Towards a comprehensive, integrative and formative evaluation process in A1 Spanish courses

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A la hora de evaluar las habilidades y conocimientos adquiridos en los niveles iniciales, resulta bastante común servirse de exámenes finales. Sin embargo, las habilidades situacionales y el desempeño estrechamente vinculado a cierto contexto pueden ser estimados haciendo uso de la evaluación formativa. En este artículo pretendemos describir el cambio, gradual pero definitivo, en el proceso de evaluación de las destrezas de los estudiantes a partir de una aproximación parcialmente sumativa hasta una formativa en los cursos iniciales de español (nivel A1 del CEFR). El estudio refleja cómo hemos desarrollado nuestra enseñanza y métodos de evaluación en un contexto socioconstructivista con el fin de garantizar la coherencia entre el proceso de aprendizaje y el sistema de evaluación. El artículo, asimismo, explora en la percepción de los estudiantes en cuanto a sus destrezas lingüísticas, su proceso de aprendizaje, y la posición del profesor como fuente de retroalimentación en estos cursos. Tomamos como marco el aprendizaje situacional, que nos ofrece un canal a través del cual poder observar y evaluar el proceso del aprendizaje de la lengua. El objetivo de nuestro escrito es reflexionar sobre una forma no tan tradicional de evaluación, y descubrir si este tipo de evaluación suscita un aprendizaje más profundo en el estudiante.

Para realizar este estudio, tomamos como fuente cuatro cursos de español llevados a cabo en otoño de 2016 en el Centro de Lenguas de la Universidad de Helsinki. La información fue recopilada por medio de cuestionarios y examinada mediante un análisis cualitativo.

Introduction

> *Final exams are stressful and cause sleepless nights. After an exam, it's common to forget its content. It was better in this course when we had small, continuous exams. This helped learning along the course. These spaced-out tasks contributed to a more complex learning that may stay in our minds for a longer time than just studying in a rush for a final exam.*

This was the answer of a student in a Spanish for beginners' course when we asked for their opinion on final exams, which are quite a common method of assessing students' learning and language skills at the lower levels of language proficiency. However, situational language proficiency and context-relevant skills can be assessed without final exams by using formative evaluation. In this article, we describe the gradual but definitive change from a summative to a formative approach in the assessment of students' skills in Spanish initial courses. In order to address the concerns of assessment methods, we focus on a case study of four Spanish courses (level A1) at the University of Helsinki Language Centre in autumn 2016: two Spanish for beginners 1 courses, one Spanish for beginners 2 course and one Refresher course in basic Spanish.

All the students were required to fill in a questionnaire (Appendix 1). We obtained 76 answers. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions: three closed-ended questions, two semi closed-ended questions, and seven open-ended questions. The data was collected between September and December 2016 and was analyzed by systematically searching

through all the data for emerging themes and patterns. Conventional content analysis (see e.g Eskola & Suoranta 1998; Krippendorff 1980) was used to code categories from the students' answers, and these themes emerging from the data were classified in four categories which are discussed in this article.

As a framework for this study, situated learning served as a useful lens through which to view, and specifically, to assess language learning processes. The objective of our study was to reflect on a fairly untraditional way of assessing language learning and to determine whether it enhances students' deep learning. The study shows, how we have developed our teaching and assessment methods in a socio-constructivist context to ensure that the teaching procedures is in sequence with the evaluation system. We took into account the students' perceptions of their language skills, assessment methods, their learning process and the teacher's role when providing feedback during these courses.

Background

The Spanish Unit teachers responsible for the Spanish for beginners courses faced challenging circumstances in 2015: the amount of contact hours was reduced from 52 to 48, the content of the course was widely comprehensive – the material in use was Español Uno (Kontturi, Kuokkanen-Kekki & Palmujoki 2014) – and digitalization was a growing priority at the University of Helsinki. In the meantime, our students were attempting to pass a summative assessment that was not completely consistent with the teaching methodology implemented because, in the students' opinion, it forced them to memorize a great amount of content at a certain period of the course, and prevented them from recognizing their gained abilities. Timing and resources were also an issue. Moreover, towards the end of the course the students also needed to study for final exams in their majors, which took place at about the same time as our language course exams This affected their ability to cope with the final Spanish language assessment. Despite the individual workload on both parties (teachers and students), some students passed the exam with a counteractive sense of their language skills. This paved the way for changes to our system.

Gonzalo Hernández, Jacqueline Chávez and José Ruiz Rubio reflected on the extra material used, activities developed in and out of classes, facilities, and ways in which to accomplish blended learning. We came to the conclusion that as our pedagogical perceptions, the way of understanding our students' needs, time constraints and goals, and our way of teaching were similar, we should develop an integrative learning process in which students could increase their self-cognition and ability to solve the problems presented to them. Assessment would be developed to provide students with a more flexible way of coping with the course, in accordance with the curriculum objectives and the determined guidelines. This would apply to Chapters 1–8 (pages 10–139) of the book, corresponding

to the first course: getting acquainted with Spanish language basics, learning to talk about yourself and your typical day, learning to handle basic daily situations such as shopping, restaurants, buying tickets, and understanding easy speech. The second course covered Chapters 9–19 (pages 140–279): extending basic grammar knowledge, widening vocabulary, learning to talk about situations in the past tense, learning to state your point of view and position, and getting acquainted with the Spanish speaking world and culture. Together we agreed on the learning activities to be implemented.

A meeting we organized on 9 May 2016 with Nina Dannert, a Language Centre University Instructor in German, revealed a different way of evaluating the learning process, in which socio-constructivism was present also in the evaluation, and a digital exam was successfully used. This meeting, in addition to some in-house seminars at the Language Centre, encouraged us on this new path. Janne Niinivaara, the Coordinator of Online Learning and Communications of the Language Centre, was our advisor for digital exams on the Moodle platform.

Summative or formative assessment?

Summative assessment, which usually takes place at the end of the course, focuses on the results of learning, and its purpose is to summarize what the students have learnt and to ensure that they have achieved sufficient skills to move on to the next course (Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2009, 156–157; Brown 2004, 218). Examples of summative assessments are unit tests, final exams and proficiency tests. Despite the stressful nature of traditional tests and final exams, they are nonetheless quite common when assessing students' learning and language skills at the end of a course. Summative assessment can highlight what objectives have been reached, but it is a problematic approach, because it lacks feedback on how to develop or improve performance (Ketabi & Ketabi 2014, 436). Due to this deficiency in the assessment system, we decided to change the evaluation process of Spanish for beginners' courses from a summative to a formative approach, which is more personalized and process-focused. We also wanted to make the most of digitalization, to the extent that our technical skills and resources permitted.

Several researchers have shown that formative assessment (FA) is one of the most influential and motivating methods for improving language learning and teaching (Rea-Dickins & Gardner 2000, 239; Wei 2011, 102). In our search for improving assessment practices, we looked towards FA as a better means of providing feedback to students on their learning process and to adapt our teaching to meet their needs. Since FA takes place throughout the learning process, it helps us change and develop our teaching and evaluation methods while the course is still in progress. As Lewy (1990, 26–28) states, its aim is to help the learning process, and teaching, by giving appropriate feedback.

Our case

FA is characterized as a student-centered approach that not only assesses the cognitive process, but also pays attention to students' interests and attitudes. It helps them adopt an active role in their learning process (Tang 2016, 751; Wei 2010, 838). As students are not constantly graded, they feel free to use the language in order to learn it. The use of FA enables students to analyze and reflect on the feedback received, which is the basic requirement to learn a language (Brown, 2004, 218; Ketabi & Ketabi 2014, 437). The Moodle platform was our facilitator in this attempt. Many of the written activities that the students had previously submitted to the teacher to be read and evaluated were now contextualized, and the procedure was made more authentic, as students had to solve certain problems, use the studied syllabus and structures, and be aware that on some occasions they would have followers. The readers may be fellow students as well as their teachers. The activities were transferred to Moodle in the form of wikis, group discussions and tasks. An example of the use of a wiki in José Ruiz's course, making students read and recognize the studied aspects articulated outside the class context, is seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Example of a wiki in José Ruiz's course

Estudia los usos de estos verbos, según la explicación del libro. Visita las páginas 325-328. Busca ejemplos de sus usos en español: facebook, twiter, blogs, periódicos y revistas. Escribe aquí 3 ejemplos diferentes de los verbos SER, ESTAR, hay (< HABER) y TENER.

SER	ESTAR	HAY (< HABER)	TENER
-Soy José. Soy de Madrid, la capital de España.	-Estoy en Helsinki, estoy en mi trabajo.	-En Madrid hay muchos cafés. Este es el café Barbieri, en el barrio de Lavapiés.	-Tengo una hija que se llama Marta.
¡Este es nuestro once inicial para el partido de Champions ante el Borussia Dortmund! (Real Madrid facebook)	¡Ya estamos en Dortmund! (Real Madrid facebook)		
Italia y Myanmar son regiones tectónicamente activas. (National Geographic en español)	El futuro no está en ciudades sin coches, sino en autos ~~limpios~~ poco ruidosos y limpios.	¿Hay relación entre los terremotos de Myanmar e Italia? (Porque Myanmar e Italia?)	Eso significa que tienen muchos terremotos.
Nadie duda de que Clinton es la candidata mejor preparada de la historia, como ha dicho	"Saber que el panda está un paso más alejado de la	Actualmente hay 1.864 ejemplares de oso panda en el	"Hillary Clinton tiene experiencia, pero es mala experiencia." ("Clinton, serena, bien preparada, cortes a

Although we chose to develop functional FA practices, we do not deny the relevance of summative assessment, as long as it is not the only or predominant method of assessment.

Summative and formative assessment can be blended in teaching and learning, therefore a digital mid-term assessment was also implemented via Moodle to give the students liberty to carry it out wherever and whenever they considered it appropriate during the period of exams. They would receive immediate numerical feedback and be able to see the right answers as soon as the assessment was completed. According to Wei (2011, 99–110), the rationale for doing so is that many students care about final scores, and it has been proven that combining these assessment methods increases students' awareness of their daily learning and makes them aim for better learning results. In fact, in two of his courses, Gonzalo Hernández also implemented a small digital exam at the end of every two or three chapters. The students were able to repeat the digital exams as many times as they considered necessary. A total of 33% of the students took them several times and improved their results by 20%. One of our goals as teachers is to make students concentrate on determined structures as they analyze and practice the aspects with which they have difficulties.

This combination of FA and summative assessment seems to help sustain learners' motivation and effort, and strengthens their self-esteem (Wei 2010, 839). That is why we use digital control exams in Moodle, which aim at showing what students have learned of the required knowledge. This point of view was also shown in our students' answers. They confirmed that digital control exams were easy and practical to use and helped them to review, assimilate and automatize the necessary skills. According to the students, these exams also fostered their auto-evaluation skills and encouraged them to take more responsibility for their own learning process.

Collaboration and situated learning

In addition to the grammar, structural, reading-comprehension, translation, listening and oral activities in the course book, we made use of Quizlet, Flinga and posters to activate the learning process, to foster collaboration and to provide support when dealing with new or previously studied content. Whereas Quizlet helped the students rehearse content already studied, Flinga and posters demonstrated what grammatical aspects had been understood after a negotiation process: Prepositions, the verb "to be", pronouns (Figure 2), and the past tense. These worked as mind maps and visual evidence.

Figure 2. Example of a poster in Jacqueline Chávez's course
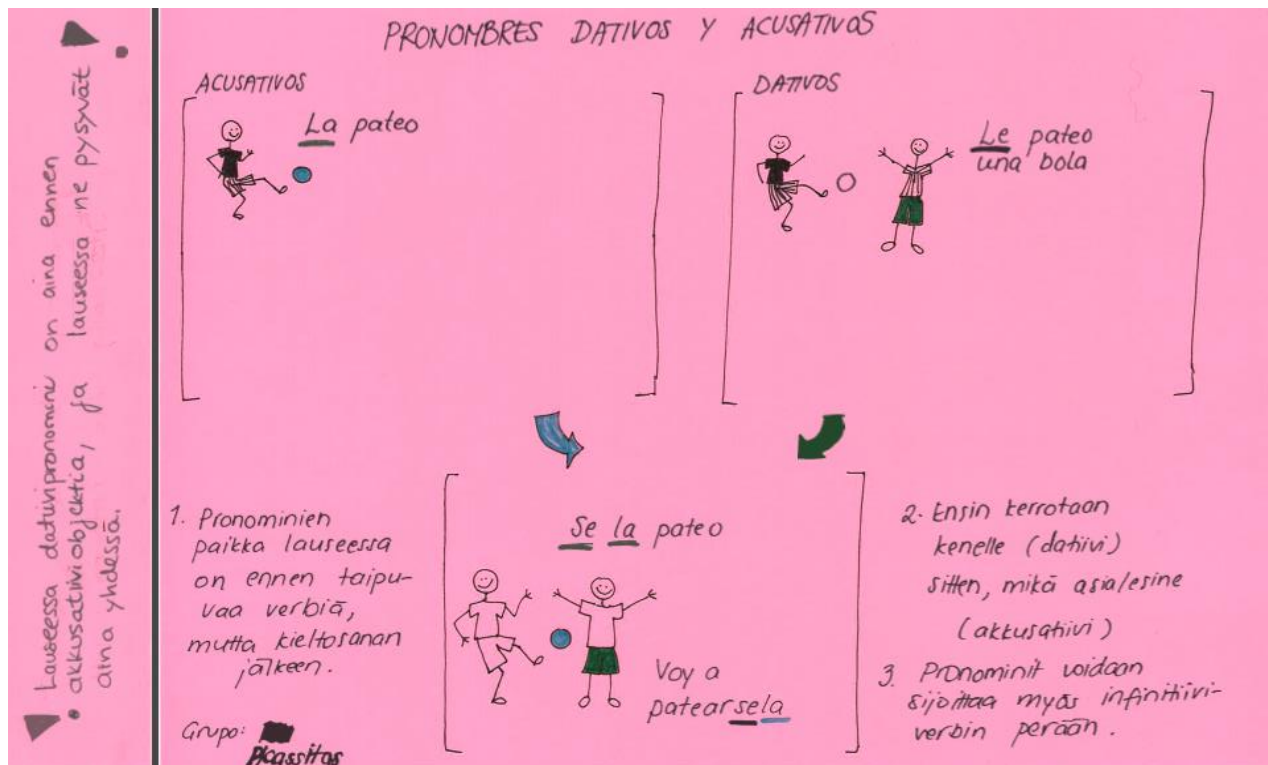
The continuous implementation of a situated learning approach in the teaching process led to increase students' motivation and self-consciousness. Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed the situated learning theory, in which learning is embedded in authentic contexts, within an activity involving a problem or task, and social interaction is an essential component. Learning is not simply a transmission of abstract knowledge from one individual to another, but a social process in which learning occurs in the same context to which it is applied. Later on, along these lines, Abdallah (2015, 2) elaborated that the shift from the acquisition metaphor to the participation metaphor in language learning involves the principle that learners are active constructors of knowledge.

The above-mentioned theory was highlighted when the students acknowledged that in the process of writing in Spanish, they not only put into practice the vocabulary studied, but also learned additional related syllabus than they would have, if they had only studied to pass a formal exam. Mastering vocabulary is a constant worry for foreign language students at basic stages. Which words should be learned? This now became each student's own decision according to his/her needs when doing the learning tasks.

During the course, the students performed different activities that accumulated to form the final outcome, pass or fail. Although we never called this process portfolio making, the result is similar; students are able to cumulatively construct their own knowledge at the time they realize what they have accomplished during the course and gather material to

14

demonstrate their development to others, if needed. Taking into consideration the students' feedback, the following tasks fostered their learning: compulsory exercises as part of the final outcome, oral exercises in class, and mid-term digital assessment. Posters and refresher exercises were also mentioned as useful ways to foster learning.

FA and students' perceptions of learning

In the previously mentioned questionnaire, we asked our students how they felt about working with FA, and 95% of them considered it favourable for their learning process. Five percent had contradictory feelings or a critical attitude towards the method. In the further analysis of our data, four main themes emerged, confirming that FA was a useful and appropriate assessment method. It seems that students appreciate a positive, less stressful learning environment that fosters their role as autonomous learners. The themes that arose in our analysis can be classified into the following categories: 1) *improvement of self-direction*, 2) *opportunity to use the language in the 'real world'*, 3) *enhancement of deep learning*, and 4) *a sense of empowerment*.

Improvement of self-direction was the first category to arise. The students felt that this way of working during the course helped them to develop their learning strategies towards more self-directed learning, which is essential in the university environment. They related that the FA method gave them more responsibility and more freedom of choice during their learning process. Since the method is based on students' self-centered participation, it enhances their personal use of learning strategies and fosters their self-directed learning (Tang 2016, 754; Wei 2011, 99).

The second of the categories appeared in the answers that praised the *opportunity to use the language in the 'real world'*, in authentic situations, which can be seen in accordance with the principles of the dialogical approach of language learning: Language is always used in specific, authentic contexts for communicative purposes, and not only for unconnected grammatical exercises (Dufva et al. 2011, Mori 2014). Since we could not always offer authentic situations in the Finnish context, we strove to simulate them. In the third chapter of Spanish for beginners 1, the students had to practice, for example, describing their apartment and town to a Spanish-speaking couch surfer who was staying with them at their house. In the seventh chapter, they had to organize and describe a bank holiday trip to a Spanish town. For this exercise, they needed to search for information on Spanish websites about flights from Helsinki to Madrid, check train schedules to the town they would go to, obtain information about the weather, the hotel, the town, and finally describe seven activities they would participate in at the destination. The students handed in these written tasks. Following a blog proved to be a fruitful method for introducing students to social media in the Spanish-speaking world. In Spanish for beginners 2, students had to look for a blog related to their studies, their hobbies or any

topic they considered interesting. This exercise can be extended in many ways. Students can summarize a blog's post or comment on others' texts (see Appendix 2).

Students seemed to appreciate the functionality of the language learning process and they expressed satisfaction at being stimulated and allowed to use the language from the beginning of the course instead of just polishing structures and vocabulary with a book. They admitted that FA allowed them to develop their grammatical skills in a meaningful way in authentic contexts.

The authentic contexts and functionality valued by our students and mentioned above are connected to the third category of our analysis, *enhancement of deep learning* strategies. The students felt that leaving out the final exam motivated them to increase and improve their deep learning. They admitted that with a final exam, they mainly concentrated on merely passing it, afterwards often forgetting what they had learned. Karjalainen (2002, 96) also points out this problematic issue in using traditional final exams. Students learn appropriate skills to pass an exam, but they might not assimilate or deeply learn the content.

The fourth and last category in our analysis sums up the answers that express feelings of *empowerment* and motivation. Our students stated that as they did not need to worry about the final exam, they had less negative feelings about their learning process, felt less stressed about it and more motivated to learn how to use the language. Brown (2004, 220) agrees: Students are often suspicious and afraid that they will fail in a testing situation. FA has proven to be an appropriate method for improving students' motivation and for helping them to develop a positive attitude towards their learning process and assessment (Wei 2011, 99).

This student-centered, empowering and less stressful approach leans on a social constructivist approach, in which attention focuses on the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge. This in turn creates a social identity for the students and stimulates them to involve themselves in the learning process (Hernández Requena 2008, 31–32).

In our courses, we have striven to encourage the students to be active and independent participants in their own language learning process. We have aimed at enhancing their motivation to learn and use the language for life, and not only to study for a final exam.

Peer evaluation and feedback

As Wei (2010, 838; 2011, 99) states in his articles, FA includes the idea of multi-assessors: teacher assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment are part of the process of

learning. FA is also characterized by making use of multi-assessment strategies and techniques such as formal and informal procedures and numerous non-testing strategies such as classroom observations, portfolios, interviews and student conference. Taking this philosophy into account, our students received feedback from the teacher, they practiced giving and receiving peer feedback and also reflected on the process of learning.

For instance, during the course, the participants gave a five-minute oral presentation, which was evaluated by their peers. They worked in groups of four. Feedback was given immediately after the presentation. The students filled in a feedback form taking into consideration the criteria they had agreed upon in a previous class. A consensus arose about the fact that they would not use numbers in the feedback, but reflection. They would hand in this reflection sheet to the teacher together with the individual presentation. The criteria used to evaluate presentations were intelligibility (taking into consideration articulation, pronunciation and structure), clarity, rich vocabulary, content (according to the instructions), and the courage to use the language. Teachers added one criterion, which was to explain what was understood of every presentation. For an example, see Appendix 3.

This procedure paved the way for a more conscious learning process when preparing the oral presentation, engaged the participants in the process as a whole, gave them clear information regarding what was expected of them, and gave them the opportunity to practice giving and receiving feedback. According to the students, being evaluators forced them to pay more attention to their peers' presentations, and made them think about what to say and how, so that the message would be useful and at the same time polite, because they did not mean to offend anyone. Some students did not consider this type of evaluation very competent and would rather have received feedback from the teacher, as they felt that their peers' opinions were too positive. In this sense, they felt that the opportunities to amend possible mistakes were diminished.

Teacher's role and feedback to students

Teachers gave feedback on written tasks and orally during the class. We aimed to provide the students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Spanish world and show them what they were able to accomplish. In the tasks' written instructions, we stated the aspects we were going to analyze, so as to guide them to the expected outcome. We underlined and explained mistakes but also made sure to point out the detailed aspects that made the text intelligible. The grades we used in Moodle were 'pass' or 'to be improved'.

Although our teaching approach is student-centered, we cannot ignore the fact that the teacher's role in assessment is essential. Hattie (2012) reminds us that student-

centeredness does not mean that students are left alone by the teacher or that students' interests and needs dictate all. Instead, student-centeredness needs to be understood as a means with which to support students to learn how to learn, how to seek help, how to evaluate their own skills, and how to be resilient (Goodyear & Dudley 2015, 285). For this purpose, it is necessary that the teacher monitors students' learning.

In the questionnaire, we also asked our students whether the teacher's feedback helped them evaluate their own learning, we received 76 answers. Seventy-one of these clearly expressed that the teacher's feedback was of great help. One student stated that the feedback did not help, and four indicated that they could not answer the question.

In a further analysis, three types of teacher's roles emerged during the process of giving feedback. These roles are clearly visible in the students' answers, confirming that the FA method did indeed help them and had been useful. Moreover, in the opposite answers, these roles arose not as existing ones, but as expected.

Teacher as intervener

According to Bähr and Wibowo (2012, 31) teachers interact with students in two ways: Teachers' interventions can be either invasive or responsive. Intervention is invasive, when the teacher interferes without being asked to. This occurs, for example, when a barrier to learning is observed. The teacher becomes an active participant and works with students, helping them to seek solutions and directing them to new information that may help them cross the barrier.

In our case, we saw examples of this in the classroom context when students worked together and a doubt or problem appeared and the teacher intervened giving feedback:

> *When we were doing oral exercises, the teacher was wandering around the classroom and helped and corrected us when needed.*

> *It's been important that from the beginning the teacher has corrected our pronunciation.*

On the other hand, a responsive intervention involves the teacher in the student's learning process and interaction when requested (Bähr & Wibowo 2012, 31). We also classify as a responsive intervention situations in which no request is made for intervention, but it is expected, for example giving feedback on written exercises. This is shown in our students' answers:

> *I always got help when I asked for it.*

> *I've received feedback and evaluation for every written exercise I've done.*

The teacher needs to be able to analyze and interpret the student's learning process in order to decide when and how to intervene in the process (Bähr & Wibowo 2012, 30–31). Our study reveals that students were satisfied with teachers' interventions and that they considered the given feedback relevant, personal and detailed:

> *I got a lot of personal guidance.*

> *The feedback helped me and it was really detailed.*

> *The feedback I got during the lessons was relevant and useful.*

Our students seemed to want feedback not only when they were at a complete loss but also when they were coping with their learning process. Interventions and feedback were considered useful by the students and they would have liked even more. However, they also understood the limits of teachers' resources:

> *Every time I got feedback, it helped me. However, it would've been great to have it even more. But I understand that the number of students is huge and it's impossible for the teacher to give feedback to everybody all the time.*

Teacher as diagnostician

Another teacher's role that emerges in our analysis is that of a diagnostician. Teachers interact constantly with students, and while doing so, interpret and support the learning that is taking place. In this sense, teachers aim to constantly diagnose what is occurring and need to apply multiple interactional strategies and evaluate the impact of these actions on student learning (Goodyear & Dudley 2015, 284–285).

Goodyear and Dudley (2015, 285) determined that diagnosing is an act of charting the situation that leads to decision-making on how the learning process or the task should be organized and what kind of interaction is required between teacher and student. According to them, diagnosing is underpinned by a focus on what students do: teachers need to question students to validate their interpretations of their current phase of learning and then support and challenge them. The teacher's role as a diagnostician appears clearly in the following students' answers:

> *The teacher's feedback helped me understand at what point of my learning phase I was.*

> *With the help of the feedback, I started to realize what my mistakes were and now I know how to avoid them in the future.*

Teacher as activator

Although students are the protagonists of their own learning, teachers also unquestionably play an active, central role in the process. Teachers and their actions may be the key factor in creating a learning environment that enables and encourages students' learning.

In the role of activator, we define the teacher as a person who helps students with their learning, encourages their initiatives, facilitates communication among students, provides feedback and assistance, and praises students' efforts. The same kind of descriptions have been used for the term 'facilitator' (see e.g. Gillies 2008, Goodyear & Dudley 2015), but we prefer to avoid this because it also has connotations of a non-professional person who helps and collaborates in the classroom but is neither a teacher nor a pedagogue. As an activator, the teacher interacts with the students, gives them constructive, encouraging feedback and helps them set goals:

> *Feedback was constructive.*
>
> *Teacher feedback encouraged me to continue learning.*
>
> *The feedback I got helped me see that even if there are still grammatical mistakes in my language, I'm able to express myself, and understand and comment on others' texts.*
>
> *The teacher was interested in our texts and gave us guidance that helped me review my own texts, and this also helped me notice my errors and learn from them.*

As seen in the comments above, students approve of and appreciate the teacher's actions in the role of activator. As Hattie (2009, 23–24, 108–109; 2012) points out, the teacher should not play a side role but an active role that promotes new learning possibilities and outcomes. Students approve the active role of the teacher. According to Goodyear and Dudley (2015, 286), teaching approaches that involve the idea of teacher-as-activator have greater effects on learning because of the active and guided instructions given by the teachers.

Reflection

After analyzing our data and reflecting on it on the basis of the references in this article, we arrived at the conclusion that FA has several positives effects on language learning. For instance, we noticed that the students felt free to concentrate on practicing their language skills and enjoyed this, because they did not have to stress about the upcoming final exam. This was especially noticeable towards the end of the course, when the students used to be susceptible to stress and anxiety. The students' opinions also confirmed this. In addition, students spent more quality time with the Spanish language

looking for information and reading authentic materials so as to satisfactorily perform the demanded tasks. They were motivated to do so. To our satisfaction, their perception of adopted linguistic skills was more positive than before. This indicates an affirmative approach towards learning Spanish in the long run.

We also consider it a remarkable achievement that now our students are not only introduced to and study the course book's structures and vocabulary, but they also become acquainted with the vocabulary they are really interested in and may need in real situations. Some students go so far as to look for academically-related information.

Thanks to FA and the digital exams, we were able to recover four to six contact hours that before were destined to implement exams in the classroom. This is a significant achievement, considering the reduction we had undergone in the duration of our courses.

When we started this project, one of our interests was to determine whether this kind of formative assessment would reduce the amount of students that drop out of our course. However, we found no clear indication of this. We must closely follow the statistics in the coming years.

Despite the success described above, we have also encountered challenges with FA. The workload for the teachers has increased considerably, much more than we expected. It takes time to learn to make digital exams, solve technical problems or improve digital exercises and analyze students' reflections. Students carry out their tasks and consequently expect evaluation and correction of each one. We teachers were free to try new methods and were excited about the outcome, yet we acknowledge that this is a challenge we have to overcome in the near future. We need to find a balance between our workload, our resources and the students' needs and expectations. We have some possible solutions to consider: Would it be a sensible idea to reduce the number of required exercises? Would an effective solution be doing some of the written exercises in pairs? We have also talked about the possibility of developing a project to be carried out during the course. Another aspect to consider is increasing the number of small digital exams with instant feedback.

We must not forget to mention that if we changed the instructions to more specific criteria, the result of the written tasks might just be of a higher standard. We began the process of developing assessment in our courses for beginners enthusiastically. It is clear to us that this endeavor was worthwhile and we need to continue developing it for the benefit of all, both students and teachers.

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Links:
Link to Flinga: https://edu.flinga.fi/s/6FEMLV

Link to Quizlet (past tense): https://quizlet.com/63809578/preteriti-flash-cards/

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire[1]

1. Olisitko halunnut tehdä loppukokeen? / Would you have liked to have a final exam?
　　　Kyllä/Yes　　　　　　Ei/No
　　　Perustele vastauksesi/ Please explain why

2. Jos tällä kurssilla olisi ollut loppukoe, olisitko oppinut / If you had had a final exam in this course, would you have learned
　　　Vähemmän/Less
　　　Yhtä paljon kuin nyt/As much as now
　　　Enemmän/More
　　　Perustele vastauksesi/Please explain why

3. Olisitko työskennellyt enemmän kurssin aikana, jos kurssilla olisi ollut loppukoe?/ Would you have studied more during the course, if you had had a final exam?

4. Olisitko käyttänyt eri oppimismenetelmiä, jos kurssilla olisi ollut loppukoe? / Olisitko opiskellut eri tavoin, jos kurssilla olisi ollut loppukoe?/ Would you have used other learning methods, if you had had a final exam?/Would you have studied in a different way?

5. Olisitko kiinnittänyt enemmän huomiota kielioppirakenteiden oppimiseen, jos kurssilla olisi ollut loppukoe? / Would you have paid more attention to learning grammar, if you had had a final exam?
　　　Kyllä/Yes　　　　　　En/No

6. Olisitko kiinnittänyt enemmän huomiota sanaston oppimiseen, jos kurssilla olisi ollut loppukoe?/ Would you have paid more attention to learning vocabulary, if you had had a final exam?
　　　Kyllä/Yes　　　　　　En/No

7. Mitä ajattelet digitaalisista kappalekohtaisista kokeista? Auttoivatko ne sinua oppimaan tunnilla käsiteltyjä asioita? Miten? / What do you think of digital chapter-specific exams? Did they help you learn the aspects studied in class? How?

8. Mitä mieltä olet kurssiin kuuluvista pakollisista tehtävistä (esim. haastattelutehtävä, kulttuuritehtävä jne), jotka korvaavat loppukokeen? / What is your opinion of the compulsory tasks that replaced the final exam (e.g. interviews, cultural activities, etc.)?

9. Mainitse kolme kurssin tehtävää/aktiviteettia, jotka tukivat eniten oppimistasi. Perustele vastauksesi. / Which three tasks/activities supported your learning process most? Please explain why.

10. Tällä kurssilla opiskelijat antoivat toisilleen palautetta esitelmän kanssa työskennellessä. Auttoiko tämä sinua esitelmän valmistelussa? Miten? Perustele vastauksesi. / During this course, the students gave feedback to each other on their oral presentations. Did this help you prepare the presentation? Please explain how.

11. Minkälaisessa kokeessa pystyisit mielestäsi parhaiten näyttämään kurssilla oppimasi taidot?/ In what kind of an exam would you be able to best show the skills you acquired during the course?

12. Auttoiko opettajan palaute sinua arvioimaan oppimistasi? Miten? Perustele. / Did the teacher's feedback help you evaluate your learning process? Please explain how.

APPENDIX 2: Extract from a student's blog post

TAREA 1: TU BLOG

📑 Keskustelualue: Tu blog

Pasión por el trabajo social

maanantai, 26 syyskuu 2016, 14:34

Pasión por el trabajo social es un blog personal sobre de Servicios Sociales. El que escribe es un trabajador social en España, en Madrid. Yo estudio trabajo social y politicas sociales y porque me interesa el blog. Creo que es muy útil aprender vocabulario de mi carrera.

Trabajo social es muy distinto en diferentes países, diferentes sistemas de sociedad. El blog conta de problemas de actualidad y tambien un poco comó es trabajo social en España. El blog parece popular y mucha gente quiere conversar temas de blog.

APPENDIX 3: Extract from a student's peer feedback

Presentador y país: (Chile)

- ymmärrettävyys (ääntäminen, lauseen rakenne, kielioppi)	Selkeä ääntäminen ja ymmärrättävä esitys kokonaisuudessaan.
- yksinkertainen rakenne mutta vaihteleva	Hyvä rakenne, eri aiheita käsittelevät osiot selkeästi jaoteltu toisistaan.
- tuttu sanasto/selvennys	Sisälsi tuttua sanastoa & paljon uusia ruokasanojakin.
- sujuvuus (on valmistautunut)	Hyvin valmistautunut. Suomentanut myös lauseet itselle & tehnyt sanalistan suomennoksineen uusista ruokasanoista
+ uskaltaa käyttää kieltä	Käyttää hyvin. & rohkeasti.
-Mitä ymmärsin kollegan esitelmästä	Chilissä yhdessä syöminen on tärkeää ja perinneruokia emm. pürakat (empañados) Chohllana yleinen annos baanssa nautitta-

vaken. Kala- ja äyriäisruuat yleisiä erityisesti rannikkokaupungeissa.