia Mata (2005) in their work “ *Educación intercultural: una propuesta para la transformación de la escuela*” ⁴³ declare themselves fervent supporters of the idea that cultural differences ought not to classify people yet be considered as something normal that has always been present. Interculturality accepts cultural differences as it favours the construction of a solid identity and gives the chance to extract as much learning as possible. In essence, educating is transmitting culture, no matter which one. Thus, the term “integration” must be abandoned and replaced by the term “inclusion”. In an inclusive context, as the one created for the magazine, all learners are accepted in terms of equality and recognised for what each of them has to offer to the educative community and concretely, to the realisation of this project. This project involves all the educative community, sharing a public space and working together to reach a common goal.
- ❖ The magazine would be developed in a transcultural context where all interests focus on the achievement of that common objective, without bearing in mind individual differences. Even more, this magazine has been thought to be created during the tutoring hours, as it is also concerned with the social and civic competence as well as the cultural competence.

⁴³ AGUADO, T; GIL, I; MATA, P. (2005) *Educación intercultural: una propuesta para la transformación de la escuela*. Barcelona: Catarata.

III. REFLECTION ON THE COMMON FEATURES OF THE CHOSEN PROJECTS

This third section aims at outlining the existing common features between the two aforementioned chosen projects.

As a brief introduction, it is necessary to specify that both projects have been designed bearing in mind how to foster students' autonomy in the learning process as well as their motivation. In other words, being aware of the great influence the learning to learning and autonomy and self-initiative competences have in students' motivation, these two projects expect to increase it towards the process of learning a second language, disregarding which language and students' cultures.

For such reason, this section intends to provide a thorough reflection on what learning strategies are, their contribution in increasing students' motivation and their essential role in enhancing students' autonomy as an indispensable condition for quality cooperative work, the last point to be discussed. Thus, it represents a personal reflection on how these elements interconnect in the learning process in order to respond to and correctly develop the learning to learn and autonomy and self-initiative competences.

One of the most currently widespread concerns whose importance is proliferating in the field of teaching is how to make students more self-sufficient. That is to say, how to enhance autonomous learners who can manage their own learning process and be self-sufficient outside the sheltered environment of the classroom. Students' perception of needs, knowledge of individual learning styles, ability to set goals, monitor the learning process, and carry out self-evaluation are all needed for independent learning. Investing some time in teaching learning strategies can deliver the pedagogical support students need.

Let's begin by clarifying what it is understood by the act of learning. Learning is the process of getting, storing, retrieving and using information. This definition seems to be in line with what constructivism leading figures know as "meaningful learning". This learning process is based in three principles:

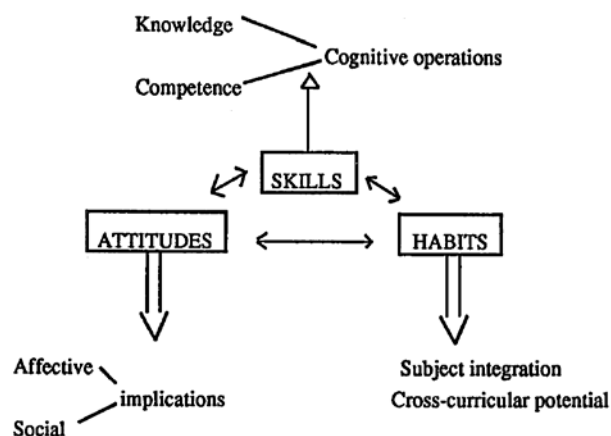
- I. *Knowledge*: it embraces the cognitive aspects of learning, that is to say, in the case of studying foreign languages, to focus on studying grammar as a tool, speaking, listening, writing, reading...
- II. *Competences*: They should be understood as making the use of language useful, using the aforementioned skills. They imply those competences that refer to real life, such as: *speaking in public, using the languages something social to communicate with others, giving opinions, controlling fear, working in groups, being a leader in their own lives, using mistakes as a learning step and so on.*
- III. *Developing values*: social and personal

These three concepts must be sustained through the development of three concepts, which will be outlined along this paper.

- I. *Consciousness*: The learner must be conscious of his /her own process of learning being aware of his /her own strengths and weaknesses.
- II. *Self-esteem*: The learner must feel capable of getting the goals he/she has in mind.
- III. *Responsibility*: Understanding responsibility as the ability to respond to any challenges.

These three aspects will lead to Compromise and results. Hence, learning strategies are required to effectively carry out this process.

First of all, a difference between study skills and learning strategies needs to be established. Luciano Mariani, one of the most concerned authors with learners' autonomy, defined in one of his first works the term study strategies: "[...] meant to be well accepted techniques



such as using a dictionary, taking notes, memorizing words, transferring information from verbal to non-verbal modes, and so on" (1991:16)⁴⁴. He supports the idea that the concept of study skills should be redefined. To pinpoint this belief, the attached picture sheds some light to the issue.

Learning strategies require practice. They cannot be learnt if not developed into some suitable *study habits*. They need to be continuous, maintained throughout time and be used and reused to be integrated into the student's learning style. To such aim, students need to first be conscious of their learning style. It cannot be argued that each student possess a personal learning style. History gives accurate evidence that different cultures value different learning behaviours. "*Teachers risk imposing a methodology on students that is inimical to their cultures*". (Ellis and Sinclair, 1989: 41)⁴⁵ This reference underpins one of the tenets which justify this paper, teaching languages disregarding students' origins as a pitfall. In other words, the great need for an inclusive school. Hence, teachers always must set as one of their prior objectives satisfying students' preferences.

Study skills are also affected by students' perceptions of the act of learning, what can also be called "motivation". It cannot be denied that the act of learning also encompasses both social and affective components. Learning cannot effectively take place if the student lacks in positive attitudes towards this act. Therefore, a teacher should know what aspects influence students' motivation.

Because this dissertation advocates for an inclusive school, there are some bare needs which do not vary from one culture to another, and thus, deserve to be commented, representing one of the keys for academic success.

⁴⁴ MARIANI, L. (n.d.) *Towards learning autonomy: From study skills to learning strategies*. Retrieved from <http://www.learningpaths.org/papers/fromskillstostrategies.pdf>

⁴⁵ ELLIS, G. & SINCLAIR, B. (1989). *Learning to Learn English: a course in learner training*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

As seen in the subject “*Interacción y convivencia en el aula*” in one compulsory reading [“¿Qué nos ha enseñado realmente la psicología social?”⁴⁶], there are four common bare necessities among teenagers. The first and most important one is the need of affiliation, of belonging to a group. This need is the key concept to justify why cooperative work contributes students’ motivation. However, the topic of cooperative work would not be discussed until the end of the reflection. The second need is the need of possessing a positive identity, what can be achieved through the process of literacy (reading and writing) as explained in the innovative project. The third need is the need of self-esteem, and last but not least, the need for peer recognition. According to Dörnyei (1994), the framework of motivation consists of three levels: language level, learner level, and learning situational level. Inside the *learner level*, he distinguishes two components: need for achievement and self-confidence, which correspond to the two latter bare necessities. To supply them, it is crucial to make students aware of their learning styles and subsequently teach them those learning strategies which suit them best.

Retaking the topic of learning strategies, a *learning strategy* is an action taken by the learner, which empowers him/her to be more autonomous. In this sense, the role of the teacher needs to be rethought. Furthermore, learning strategies are specific; they are a set of concrete activities that can be practiced in learning situations. Even more, learning strategies can be transferred to new situations. All learning strategies can be transferred across the boundaries of school subjects, having all groups of strategies a very high cross-curricular potential

Because learning strategies bring students the possibility to be highly more independent, they seem to supply two of the teenagers’ bare necessities already mentioned: the need for peer recognition, which as well connected to the need of self-esteem. If students feel they are more autonomous, their motivation increases, and their affective filter downgrades. Consequently, it also has an impact on students’ self-confidence, which includes two components: language use anxiety

⁴⁶ OVEJERO, A (2010). ¿Qué nos ha enseñado realmente la psicología social? En OVEJERO, A (2010). *Psicología social: algunas claves para entender la conducta humana*. Madrid: Biblioteca nueva (pp 44-55)

(the affective filter) and self-evaluation of L2 proficiency (Dörnyei, 1994: 277). The student believes that he has abilities to produce results, achieve aims and perform tasks competently. If students produce good results, then the need for peer recognition is also supplied, also linked to what Dörnyei calls the need for achievement.

There are five types of learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective and communication learning strategies. However, the focus will be placed on cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

On the one hand, *cognitive strategies* refer to specific tasks or problems. They encompass actions such as making a summary, skimming, scanning, etc. They are related to subject matter contents, as they imply experimenting with language in tasks. They are mainly unconscious strategies.

On the other hand, *metacognitive strategies* refer to general ways of managing learning. They imply reflection on how a task can be carried out. They are conscious, deliberate actions. (Mariani, 1991: 20)

Albeit having five groups of different strategies, these two seem to be the core of learning. Analysing both definitions, it creates the impression that metacognitive strategies come first, and cognitive strategies are dependent on them.

Their merger is what is known as *self-determination*: “*The notion of thinking in sense if reflecting, calculating, memorizing, predicting, judging and deciding*” (Barrow and Woods 2006: 98)⁴⁷ Reading between lines, this definition seems to pinpoint the notion of “meaningful learning”. Students are no longer passive recipients but the main characters of their learning process. Determined by their previous experiences and background knowledge, students should be able to personally judge and decide what items they would like to learn. In essence, students decide what knowledge is worth retaining according to its utility and relevance for their lives. This is, in Dörnyei’s and Tapia’s view, the first prerequisite to successful learning. Otherwise students would easily forget the

⁴⁷ BARROW & WOODS (2006) *An introduction to philosophy of education*. 4th edition. Oxon: Routledge

new knowledge and store it somewhere in their minds, having difficulties to recall it. Besides, it would also hinder students' motivation towards the act of learning, lacking in self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy, with negative connotations in the need for being achievement.

However, as already mentioned, to make learning strategies effective they need to persist in time, which can only be possible through training or study habits. If teachers want to teach learning strategies, the first and most important stipulation is to make students aware of their own difficulties, habits, attitudes, etc. In my view, this task can be done by making profit and slightly modifying some of the tools seen in the subject "*Procesos de enseñanza- aprendizaje*". Using one minute papers or creating rubrics containing those aspects the teacher is interested in could be serviceable for that goal. A reaction paper is also useful to check students' understanding of a concrete topic. I would personally add a new purpose, to make students write the followed process in the accomplishment of a task (if our goal is to check cognitive and metacognitive strategies). There are also fine materials, as the ones provided by Honey and Mumford (2006) in their work "*The learning styles questionnaire*"⁴⁸ which can also serve to that aim. Even more, as could be appreciated in my unit of work and also quoted in its justification, a letter box in which students could introduce comments or suggestions concerning any topic and in which discretion was a hundred percent guaranteed, can be a possible solution. This can also make a contribution to make students more confident and voice personal concerns that otherwise, they would have never felt brave enough to share.

Once students are fully conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, it is time to begin their training in learning strategies. Generally speaking, it cannot be argued that when students are pushed to develop a task, (e.g. making a summary), they have not got any clue about how to approach it. Some teachers take as given that students can manage the task and therefore, skip some essential steps. Provided that teachers' intention is students' success in the production of a final outcome, it is then compulsory to first explain and show students the procedure to

⁴⁸ HONEY, P & MUMFORD, A (2006) *The learning style questionnaire. 80- item version*. Berks: Peter Honey publications limited

be followed. To put it in another way, this process ought to be scaffolded, tasks must be graded in smaller tasks before producing the final outcome. Otherwise students would feel lost and will not produce the desirable result, thus not supplying the need for achievement necessity. Bearing this tenet in mind, both the unit of work and the innovative project contain tasks which are also divided into little tasks.

Teachers have to provide models as well, so that students have guidelines to follow. In this process of first judging how to approach a task, and then accomplishing it, both cognitive and metacognitive strategies work hand in hand. Teachers should dedicate as much time as necessary in making students reflect on how to carry out varied tasks and then, once decided the procedure, experiment with the language in the accomplishment of the task. Albeit at first glance it conveys the impression that this training is easy to do, in fact it is not so simple. Nonetheless, though the effect may not be perceptible in a short term, it has positive effects in a medium and long term. As already mentioned, this training in learning strategies is also serviceable for other areas; it has very high cross-curricular potentials. Because it implies a great amount of work for a single teacher, I would suggest higher levels of coordination among teachers. In their regular meeting, teachers can talk and decide what sorts of tasks they intent to develop with students. If each of the teachers focuses in one kind of task entailing concrete learning strategies and outcomes, time can be saved and students would sense that what they learn in one subject can be transferred to other subjects and tasks, making learning useful and relevant. This training must be sustained throughout their schooling in order to provide students with strategies and tools to cope with everyday issues, even outside the school.

This training in learning strategies according to each student learning style is also crucial for quality cooperative work. There is a growing tendency over the years to work cooperatively, owing to its numerous benefits and advantages. For such reason, the two chosen projects include this type of working as their foundations, to make lessons more learner-centred where the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator and a guide.

First of all, it must be highlighted that the notion of cooperative work is sometimes misunderstood. It is not a methodology yet a working philosophy. What is more, cooperative learning has to be understood not just like a method, but a didactic content itself; acquiring contents is not longer the prior aim, but the integral formation of the individuals. According to Pujolàs (2008: 191)⁴⁹ *“Cooperative work teams have a double end: to make all their members learn curricular contents, each of them to the fullest of their possibilities, and to learn to work in teams”* which leads to think that the act of learning must be rethought. Improving academic results, personal relationships, and increasing motivation are some of the advantages this philosophy provides. Thus, students have to be aware of these perks. Training students to work cooperatively is an arduous task, which likewise with learning strategies, their effects can be seen in a medium and long term.

Cooperative work also seems to support one of our current society demands, the need for an inclusive school. In an inclusive school, it is the school who adapts itself to the individuals, by managing the present heterogeneity in the classroom. As early as in the 1990s, Canevaro (1985) and Rué (1991) defended the richness of heterogeneity and the advantages of managing it. The society is diverse and we expect students to get along in heterogeneous communitarian environments. More current authors such as Teresa Aguado, Inés Gil y Patricia Mata (2005) also support the same assertion. In the innovative project, cooperative work allows foreign students to learn the Spanish language in a natural context, benefiting from the help of the autochthonous students. Hence, foreign students, through cooperative work, learn natural and academic language at the same time.

Nevertheless, to work cooperatively, there are some requisites teachers must take into account. Although the ideal principle would be to let students form groups according to their preferences, sometimes it is better to let the teacher arrange students. For that aim, quoting Pujolàs (2008:191), a teacher has to first get to know the students. In my unit of work, groups were always heterogeneous. Students from different levels were mixed so that any group gains the upper hand

⁴⁹ PUJOLÀS, P (2008). *Nueve ideas clave. El aprendizaje cooperativo*. Barcelona: Grao

and so that students with difficulties or a lower level could learn from those with a higher level. This sort of arrangement worked well. Another alternative is to scaffold the steps which lead to team-making. That is, according to Más, Negro and Torrego⁵⁰, some authors tackled in the subject “Interacción y convivencia en el aula”, students first arrange in pairs for a while, and, if the teacher notices pairs work well, go a step further and join two pairs, to make a team of four members. Subsequently, this new team needs to share roles and learn some abilities (cooperative, problem-solving and assistance abilities). This new arrangement should last, for instance, a term, so that students begin relying on each other. If teams success, the last step is to maintain them in order to achieve a higher efficacy in their performances. Then, following this procedure, students are the ones who choose whom they would like to work with by first choosing one partner and then joining with another pair. Consequently, this procedure agrees with one of the cooperative work tenets, group cohesion. Students feel at ease with their partners, and they all work for the achievement of a common goal, the production of a high quality outcome.

Cooperative work demands a great level of autonomy from students. As Pujolás asserts, “*We cannot work in teams if students do not know how to work in teams*” (Pujolás, 2008: 217). Students have to take a role in the team or group, which will vary within time. Even more, students have to have some abilities and techniques to be able to pacifically solve those problems which may arise in the course of a task accomplishment.

Cooperative work is strongly connected to learning strategies, in the sense that they are indispensable for learners’ autonomy. Because each student has a role in the team, it is necessary, as already mentioned, to make them aware of the strengths and weaknesses, to check how each individual can contribute to a group. Even more, it is necessary for students to know their learning styles in order to choose those metacognitive strategies which suit their learning style and

⁵⁰ MÁS, C., NEGRO, A. (Coord) AND TORREGO J.C. (Coord) (2012) *Creación de condiciones para el trabajo en equipo en el aula*, in ⁵⁰ MÁS, C., NEGRO, A AND TORREGO J.C. (2012) *Aprendizaje cooperativo en las aulas. Fundamentos y recursos para su implantación*. Alizanza (pp 105-137)

subsequently, decide which cognitive strategies implement in the production of an outcome.

Going a little further, I would suggest that cooperative work could also be used to train students in specific learning strategies, giving it a new scope. Because cooperative work is a didactic content itself which embraces multiple abilities, students can be trained during the tutoring hours. During the practicum periods, I had the chance to attend some of the teachers' meetings concerning the tutoring hours. Two aspects must be voiced. Teachers showed reluctance for their tutoring hours, claiming students are not interested in them and thus, preferring to do nothing. Even more, they also asserted that cooperative and group work was not possible to be developed in lower levels due to each group's characteristics. In my opinion, because students can appreciate their tutors' lack of motivation, they lack in motivation as well. Nevertheless, when implementing the unit of work, students seemed to be enthusiastic with the idea of working together. For such reason, I would recommend using the tutoring hours to work on learning styles, learning strategies and cooperative work abilities. One possibility is, as a first task, hand in some questionnaires or tests to students, for instance, the ones mentioned from Honey and Mumford (2006), to make them and the teacher aware of their learning styles. Once the teacher is aware of how his/her students learn, students could be arranged in groups according to their different styles. To put it another way, students with the same learning style form one group. This would facilitate the task of showing students those learning strategies which suit them best, and the tasks of close monitoring and feedback providing would be much easier, taking less time. Even more, students can share their own learning strategies and learn ones from the others, another tenet of cooperative work. Teachers should invest some considerable time in this training, because it is one of the foundations for quality cooperative work, and as already stated study skills need to be maintained in time through good studying habits.

If students are aware of their learning styles and trained in learning strategies during these tutoring hours, the rest of subject would benefit from it. Now, the teacher, possessing some knowledge about how students work best, he/she can

arrange them in different heterogeneous groups. Each of the groups would be consistent of students with different learning styles, so that a task can be approached in different ways. Students can also appreciate their peers' learning styles. Because cooperative work entails students learning from their peers, they can share those learning strategies they have been trained in, and adopt those they think can suit them, although they are not specific of their learning style. Then, the teacher is no longer the teacher but a guide and a facilitator. Through this process of sharing knowledge and accomplishing tasks, students also gain in confidence and the group cohesion is perceptible, supplying the most important of teenagers' bare necessities, the need of belonging to a group or need for affiliation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The intent of this paper was to provide a global and personal standpoint on how learning styles and learning strategies are indispensable to make learners autonomous, what would have its effects both in their motivation and in the quality of their outcomes.

Students and more concretely teenagers possess some bare necessities by nature that need to be supplied and directly affect their motivation. All bare necessities are connected, influencing each other. The need for affiliation and the need for achievement are the most relevant ones, affecting students' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-perception.

In order to supply the need for achievement, students need to be aware of their learning styles in order to develop those learning strategies in accordance with them. It requires sustained training, which also needs to be scaffolded.

Once students are fully aware of their learning styles and have been trained in learning strategies, they would feel more competent in the accomplishment of tasks, supplying the aforementioned bare necessity.

In terms of cooperative work, providing students the tools with which they are able to be more sufficient, would have positive effects in the quality of their work. What is more, students can share learning strategies though their learning styles are different, and decide whether it applies for them or not. Moreover, each student can develop that role is he more capable of, also increasing his/her motivation. Cooperative work also supplies the most important of the bare necessities at this age, the need for affiliation, which is a consequence of good group cohesion. Lastly, cooperative work is in line with the inclusive school, managing heterogeneity for its benefit.

Lastly, my personal reflection implies employing the tutoring hours to teach students learning strategies which can be extrapolated to every single subject or area, even outside the school boundaries. What is more, students can be trained in

those personal abilities which are necessary to manage the possible problems which may arise within the groups.

However, albeit this process seems to take a considerable amount of time and a great effort from teachers, it is doubtlessly worth doing. Quoting Pujolás again, "*we cannot work in teams if students do not know how to work in teams*" (Pujolás, 2008: 217)

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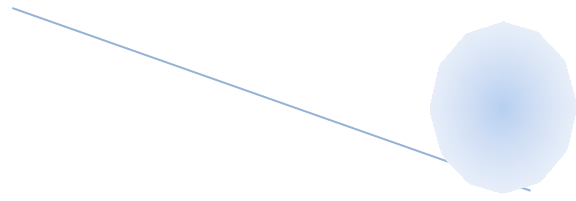
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ANEXES