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Una propuesta innovadora para fomentar la igualdad de género y mejorar la capacidad de escritura mediante el aprendizaje cooperativo y los cómics.

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Trabajo de Fin de Máster

Una propuesta innovadora para fomentar la igualdad de género y mejorar la capacidad de escritura mediante el aprendizaje cooperativo y los cómics.

An innovative proposal for fostering gender equality and enhancing writing skills through cooperative learning and comics.

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“Education is a weapon of mass construction”

Marjane Satrapi

Table of contents

ABSTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION	1
2. OBJECTIVES.....	3
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	5
3.1. Comics as a teaching resource.....	5
3.2. Promoting gender equity and gender equality in the classroom.....	8
3.3. Cooperative learning strategies to improve writing skills.....	10
4. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	15
5. INNOVATION PROPOSAL.....	19
5.1. Contextualisation and target group.....	19
5.2. Objectives.....	20
5.3. Competences.....	21
5.3.1. Key competences.....	21
5.3.2. Operational descriptors.....	22
5.3.3. Specific competences.....	23
5.4. Basic knowledge.....	25
5.5. Methodology.....	26
5.6. Special needs.....	29
5.7. Activities and timing.....	29
5.8. Assessment.....	43
5.8.1. Assessment Criteria.....	43
5.8.2. Assessment procedures and instruments.....	45
5.9. Materials and resources.....	46
6. DISCUSSION.....	49
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	51
8. REFERENCES.....	53
ANNEXES.....	59

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the integration of cooperative learning strategies and the use of comics to promote gender equality, enhance writing skills, and foster critical thinking in educational settings. By incorporating cooperative learning techniques and harnessing the power of comics as a multimodal tool, the innovation proposal aims to create an inclusive and engaging learning environment that challenges gender stereotypes, fosters gender equality and nurtures students' writing proficiency. The objectives include promoting gender equality through the exploration of diverse narratives, developing students' writing skills through comic-based activities, fostering critical thinking by analysing visual and textual elements in comics, encouraging active participation in collaborative discussions, cultivating empathy and respect through the examination of gender-related issues, and empowering students to become agents of positive change in society. However, the proposal also presents some challenges and limitations, which highlight the importance of promoting inclusive and diverse group work, and of providing clear instructions and guidance to students. Overall, the innovation proposal provides a valuable opportunity to promote effective teaching and learning practices based on the principles of cooperative learning and communicative language teaching.

Keywords: cooperative learning, gender equality, comics, writing skills, critical thinking, English as a Foreign Language.

RESUMEN

Esta tesis explora la integración de estrategias de aprendizaje cooperativo y el uso de cómics para promover la igualdad de género, mejorar las habilidades de escritura y fomentar el pensamiento crítico en entornos educativos. Mediante la incorporación de técnicas de aprendizaje cooperativo y el aprovechamiento del poder de los cómics como herramienta multimodal, la propuesta de innovación pretende crear un entorno de aprendizaje inclusivo y atractivo que desafíe los estereotipos de género, fomente la igualdad de género y nutra las competencias de escritura de los estudiantes. Los objetivos incluyen promover la igualdad de género a través de la exploración de diversas narrativas, desarrollar las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes a través de actividades basadas en cómics, fomentar el pensamiento crítico mediante el

análisis de elementos visuales y textuales en los cómics, fomentar la participación activa en debates colaborativos, cultivar la empatía y el respeto a través del examen de las cuestiones relacionadas con el género, y capacitar a los estudiantes para convertirse en agentes de cambio positivo en la sociedad. Sin embargo, la propuesta también presenta algunos retos y limitaciones, que ponen de relieve la importancia de promover un trabajo en grupo inclusivo y diverso, y de proporcionar instrucciones y orientaciones claras a los estudiantes. En general, la propuesta de innovación ofrece una valiosa oportunidad para promover prácticas eficaces de enseñanza y aprendizaje basadas en los principios del aprendizaje cooperativo y la enseñanza comunicativa de idiomas.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje cooperativo, igualdad de género, cómics, destrezas de escritura, pensamiento crítico, Inglés como Segunda Lengua.

1. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Gender injustice is a phenomenon that affects the whole of society and manifests itself in various forms. In a general sense, gender inequality is evident in the marginalization and subordination of individuals based on their gender, the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes, the prevalence of gender-based violence, and the imposition of double burdens on women. As early as the 19th century, women began to organise themselves to demand a series of rights, but it was not until the 20th century that women achieved their first conquests towards gender equality. However, real equality has not yet been achieved, but in recent decades there has been a collective awareness of this social phenomenon (Mujica, 2020).

Education, and educators as agents of change, play a crucial role in challenging and transforming these inequalities by equipping students with knowledge, critical thinking skills and a sense of social responsibility. From the educational field, there is a commitment to implement measures that promote equality in education, research on gender-based violence, and the adoption of actions to counteract this social injustice. According to Mujica (2020), in order to achieve real and effective education, it is necessary to incorporate moral education within the educational system that raises awareness and educates girls and boys about gender-based violence, instills values of equality and human rights, and promotes strategies to foster a gender perspective.

Promoting gender equality and addressing gender inequality are critical global challenges in today's society. Sustainable Development Goal 5, as outlined by the United Nations (n.d.), calls for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. To effectively address this goal, innovative and comprehensive approaches are necessary, both within and beyond the traditional classroom setting. Consequently, all the above has impacted greatly on the design of this project which aims to integrate an approach that combines comics, cooperative learning, and gender equality topics to enhance the acquisition of language proficiency, foster inclusive education, empower students to become agents of change, and activate critical reflection and analysis by them.

To this end, the dissertation is structured as follows. First of all, the theoretical background that nurtures the innovation proposal is described. This framework is divided into three parts. The first part explores the use of comics as a didactic

resource, while the second part deals with the importance of promoting gender equality in education. The last part highlights how the integration of cooperative learning enhances the writing process. The second part deals with the development of an innovation proposal consisting of two workshops. This is followed by a discussion and evaluation of the intervention on its feasibility, advantages and limitations. The dissertation ends with the conclusions, which include reflections on what has been achieved with respect to the objectives of the dissertation, its development and the competences obtained.

2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this dissertation is to develop a didactic intervention to foster gender equality and enhance writing skills through the implementation of cooperative learning strategies and the use of comics in educational settings. This project aims not only to achieve the stage objectives mentioned below but also to achieve specific objectives.

One of the specific goals to be achieved is to promote gender equality. The aim is to activate students' capacity for critical and reflective thinking, work on assertiveness and empathy, raise awareness of gender violence, and promote strategies to foster a gender equality perspective. Through collaborative activities, students will have opportunities to challenge traditional gender roles, promote mutual respect, and foster empathy and understanding.

Another objective encompass both the enhancement of writing and reading skills, although the latter is not one of the primary objectives to be worked on. On the one hand, the utilization of cooperative learning approaches will provide students with a supportive platform to develop and enhance their writing skills. By engaging in collaborative writing tasks, students can exchange ideas, provide constructive feedback, and learn from their peers, leading to improved writing fluency and organization. On the other hand, by working with comics, students are exposed to multimodal texts that requires to analyse and interpret visual narratives, comprehend the interplay between text and images, and extract meaning from various forms of expression within the comic format.

Finally, the workshops proposed below are aimed at cultivating empathy and encouraging active participation. By working collaboratively and engaging in discussions on gender equality, students will develop empathy and respect for diverse experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, students will be actively engaged in the learning process, contributing their unique ideas and experiences. This will help create a culture of inclusivity, understanding, and support, promoting positive relationships and reducing prejudice and discrimination.

As for the stage objectives which appear in the curriculum, and which are based on *Royal Decree 217/2022*, of 29th March, which establishes the organisation and

minimum teaching of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE), they will be detailed further on in the chapter “Innovation Proposal”.

3.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides theoretical support and existing evidence for the intervention proposal using comics and cooperative learning to improve writing skills and promote gender equality. To do so, we begin by explaining the importance of the comic as a didactic resource; secondly, we explain the relevance of integrating gender equality and equity in the educational curriculum; and finally, we develop cooperative learning as a methodology, placing special emphasis on its application to improve writing skills.

3.1. Comics as a teaching resource

In the digital era, visual content has become an essential part of our daily lives, with comics being a prime example of how it has established itself in popular culture. As modern students are more inclined towards computer games and visual stimuli, teachers should leverage this opportunity by incorporating graphic novels and comic books to engage them.

The medium of comics is a relatively recent invention (Carter 2007; Weiner 2002) and there has been a dearth of theoretical discourse on the topic. Despite the increasing existence of some scholarly works, there is a lack of consensus regarding a definitive definition of the medium. McCloud (1994) clarifies that *comics* refer to the “medium itself, not a specific object as ‘comic book’ or ‘comic strip’” (p. 4) and defines them as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (p. 9). Eisner (2008), on the other hand, describes *comics* as “unique aesthetics of Sequential Art as a means of creative expression, a distinct discipline, an art and literary form that deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea” (p. 5). In this study, the term *comics* will be used to encompass both comic books and graphic novels.

From a didactic point of view, comics are beneficial for classroom learning as they offer many formative and educational possibilities (Carter 2007). They are a resource that allows for meaningful learning, reinforces content previously seen in the classroom and their nature lends itself to the teaching of a foreign language. Their potential goes beyond being a mere fun activity for artistic enrichment (Gómez-Trigueros & Ruiz-Bañuls, 2019).

Moreover, for second language learners, the universal language of images supports the text, which considerably reduces the reader's comprehension efforts. In the same way, the use of comics increases the motivation of the students towards the contents to be acquired, awakening critical and reflective thinking. The language in comics is generally informal, with normal, everyday language, which gives them the opportunity to interact with the language on a dynamic and authentic level (Clydesdale, 2008). Krashen (2004) also agrees that comics have demonstrated to improve L2 acquisition by reducing psychological barriers like affective filters that may hinder efficient language learning.

On the other hand, many students who are fluent readers have difficulties in writing. The comic helps organisation through narration and storyboarding and encourages students with low interest in writing to engage in creation. This resource is, in particular, very useful when working on dialogues (Clydesdale, 2008; Gómez-Trigueros & Ruiz-Bañuls, 2019). In this regard, Templer (2009) states that students creating their own comics is a form of active multimodal production that teachers may easily experiment with in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom.

In recent decades, the concept of *multimodality* has gained popularity and refers to texts that use a number of modes to convey ideas or represent concepts. As defined by Serafini (2014), "modes constitute a system of visual and verbal entities created within or across various cultures to represent and express meanings" (p. 12). Comic books and graphic novels are, therefore, multimodal texts since they integrate words, visual images, and other graphic elements to convey meaning and communicate information. In support of this idea, Carter (2007) argues that comics offer significant, distinctive, and timely multiliteracy experiences.

Unlike twenty years ago, young people now pay more attention to a wider range of media than to just the teacher and the textbooks in the classroom. For that reason, there is now a greater need for educational materials that give educators the tools and tactics necessary to enhance students' capacity to produce, interpret, and use multimodal texts in a variety of settings (Serafini, 2014). Therefore, the inclusion of graphic novels and comic books should be considered in the teaching-learning process of millennial learners.

As mentioned above, many students who can read fluently have difficulties in writing. Clydesdale (2008) points out that they have ideas, but lack the written language skills to get started, follow a sequence of ideas, and reach a logical conclusion. Students often ask if they can draw as they write and, thus, support their ideas about language. If they are allowed to use words and pictures, they will be able to solve narrative problems that they would otherwise not be able to solve if they used only words. Like reading, comics provide a scaffold for students to experience success in their writing (Clydesdale, 2008; Gómez-Trigueros & Ruiz-Bañuls, 2019).

The creation of comics in the classroom becomes an interdisciplinary activity, as it sets in motion a wide range of mechanisms that affect the different areas of any educational action: communication, learning, languages, human relations, among others. The process of comic creation essentially involves placing students in the role of information generators, enabling them to understand all stages of communication, from its initiation by the sender to its reception by the reader (López, 2011). Bitz (2004) corroborates much of what López asserts as he states that “children discover meaningful dimensions of their worlds when they can explore them through creative arts, including comic books” (p. 575).

López (2011) claims that the graphic novel works with different linguistic techniques such as monologue, dialogue, and colloquial expressions. Such techniques are not often worked on in a classroom and they can be improved through the creation of comics. On the other hand, having learners create their own graphic novel or comic book gives the students a chance to be an active element in the learning process, providing strong motivation, as well as fostering communication, group integration and cohesion, and critical thinking.

Apart from that, Eisner (2008) states that an image has the ability to effectively communicate profound depths and evoke a specific range of emotions. Furthermore, Schwarz (2006) asserts that “the graphic novel offers an engaging medium for asking students to analyse information and persuasion in different ways” (p. 61). Hence, comics go beyond mere superficial entertainment and can be considered as powerful tools for education.

Many graphic novels and comic books deal with social and political issues. Within each comic book or graphic novel, an ideology and a unique worldview are embedded,

providing a platform to explore diverse perspectives (Carter,2007). Schwarz (2006) adopts a similar stance by stating that by using these materials in the classroom, students gain the opportunity to delve into the reflected lifestyles, values, and beliefs, often challenging stereotypes and broadening their understanding of different cultures. This process activates their knowledge, attitudes, and strategic skills, enabling them to approach various cultures in a more enriching manner. Thus, comics serve as a valuable resource in language learning, as they not only entertain but also offer profound insights into sociocultural issues (Carter, 2007; Carleton 2014).

Carleton (2014) defines the term *conscientization* as a “pedagogical process defined by critical engagement with understandings of the world that leads people to actively reject established rationalizations of unequal power relations and oppression” (p. 161). This author argues that comic books and graphic novels provide a valuable opportunity to cultivate critical consciousness as they empower readers to actively construct meaning, engage in critical interpretation, and consciously reflect upon and connect with specific messages.

Ultimately, comics, with their inherent ability to engage and captivate, are well-suited to teaching students about morals and ethics. They provide a platform for exploring diverse perspectives and offer a broader range of voices compared to traditional textbooks. By incorporating these materials into the curriculum, discussions on important issues like social justice can be sparked, fostering critical thinking and dialogue. In addition, the potential of comics for conscientization is significant, so educators can harness these popular resources to encourage positive change in learners (Schwarz, 2006; Carter, 2007; Carleton 2014).

3.2. Promoting gender equity and gender equality in the classroom

The pursuit of gender equality is a key objective embraced by the United Nations. In present times, there is considerable controversy surrounding the issue of gender equity in education. This concern has gained significant attention due to ongoing discussions and actions aimed at addressing the problem. In fact, world leaders united in 2015 to pledge their commitment towards creating a more equal society, as evidenced by the signing of the United Nations resolution that established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, n.d.).

Despite the progress made towards achieving gender equality, girls continue to face challenges in accessing quality education and achieving academic success. Gender bias in the classroom has been identified as one of the key factors that contribute to gender-based disparities in education (Chotim, 2022). Teachers play a crucial role in promoting gender equity and gender equality in the classroom, as they are responsible for creating a safe and inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive (Aksu, 2005; Vu & Pham, 2022). Therefore, it is essential to explore ways in which teachers can promote gender equity in the classroom and address the challenges to prevent this social injustice.

Gender equity and gender equality are two concepts that are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings. Gender equity refers to the fair treatment of individuals, regardless of gender, with a focus on addressing historical and systemic inequalities. Gender equality, on the other hand, refers to the idea that all individuals, regardless of gender, should have equal rights, opportunities, and resources (Mahato, 2022). In the context of education, gender equity and gender equality are crucial for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their gender.

The classroom is a critical space for promoting gender equity and gender equality, as it is where students develop their attitudes and beliefs about gender roles and where they encounter the structures and practices that perpetuate gender-based inequalities. Aragonés-González et al (2020) assert that sexist stereotypes that endure within the educational setting serve to perpetuate culturally-defined gender roles, both male and female, through the language used in classrooms and textbooks, as well as the disparate treatment based on gender. These factors collectively impede the advancement of gender equality, to the extent that certain authors regard it as a primary flaw within the education system. Aksu (2005), and Vu and Pham (2022) corroborate much of what these authors state as they declare that the overall makeup of the school community, coupled with the behaviours exhibited by its members, significantly contribute to the widening of the gender gap. This gap can be understood as a distinction in the treatment and societal expectations imposed upon men and women, as well as the disparities in their respective accomplishments and endeavours.

Despite that, in the field of education, there exists a strong commitment to implementing initiatives aimed at fostering equitable education, conducting research on gender inequality within educational contexts, and implementing measures to combat this prevailing social injustice. As highlighted by Mujica (2020), achieving a genuinely impactful education necessitates the integration of moral education within the educational framework. This entails fostering an understanding and consciousness among both girls and boys regarding gender-based violence, instilling values of equality, equity, and respect for human rights, and actively promoting strategies to cultivate a gender-inclusive perspective.

3.3. Cooperative learning strategies to improve writing skills

The acquisition of writing skills holds immense importance, not only for students but also for individuals of all ages. Writing is an essential skill that is required in many aspects of life, enabling individuals to express their thoughts and ideas coherently and effectively. Harmer (2004) affirms that “being able to write is a vital skill for ‘speakers’ of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their own first language” (p. 3). However, writing poses a significant challenge for language learners compared to other skills. To address this challenge and promote the development of writing skills, educators have resorted to different methods. One of them is Cooperative Learning (CL), a pedagogical approach that emphasises learner-centered methods. According to Kagan (1994), and Johnson and Johnson (1999), CL has gained significant popularity in recent years as a global trend in education and has emerged as a recommended method specifically for teaching writing.

In his book, Harmer (2004) states that writing involves several cognitive processes, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Raimes (1983) agrees with Harmer, adding that writing requires the application of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax rules to create a coherent and meaningful message. Furthermore, proficient writing is a complex skill that requires practice and feedback to improve. It serves as a gateway to self-expression and is essential for academic, professional, and personal pursuits.

In the context of learning English as a Second Language (ESL), writing “reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that we [teachers] have been teaching our students” (Raimes, 1983, p. 3). Additionally, Harmer (2004) suggests that writing promotes students’ attention to accurate language usage, as they consider how

language is employed throughout the writing process. As writing is a cognitive process that involves planning and multiple revisions before the final version is produced (Yusuf et al., 2019), this engagement stimulates language development by challenging students to address the linguistic issues that arise during their writing endeavours. Thus, teachers are constantly seeking new and innovative ways to help students improve their writing skills.

One of the methods that educators find effective and suitable for writing teaching is Cooperative Learning (CL). Studies have found that CL can provide a variety of benefits, including increased motivation, higher levels of engagement, peer support, greater language use, among others (Kagan & High, 2002; Slavin, 2011). Yusuf et al (2019) add to the above that CL is a pedagogical approach rooted in social interaction, encouraging learners to work together collaboratively toward a common goal. Furthermore, those authors highlight that CL emerged as a promising approach that can lead to improved writing skills, as students are able to learn from each other, identify areas for improvement, and practice their writing skills in a supportive and collaborative environment.

Johnson and Johnson (1999) define CL as an instructional use in which learners work in small groups with the aim of optimizing their individual learning as well as facilitating the learning of their peers. Mandal (2009) adds to this definition that the underlying principle of CL methods is that by rewarding groups rather than individuals, learners are incentivised to help each other master academic content. In this collaborative group work, each team member not only takes responsibility for his or her own learning, but also actively supports the learning of others (Slavin, 2011), fostering an environment of achievement.

Working cooperatively involves actions such as negotiating and mediating (Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Mandal, 2009). In the field of language education, mediation is an essential component of language acquisition. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (2020) contains a number of mediation descriptors that are “particularly relevant for the classroom in connection with small group, collaborative tasks. The tasks can be organised in such a way that learners have to share different inputs, explaining their information and working together in order to achieve a goal” (p. 36).

According to Johnson and Johnson (2002), five basic principles must be included for a situation to be cooperative:

- **Positive Interdependence:** team members perceive that they need each other to achieve a common goal. The members cannot succeed alone. Every student shares resources, maximising everyone's productivity, and has assigned roles for the good completion of the task.
- **Individual Accountability:** the team's success depends on each member's contributions ensuring that each student is responsible for their own learning. The performance of each student must be assessed, and the results must be communicated to the group and individual members.
- **Face to Face Promotive Interaction:** team members promote each other's learning by sharing, helping, and encouraging efforts to produce. Students explain, discuss, and teach what they know to their peers.
- **Interpersonal and Small Group Skills:** groups cannot function properly if their members do not possess and use the necessary social skills for the work to be done. An appropriate use of social skills involves leadership, trust building, communication, decision-making, and conflict management.
- **Group Processing:** Groups require specific time to reflect on their performance discussing how successful they are in achieving their goals.

In cooperative classrooms, students take on a significant amount of responsibility for their own learning as well as the learning of their teams. However, the teacher remains in charge of guiding the learning process and determining which type of CL is most suitable for their students. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), there are three types:

- **Formal Cooperative Learning Groups:** pupils work together for periods ranging from one hour to several weeks to achieve common goals and jointly complete certain tasks. They are structured on the basis of pre-instructional decisions, specifying the task and cooperative structure, intervening to provide task support, and monitoring groups as they work.
- **Informal Cooperative Learning Groups:** students work together in occasional groups set up for a few minutes to an hour of class time. They are used to thinking about a particular question, or to creating an atmosphere of

expectation about what they are about to learn, thereby preventing students from becoming distracted and maintaining their focus on the lesson.

- Cooperative Base Groups: These are long-term groups with stable members, whose main aim is to mutually support, assist, encourage, and provide backup to each other, fostering optimal academic performance and promoting healthy cognitive and social development.

CL methods can serve many roles within lessons. Slavin (2003), and Kagan and Kagan (2015) suggest some of them to be used in the classroom to enhance students to work together: Jigsaw, Round Table, Peer Editing, Think-Pair-Share (TPS), or Structured Academic Controversy (SAC). All strategies/methods that will be worked on during the innovation proposal will be explained below in “Methodology” in the section “Innovation proposal”.

All things considered, CL encompasses several positive aspects that foster language learning. It facilitates an environment where students take ownership of their learning, while promotes cooperation among them, reducing peer competition or isolation. CL enables students to develop their writing skills by actively engaging in cooperative activities that encourage communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. By working together, students can share the workload, increase their motivation, brainstorm ideas together, and revise each other’s work and, at the same time, they can construct positive relationships and greater self-esteem.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is plenty of research concerning the implementation of comics in the ESL classroom. There are also numerous studies where cooperative learning is used as a strategy to improve writing skills. On the other hand, it was not until the mid-20th century that special significance was given to studies on coeducation and gender equality in education. Today, with the Sustainable Development Goals in mind, researchers are looking at this area with special attention and studies are being carried out.

Aware of the vast number of studies on the use of comics in a L2, some general insight into its success for L2 learning and teaching will be provided. Bitz (2004) created The Comic Book Project and, in 2002, “733 children at 33 after-school sites in New York city brainstormed, outlined, sketched, wrote, and designed original comic books” (p. 574). The goal was “to build literacy and artistic skills while motivating children not only to attend the sessions but also to take ownership of and pride in their work” (p. 575). In his project, “many of the children seemed to make progress, particularly in the area of writing” (p. 584).

Gretchen Schwarz corroborates much of what Bitz asserts in her article “Expanding literacies through graphic novels” (2006). She believes that graphic novels and comic books offer English language teachers “opportunities to engage all students in a medium that expands beyond the traditional borders of literacy” (p. 58). According to her, this medium constitutes an “appealing way for students to analyze literary conventions, character development, dialogue, satire, and language structures as well as develop writing and research skills” (p. 58).

Furthermore, Carter (2007) integrated comics in a grade 9–12 combination class at a high school in 1999. This researcher used the medium to help engage his students “in creative writing and in gaining an understanding of the concept of characterization” (p. 15). What he observed was that “students enjoyed the activity and learned several complex concepts that had previously escaped their grasp” (p. 16). Supporting such a claim is the 2015 article “Graphic novels: An alternative approach to teach English as a foreign language” by Hüseyin Öz and Emine Efecioglu who state that the use of visual aids has consistently played a supportive role in language learning.

Öz and Efecioglu (2015) have conducted a study which investigates “the role of graphic novels in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to International Baccalaureate students (aged 15-16) in TED Ankara College Foundation Private High School” (p. 75). The study has revealed that “a great majority of students perceived graphic novels as entertaining and beneficial in terms of understanding the plot, characters, setting and helping them to imagine and remember the story” (p. 84). Additionally, the study has showed that graphic novels had a notable impact on improving participants’ critical thinking abilities within the English classroom. This line of thinking fits well into what Carleton states in his article “Drawn to change: Comics and critical consciousness” (2014). In his study, Carleton explores the potential of comic books and graphic novels in relation to critical pedagogue Paulo Freire’s theory of critical consciousness. This author analyses two Canadian works with politically progressive subject matter and reaches a conclusion that the academic commitment to comics can be a significant challenge, as well as a valuable opportunity for learners to cultivate critical awareness in the 21st century.

As broached in the previous section, Cooperative Learning (CL) has been identified as an effective and suitable method for teaching writing. Research has shown that CL strategies offer numerous advantages, such as heightened motivation, increased engagement, peer support, and enhanced language use. This approach has emerged as a promising means to improve writing skills by facilitating peer learning, identifying areas for improvement, and providing opportunities for practice within a supportive and collaborative classroom setting (Kagan & High, 2002; Slavin, 2011; Yusuf et al., 2019).

Slavin (2009) asserts that the results in different studies have consistently demonstrated a preference for CL. In his book “*Educational psychology: Theory and practice*”, the author claims that “studies show substantial positive effects on the achievement of students in grades 2 through 12 in all subjects and in all types of schools” (p. 248). He also highlights that “one study found that students in schools that used a variety of cooperative learning methods in almost all subjects for a 2-year period achieved significantly better than did students in traditionally organized schools” (p. 248).

On the other hand, a research study carried out by Yusuf et al (2019) has investigated “the effects of CL to improve the writing skill of ninth grade students in a

middle school in Kuala Lumpur” (p. 1403). The researchers have found that “the incorporation of CL in the writing class had proven to give positive effect on the students’ performance” and that “students scored better in the writing of narrative essays” (p. 1408). Moreover, their study has showed that by fostering a less intimidating learning environment, CL encouraged increased student participation and diminished unhealthy competition among students. Apart from that, CL helped to mitigate the dominant role of the teacher in the classroom.

Among recent CL proponents, Saeideh Ahangari and Zarrin Samadian have investigated the impact of CL on the writing skills of Iranian EFL learners. In their article “The Effect of cooperative learning activities on writing skills of Iranian EFL learners” (2014), the authors proclaim that, in contrast to individualistic and competitive learning approaches, CL has been widely acknowledged as an effective and beneficial teaching method for enhancing learners’ linguistic, social, and communicative competence. These researchers have pointed out that CL activities enhance writing skills in EFL classes and that “all of the components of a piece of writing i.e. content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics” (p. 129) are improved through those activities. Lastly, they have claim that cooperative group work not only nurtures cognitive skills like discovery learning, problem-solving, and creativity but also offers a conducive environment for students to acquire and hone their social skills.

One way for students to acquire and polish their social skills, apart from working cooperatively, is to work on and discuss controversial social issues. The previous section discusses the importance of the implementation of gender equity and equality in education systems. As noted above, the issue has attracted considerable interest in recent times due to ongoing dialogues and efforts to address the problem.

Recent studies (Aksu, 2005; Vu & Pham, 2022) have pointed out that teachers have a vital part to play in advancing gender equality and equity within the educational setting, as it is their duty to establish a secure and inclusive learning atmosphere that fosters the success of all students. Consequently, it is imperative to examine strategies through which teachers can encourage gender equality in the classroom and confront the obstacles that hinder this societal injustice from persisting. Aragonés-González et al (2020) confirm the “need to promote legislation reform based on the coeducational interventions as well as the necessity to promote specific teacher training in gender

and equality” since, according to them, gender equality is “one of the main deficiencies in education” (p. 1).

In her study “Implementation of gender equality in schools” (2022), Chotim illustrates that “gender-neutral schools that serve a strategic role and function in educating pupils for their multi-intelligence grow effectively without being bound by often gender-biased social beliefs” (p. 108). For her, addressing discrimination in education requires the implementation of multiple measures such as “gender-responsive learning, lesson planning, classroom arrangement, language use, and gender-based classroom interaction” (p. 108). Aksu (2005) shares a similar perspective, advocating for the utilization of cooperative small group work as a means to reduce competitiveness and foster a spirit of cooperation.

Vu and Pham (2022) have continued the trend of exploring gender bias in the classroom and show in their study that “gender content, whether ‘traditional’ or ‘progressive’, was largely absent from classroom discourse, as teachers prioritized transferring linguistic knowledge” (p.1). Nevertheless, Chotim (2022) finds that “numerous pictures and sentence formulations that do not reflect gender equality can be found in the realm of learning in schools, such as textbooks” (p. 112). What the researchers do agree on is that there is little emphasis on encouraging students’ critical thinking and self-reflection, especially when it comes to gender-related issues, as evidenced by the lack of class time devoted to these discussions. Teachers often overlook various nuances and aspects of gender issues, and their teaching approach and interactions are sometimes influenced by their own conscious and unconscious biases.

With research showing the importance of including gender equality in the classroom and the advantages of using comics and cooperative learning in second language teaching, it seems a natural progression to create an innovation proposal that works together with these variables.

5. INNOVATION PROPOSAL

This section includes the innovation proposal based on what is set out in the previous section. This didactic proposal is presented in the form of two workshops that will take place in two different periods over the course of a school year. The proposal is aimed at students in the fourth year of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) in the subject of English as a Foreign Language. This innovative proposal aims to create an educational experience that is not only academically enriching but also socially transformative, equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a diverse and equitable world.

In order to better understand this overview of the proposal, this chapter is distributed as follows. It begins with a brief description of the context and the group of pupils where the intervention is proposed to be carried out. Next, the different curricular elements that have been taken into account for its development (objectives, competences and basic knowledge) will be detailed. Next, the methodology used would be explained and some guidelines for implementing the proposal with pupils with special needs would be given. After that, the activities that will take place in the two workshops are detailed together with their timing. Finally, the evaluation, materials and resources are described.

5.1. Contextualisation and target group

The present innovation proposal is designed to be implemented in the Autonomous Community of La Rioja. This proposal could be implemented in either private or public schools. However, the centre chosen here to carry out the intervention is a public centre in the municipality of Logroño, located in a peripheral neighbourhood with a medium socio-economic profile of families.

A model that can be quite representative is set as a target group. A class of 25 pupils where some of them come from different countries and some of them do not speak Spanish at home and have different cultural backgrounds. Despite this, there is no problem of inclusion. Regarding special needs, there are 2 students who presents attention-deficit disorder (ADD); therefore, some strategies will be included. In this way, the particularities that make up a class have been considered so that all students have the same opportunities, ensuring this through the Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

On the other hand, the choice of the group level is determined by the subject matter to be addressed. Thus, it is considered that pupils in the fourth year of CSE, aged between 15 and 16, have a certain degree of maturity and the sufficient capacity for critical thinking to deal with controversial topics such as domestic abuse or the taboo of sex. Students at those ages should demonstrate sensitivity towards gender equality as it is a matter that impacts their daily lives, both within the school environment and in their homes.

5.2. Objectives

The stage objectives to be developed throughout this project are based on *Royal Decree 217/2022*, of 29th March, which establishes the organisation and minimum teaching of CSE. In this proposal, the following objectives are those that have been tried to achieve:

- a)** To assume their duties responsibly, to know and exercise their rights with respect for other people, to practice tolerance, cooperation and solidarity among people and groups, to practice dialogue, consolidating human rights as common values of a plural society and to prepare for the exercise of democratic citizenship.
- b)** To develop and consolidate habits of discipline, study and individual and teamwork as a necessary condition for the effective completion of learning tasks and as a means of personal development.
- c)** To value and respect the difference between the sexes and equality of rights and opportunities between them. Reject stereotypes that imply discrimination between men and women.
- d)** To strengthen their affective capacities in all areas of their personality and in their relations with other people, as well as to reject violence, prejudices of any kind, sexist behaviour and to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- g)** To develop an entrepreneurial spirit and self-confidence, participation, a critical sense, personal initiative, and the ability to learn to learn, plan, make decisions and take responsibility.
- i)** To understand and express oneself in one or more foreign languages in an appropriate manner.

I) Appreciate artistic creation and understand the language of different artistic manifestations, using different means of expression and representation.

5.3. Competences

5.3.1. Key competences

According to *Royal Decree 217/2022*, of 29th March, there are eight key competences that students are expected to acquire throughout the course. The activities developed in the innovation proposal allow the following competences to be acquired:

- Competence in linguistic communication (**CLC**): It involves interacting in oral, written, signed or multimodal form in a coherent and appropriate manner in different spheres and contexts and with different communicative purposes. It involves consciously mobilising the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow understanding, interpreting and critically assessing oral, written, signed or multimodal messages, avoiding the risks of manipulation and misinformation, as well as communicating effectively with others in a cooperative, creative, ethical, and respectful manner.
- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence (**PSLLC**): It implies the ability to reflect on oneself to know oneself, accept oneself and promote others constructively; maintain resilience; and manage lifelong learning.
- Citizenship competence (**CC**): It contributes to students being able to exercise responsible citizenship and to participate fully in social and civic life, based on an understanding of social, economic, legal, and political concepts and structures, as well as knowledge of world events and active engagement in sustainability and the achievement of global citizenship. It includes critical reflection on the major ethical issues of our time and the development of a sustainable lifestyle in line with the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.
- Competence in cultural awareness and expression (**CCA**): It involves understanding and respecting how ideas, opinions, feelings, and emotions are expressed and communicated creatively in different

cultures and through a wide range of artistic and cultural manifestations. It also involves a commitment to understanding, developing, and expressing one's own ideas and sense of place or role in society.

The activities in the sessions promote the development of students' CLC since they involve language learning and practice. Students practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills by engaging in various activities that require reading comic books; debating with their peers; writing an essay and learning linking words to connect ideas and communicate effectively.

On the other hand, it is intended to make learners develop the PSLLC and CC by using active learning methodologies, such as Cooperative Learning, or critical thinking activities. The students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning process and to reflect on their own learning strategies. Furthermore, the activities encourage students to reflect on gender equality, on their experiences and share their thoughts and feelings with others, which can help promote empathy and understanding, dialogue and respect for different opinions.

Students will put into practice the CCAE by appreciating, reading, and discussing different graphic novels on gender equality. In addition, students develop the process of creating valuable ideas and solutions, and innovative prototypes by creating a comic-book decalogue of clues to know if someone is in an unhealthy relationship.

5.3.2. Operational descriptors

The operational descriptors (OD) of the key competences are an important frame of reference to define the specific competences of each subject, together with the objectives of the stage. The relationship between the OD and the specific competencies (SC) makes it possible to assess the degree of acquisition of the key competencies (KC). Therefore, the assessment of the SC is fundamental to measure whether the competences and objectives foreseen for the stage have been achieved.

5.3.3. Specific competences

According to *Royal Decree 217/2022*, of 29th March, there are six specific competences that students are expected to acquire throughout the course. The activities developed in this proposal allow the following competences to be acquired:

- Understand and interpret texts of commonly used discursive genres expressed clearly and in the standard language, seeking reliable sources and making use of strategies such as inference of meaning, to extract the overall meaning and main ideas and assess their content in specific communicative situations (**SC1**). The most suitable descriptor is CLC2:

CLC2: Understand, interpret, and critically evaluate oral, written, signed or multimodal texts in the personal, social, educational, and professional spheres to participate in different contexts in an active and informed way and to construct knowledge.

- Produce original texts of common discourse genres, of medium length, simple and clearly organised, using strategies such as planning, compensation or self-repair, to express relevant messages creatively, appropriately, and coherently and to respond to specific communicative purposes (**SC2**). The most suitable descriptors are CLC1, PSLLC5, and CCAE3:

CLC1: Express him/herself in oral, written, signed or multimodal form with coherence, correctness, and appropriateness to different social contexts, and participates in communicative interactions with a cooperative and respectful attitude both to exchange information, create knowledge and transmit opinions, and to build personal links.

PSLLC5: Plan medium-term objectives and develops metacognitive feedback processes to learn from mistakes in the knowledge construction process.

CCAЕ3: Express ideas, opinions, feelings, and emotions through cultural and artistic productions, integrating their own body and developing self-esteem, creativity, and a sense of their place in society, with an empathetic, open, and collaborative attitude.

- Interact with other people, with increasing autonomy, using cooperation strategies, using analogue and digital resources, and being respectful of courtesy rules to respond to specific communicative purposes (**SC3**). The most suitable descriptors are CLC5, PSLLC3, and CC3:

CLC5: Place his/her communicative practices at the service of democratic coexistence, dialogue-based conflict resolution and equal rights for all people, avoiding discriminatory uses and abuses of power, to promote not only the effective but also the ethical use of the different communication systems.

PSLLC3: Proactively understand other people's perspectives and experiences and incorporate them into their learning, to participate in group work, distributing and accepting tasks and responsibilities fairly and using cooperative strategies.

CC3: Understand and analyse fundamental and current ethical problems, critically considering their own and other people's values, and developing their own judgements to confront moral controversy with an attitude of dialogue, argumentative, respectful, and opposed to any type of discrimination or violence.

Table 1 presents the specific competencies to be developed in the innovation proposal, as well as their relationship with the operational descriptors. This connection makes it possible to assess the level of acquisition of the key competencies.

Table 1

Relation of specific competences, operational descriptors, and key competences

Specific Competences (SC)	Operational Descriptors (OD)	Key competences (KC)
SC1	CLC2	CLC
SC2	CLC1, PSLLC5, CCAE3	CLC, PSLLC, CCAE
SC3	CLC5, PSLLC3, CC3	CLC, PSLLC, CC

5.4. Basic knowledge

According to the *Decree 42/2022*, of July 13th, there are three blocks which contain the contents or Basic knowledge (BK) for the First Foreign Language. The content included in the proposal is as follows:

Table 2

List of contents to be worked on in the innovation proposal

<p>A. Communication.</p> <p>2.1. Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Predicting the contents of a text from titles, headings, entries, headings.• Inferring the meaning of a section of text from the text as a whole. <p>2.2. Production and Co-production</p> <p>2.2.1. Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying the main ideas to be conveyed, limiting the message to what is remembered and the means available to express it.• Recognising the type of text and its typical structure in order to organise information coherently. <p>3. Mediation</p> <p>3.1 Activities</p> <p>Mediation of texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paraphrasing, explanation, synthesis, and translation of an oral or written text. <p>Mediation of concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration in a working group. <p>3.2 Strategies</p> <p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reformulation of the text to make it more comprehensible.• Encouragement of group work. <p>4. Communicative functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expression of opinion through a variety of expressions.• Simple arguments. <p>5. Contextual models and discursive genres</p> <p>5.2 Textual structure</p> <p>Overall structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design: formats, patterns, and graphic elements. <p>5.2.2. Microstructure: mechanisms of coherence and cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connectors and linking expressions. <p>5.3.2. Written genres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short graphic stories (Comprehension) <p>6. Linguistic units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expression of condition (conditionals 0, 1, 2 and 3 with <i>if</i> and <i>unless</i>). <p>B. Multilingualism and reflection on learning.</p> <p>2.2. Cognitive and rote learning strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative work: sharing resources; regular collaborative review and practice.
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5.5. Methodology

In order to address the obstacles encountered in education, it is necessary to explore innovative methodologies that can effectively navigate the evolving needs of today's society within the educational system. Although it is true that there is no singular approach that guarantees success in learning a second language, Second Language Teaching/Foreign Language Teaching should adopt an eclectic methodology that combines different methods and educational models to attain more favourable outcomes. Therefore, a series of methodologies and models seen during the Master's Degree in Teaching have been taken into account when designing the proposal.

On the one hand, the approach followed in this innovation proposal will mainly be based on Communicative Language Teaching, also known as Communicative Approach. This approach emphasizes communication as the primary function of language and aims to enhance students' communicative competence, which encompasses various interconnected competencies such as linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence (Richards, 2006). The Communicative Approach encompasses a range of methods including Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

TBLT will be implemented as it focuses on the use of tasks as the central organising principle in language teaching. This methodology emphasises the importance of using language in a practical and real-world context. Therefore, TBLT involves completing real-world activities inside the classroom to develop language skills that can be applied in everyday life (Willis, 2004). Besides TBLT, some educational models will be implemented.

One of them is Cooperative Learning (CL), which was discussed in detail in the first chapter "Theoretical Framework". As stated in that chapter, CL enables students to develop their writing skills by actively engaging in cooperative activities that encourage communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. By working together, students can share the workload, increase their motivation, brainstorm ideas together, and revise each other's work and, at the same time, they can construct positive relationships and greater self-esteem. The CL strategies (Slavin, 2003; Kagan & Kagan, 2015) to be used during the proposal are the following:

- Jigsaw: a model in which students work in heterogeneous groups with academic material that has been broken down into sections for each member. Learners from different groups who possess the same expertise come together to exchange ideas, deepen their understanding, and share thoughts. Subsequently, these experts return to their respective team members to teach them what they have learned and experienced.
- Praise-Question-Polish: a model in which students engage a fellow student as a peer reviewer to provide feedback on an initial draft. This concise editing approach allows learners to improve their own writing by critically evaluating the writing of the peers.
- Round Table: a model employed for brainstorming. Initially, the instructor poses questions that have multiple possible answers. Teams share one piece of paper to write down the ideas. Group members take turns to add their own idea, passing around the paper several times among the rest of the members.
- Peer Editing: a model which allows peers to read and edit a piece of writing, highlighting mistakes and suggesting improvements. This process benefits both the writer and the peer editor. The writer receives valuable input and guidance to enhance their writing, while the peer editor gains a better understanding of how to improve their own writing through the act of providing feedback.
- Think-Pair-Share (TPS): a model in which students initially engage in independent thinking before being directed to discuss their ideas with a nearby classmate (Pair). Subsequently, the groups collectively Share their discussions and insights, fostering ongoing dialogue.
- Structured Academic Controversy (SAC): a model which involves structured debates or discussions around an issue. Controversial issues are learnt and discussed from multiple perspectives by small teams of students. In such teams, students have the opportunity to gain insights into the opinions and perspectives of others while expressing their own. They aim to engage in respectful and polite discussions, seeking agreement with ideas they find convincing and attempting to persuade others when they disagree.
- Numbered Heads Together: a model in which students number off, and the teacher poses a question and announces the time limit. Students put their

heads together, do the activity, and ensure all members can answer. The teacher then calls a number, and students with that number answer.

- Talking Chips: a model in which students have chips, and during a discussion, they place their chip in the centre of the table each time they talk.
- Round Robin: a model in which the teacher assigns a topic/question with multiple possible answers and students take turns responding orally.
- Gallery Walk: a model which allows students to share ideas and respond to meaningful questions or problem-solving situations as they walk throughout the classroom.

Another appropriate model for the implementation of the proposal is the Workshop Model. This instructional practice emphasises active learning, student engagement and its goal is to support learners in reading and writing. This model involves structuring classroom instruction into three parts, typically including a mini-lesson, practice, and a debrief or concluding reflection. The use of workshops promotes student autonomy, collaboration, and enhanced comprehension of the subject matter (Lynette, 2023).

Finally, another pedagogical approach implemented will be Flipped Learning. This approach transitions from providing instruction to a group of learners to individual learning, and subsequently transforms the group setting into an interactive learning environment facilitated by the teacher. In this approach, students apply concepts and actively engage with the subject matter, fostering creativity and dynamic participation within the group (Flipped Learning Network, 2014).

By integrating different methodologies and models, the teacher provides students with a range of learning experiences that help them develop communicative competence in the target language. Furthermore, the application of these models and methodologies creates a language learning environment that is engaging, authentic, and challenging, and provides learners with opportunities to use the language in meaningful ways. Thus, students' willingness to communicate is fostered with motivating topics, reinforcing their oral skills.

5.6. Special needs

The new law approved in 2020, the Organic Law that modifies LOE of 2006 (LOMLOE), integrates a series of provisions to guarantee the necessary resources to respond to the specific needs of students, especially students with disabilities, and to promote inclusive education (*Royal Decree 217/2022*). Thus, all schools are bound to create a plan devoted to attention to diversity. It is also important to work closely with the students' families, other teachers, and professionals to ensure that everyone works together to support the students' learning and development. As mentioned above, one student presents attention-deficit disorder (ADD). That is why a different curricular adaptation is needed for this kind of pupils to ensure the acquisition of the contents.

Some potential intervention strategies and curricular adaptations that could be helpful for students with ADD are the following:

- The teacher should provide a structured and organized learning environment, with clear routines and expectations.
- It is also highly recommended to break down complex tasks into smaller and more manageable steps and provide instructions clearly and concisely.
- Positive reinforcement and frequent feedback help students remain focused.
- The teacher should incorporate frequent movement breaks to help students to stay alert and engaged.

Some of these strategies are achieved through the incorporation of CL in the classroom.

5.7. Activities and timing

All the elements of the proposal collected and defined so far largely shape the activities and timetable proposed here and given the preliminary nature of the proposal, it will be positioned accordingly. Thus, the project will consist of two different workshops to be held in November and March. The month of November will be chosen because the aim is to work on cooperative learning techniques from the beginning of the course. In this way, the students would be familiar with several of the techniques that will be worked on in the workshops and the group dynamics would already be known without wasting too much time in going into the instructions in depth. Likewise,

the second workshop would take place in March, as the idea is that in the previous months, in specific activities, work would continue with the base groups that would be formed during the first workshop. Thus, it would be checked whether the base groups could function outside the context of the workshops during the months prior to the second workshop in order to make the necessary modifications in time to ensure that the groups are consolidated and to create a comfortable and trusting environment for them during the second workshop.

Each workshop will have a total duration of 4 sessions; each session will last 55 minutes and will take place once a week on the last day of English class. The choice to hold the workshops for one hour per week will be made because this would interfere less with other activities in the English class and, above all, because the students would have time to prepare some of the activities that they would be asked to do from one week to the next.

As previously discussed, the activities are aimed at students of 4th CSE. As for the distribution of pupils, 5 groups of 5 people each will be formed, which will be the base groups for the two workshops. Depending on the activities to be carried out and the cooperative learning techniques to be used, different teams may be formed at different times. However, the core group will be maintained throughout the two workshops.


On the other hand, the workshops aim to promote gender equality and improve writing skills through cooperative learning. To this end, two comics with a gender equality theme will be used as an excuse to engage the pupils. It is worth mentioning that the students have previously worked on the linguistic units that are worked on in the workshops. The aim of these two workshops is to consolidate the students' learning of these language units and to encourage them to reflect critically on the situation of the main characters in the comics. These workshops are an excellent training and awareness-raising tool for the students, as the aim is for them to reflect on gender equality, to develop greater empathy and assertiveness skills while working on the linguistic aspect of the language.

The first workshop consists of reading a comic book and creating a decalogue in the form of a comic book about clues to know if someone is in an unhealthy relationship. This will be done through activities including brainstorming, learning how to make a comic strip and create cartoons, participating in discussions. The second

workshop consists of reading a comic book and creating an essay on the current situation of women in Iran. This will be done through activities including researching and analysing how the role of women in Iranian society has evolved since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and how women are addressing current challenges, participating in debates and discussions, and learning expressions for doing so.

As mentioned before, each workshop consists of 4 sessions. To show an overall view of it, various tables have been included. In them, the following items can be found: the activities and a short description of each of them; the timing devoted to each activity; the specific competence to be developed (SC); the cooperative learning technique to be used (CL technique); and the materials.

WORKSHOP 1

SESSION 1				
ACTIVITY		SC	CL TECHNIQUE ¹	MATERIALS ²
1.1. <i>Presentation</i> : The teacher explains the task to be carried out, the objectives and the outcome. The teacher shows the students examples of comics that feature strong female characters or are written or illustrated by women. Discussion of the importance of representation and diversity in media.	10'	SC3		
1.2. <i>Comic book introduction</i> : The teacher introduces the comic book that the students will read and summarise. She/he shows them the cover and a few pages to generate interest and curiosity. The teacher asks the students to preview the comic book by looking at the pictures, captions, speech bubbles, and any other visual clues. Then, she/he asks them to make predictions about the story based on their preview. Students share their predictions by first answering individually and then discussing with a classmate.	10'	SC1 SC3	Think-Pair-Share	<i>Dragonslippers: This is what an abusive relationship looks like.</i> Rosalind B. Penfold
1.3. <i>Comic book reading</i> : Division of the comic into sections and assignment of each section to small groups of students ³ . Each group reads and analyses their section and then shares their findings with the rest of the class. In this way, students can work together to understand the comic as a whole. After they finish reading, students discuss with their group members and compare their predictions to what actually happened in the story.	20'	SC1 SC3	Jigsaw	<i>Dragonslippers: This is what an abusive relationship looks like.</i> Rosalind B. Penfold
1.4. <i>Rewriting scenes</i> : Students choose a scene from the comic book that represents a gender stereotype and re-write it to challenge the stereotype. Each student is assigned a number and independently selects a scene from the comic book that showcases a gender stereotype, creating alternative rewrites to challenge the stereotype. The teacher poses questions related to the scenes and rewrites. Students then discuss their responses as a group, reaching a consensus. When a number is called out, one student from each group shares their group's answer.	15'	SC2 SC3	Numbered Heads Together	<i>Dragonslippers: This is what an abusive relationship looks like.</i> Rosalind B. Penfold

¹ Each technique is explained in the section "Methodology".

² The materials used during the proposal are listed in Annexes (Annex II) under the name "Materials", followed by the number of the activity and the name of each document.

³ The base groups will be of 5 pupils.


SESSION 2				
ACTIVITY	🕒	SC	CL TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
2.1. <i>Warm-up</i> : The teacher asks students to think about the qualities of a healthy and respectful relationship. After a few minutes, students pair up and share their ideas with each other.	5'	SC3	Think-Pair-Share	
2.2. <i>Overview of the topic</i> : The teacher makes a brief overview of the topic of abusive or unhealthy relationships, emphasising the importance of understanding and recognising the signs. She/he shares relevant statistics or real-life examples to illustrate the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence. Discussion of the significance of critical thinking and reflection in addressing these issues.	10'	SC1 SC3		<i>Violence against women.</i> World Health Organization <i>Violence against women and girls – what the data tell us.</i> World Bank
2.3. <i>Brainstorming</i> : In their core groups, students contribute ideas about warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. Students use conditionals ⁴ to discuss potential signs. They generate as many ideas as possible within the given time frame.	15'	SC2 SC3	Round Table	<i>Conditionals.</i> Perfect English Grammar
2.4. <i>Hypothetical Situations</i> : In their core groups, students engage in hypothetical scenarios involving the topic, discussing them, considering the potential signs and implications of the situations. Students should use conditionals to discuss the hypothetical outcomes and consequences.	10'	SC2 SC3	Talking Chips	<i>Conditionals.</i> Perfect English Grammar
2.5. <i>Discussion</i> : Students work in their groups again and discuss a series of questions. They share their ideas and experiences with each other and listen respectfully to different perspectives.	15'	SC2 SC3	Numbered Heads Together	

⁴ It is important to clarify that students have previously worked with conditionals, and this is a mere review of them.


SESSION 3				
ACTIVITY	🕒	SC	CL TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
3.1. <i>Warm-up</i> : Revision of the previous session’s brainstorming activity about warning signs of an unhealthy relationship.	5’	SC2		
3.2. <i>Creation of comics</i> : The teacher introduces the concept of creating comics by providing a brief overview. She/he shows a brief video that explains the basics of creating comics, including how to draw characters and backgrounds, how to use speech bubbles and captions, and how to create a sequential narrative. Within each small group, assignation of a specific aspect of creating comics, such as panel layout, speech bubbles, character design, or visual storytelling techniques. Each member will become an “expert member” focusing on her/his assigned aspect. Experts gather information and collaborate sharing their findings and discussing ideas. Once they have the information, each expert returns to his or her core group, sharing their expertise on their assigned aspect.	25’	SC1 SC3	Jigsaw	<i>Elements of comics.</i> Difference Engine <i>How to Create a Comic Strip.</i> Learn
3.3. <i>Creation of a vignette</i> : The teacher provides students with a list of common gender stereotypes. Students, individually, create a vignette of two panels that challenges and breaks down one of these stereotypes. Once everyone has completed their vignettes, they circulate around the classroom to read and provide feedback on each other’s creation. Students can leave sticky notes or comments near the compositions to offer suggestions, ask questions, or highlight strengths. After the gallery walk, students integrate the feedback and suggestions into a final piece. The teacher finishes the session by explaining the purpose of the next session, which is to create a decalogue in the form of a comic book that raises awareness about warning signs of an abusive relationship.	25’	SC2 SC3	Gallery Walk	<i>Examples of gender stereotypes.</i> Gender Equality Law Center <i>Comic strips templates.</i> Canva

SESSION 4				
ACTIVITY	🕒	SC	CL TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
<p>4.1. <i>Decalogue creation</i>: As the students have previously worked on the warning clues of being in an abusive relationship, they now have to create a decalogue with those clues. Each pupil will have two clues, which they will have to turn into comic strips. Each clue will be made into two panels.</p> <p>After completing their comic strips, students will exchange their work with a classmate and provide feedback on each other's writing and artwork. This allows students to improve their work through constructive criticism and collaboration, gaining new insights into how they can improve their piece, and learning from the creation of their peers.</p> <p>Once the students have their final creations, they will meet with their group to put all the clues together to form the decalogue.</p>	35'	SC2 SC3	Peer Editing	<i>Comic strips templates.</i> Canva
<p>4.2. <i>Final reflection</i>: The teacher displays the decalogues created by each group around the classroom. Students walk around, read the decalogues, and leave sticky notes with positive feedback, questions, or additional thoughts.</p> <p>In their core groups, students reflect on the decalogues and the journey of the four sessions, thinking about what they have learned, about changes in their perspectives, and the importance of gender equality and healthy relationships.</p>	15'	SC1 SC2 SC3	Gallery Walk + Round Robin	
<p>4.3. <i>Self-assessment questionnaire</i>: Students fill in a self-assessment questionnaire about their performance in the group work. This self-assessment questionnaire also seeks to assess the feasibility of Cooperative Learning.</p>	5'			<i>Self-assessment questionnaire</i> (Annex I. Assessment)

WORKSHOP 2

SESSION 1				
ACTIVITY		SC	CL TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
1.1. <i>Presentation</i> : The teacher explains the task to be carried out, the objectives and the outcome. She/he asks the students about their experiences and opinions on comics since the previous workshop.	5'	SC3		
1.2. <i>Overview of the topic</i> : The teacher provides the students with a set of discussion questions related to the role of women in Iran. Students work in their core groups to discuss the questions and share their insights.	10'	SC2 SC3	Round Robin	
1.3. <i>Comic book reading</i> : Division of the comic into sections and assignment of each section to a small group of students. Each group reads and analyses their section and then shares their findings with the rest of the class. In this way, students can work together to understand the comic as a whole.	20'	SC1 SC3	Jigsaw	<i>Embroideries.</i> Marjane Satrapi
1.4. <i>Discussion</i> : The teacher asks open-ended questions to stimulate reflection and critical thinking about the themes and messages of the comic book. Students reflect individually. After a few minutes, they pair up and share their insights and perspectives with a classmate. Finally, a few pairs of students share their discussions with the whole group.	15'	SC2 SC3	Think-Pair-Share	<i>Embroideries.</i> Marjane Satrapi
1.5. <i>Explanation Flipped Classroom</i> : The teacher explains that students have to search for information on the situation of women in Iran and the evolution of women's roles since the Islamic Revolution. Within each core group, assignation of a specific aspect or theme related to the topic. Aspects include politics, education, employment, family dynamics, and cultural influences.	5'			


Flipped Classroom: Students search for information of their specific aspect related to the topic and take notes on the main ideas and arguments presented. This way, each member of the core groups become an “expert member” focusing on her/his assigned aspect. In the next session, the students will meet with the “expert members” to share all the information they have found.

SESSION 2				
ACTIVITY		SC	CL TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
2.1. <i>Warm-up:</i> Students take a few minutes to reflect individually on their research and learning about the topic. After a few minutes, they pair up and share their insights and perspectives with a classmate.	5'	SC3	Think-Pair-Share	
2.2. <i>Gathering information:</i> In their expert groups, students share their findings and insights on the topic. They discuss and synthesise the information to gain a comprehensive understanding of their assigned aspect. Once they have the information, each expert returns to her/his core group. Each student takes turns sharing their expertise on their assigned aspect. Students present key points, provide examples, and discuss, compare, and contrast the different aspects presented.	25'	SC2 SC3	Jigsaw	
2.3. <i>Introducing opinion expressions:</i> The teacher explains the importance of expressing opinions effectively in discussions or debates and introduces students to various expressions to present ideas, show respect for different perspectives, and foster meaningful dialogue. The teacher provides a list of expressions, explains its meaning and appropriate usage, and give examples of how each expression can be used in a sentence or within a discussion or debate context.	10'	SC1		<i>How to effectively express your opinion in an argument.</i> ESLBUZZ <i>Phrases for expressing an opinion.</i> British Council
2.4. <i>Expressing opinions:</i> The teacher prepares a set of opinion cards with different statements related to the session’s topic, distributes the opinion cards to students, and encourage to use the expressions they have learned. Students initiate a communicative exchange to share their opinion on the statement mentioned on their opinion card.	10'	SC2 SC3	Talking Chips	

Flipped Classroom: Students watch a video and give their opinion on the topic by recording a short 90-second video with the digital tool *Flipgrid*: <https://info.flip.com/es-us.html>

The aim is for students to practice and use the expressions seen in the previous session to expressing opinions effectively. In the next session, students will participate in a debate on one of the topics being discussed in the comic book.

MATERIALS: *Woman. Life. Freedom: Honoring the activism of Iranian women and girls.* Equality Now

SESSION 3				
ACTIVITY		SC	CL TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
<p>3.1. <i>Warm-up:</i> The teacher asks students to reflect on their personal experiences or observations regarding patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes in family relationships. She/he provides some questions to facilitate a brief discussion.</p> <p>In their core groups, students share their ideas and experiences with each other and listen respectfully to different perspectives.</p>	10'	SC2 SC3	Round Robin	
<p>3.2. <i>Debate:</i> The teacher provides each group with a statement or prompt related to the previous topic. She/he assigns each group a specific viewpoint or perspective to argue either in favour or against the statement.</p> <p>Groups will have a set amount of time to discuss and prepare their arguments. During the discussion, students should use the expressions seen in the previous session to expressing opinions effectively. The teacher conducts the debate within each group, encouraging students to present their arguments and counterarguments. After the debate, each group to summarise their main points and conclusions.</p>	30'	SC2 SC3	Structured Academic Controversy	

<p>3.3. <i>Linking words</i>⁵ review: The teacher reminds students of the importance of using linking words and phrases to create a cohesive and logical flow of ideas. She/he displays a list of connectives and provides brief explanations of their usage.</p> <p>The teacher displays a series of argumentative statements or incomplete sentences around the classroom. She/he assigns each core group to a different station. In their groups, students read the statement and continue the argument by using an appropriate linking word or phrase. After a designated time, each group rotates to the next station and continues the argument started by the previous group.</p>	15'	SC2 SC3	Gallery Walk	<p><i>Linking words.</i> English Teacher</p> <p><i>Transition words.</i> Sharing 4 Teachers</p>
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⁵ It is important to clarify that the students have previously worked on the coherence/cohesion connectives, and this is merely a review of them. For this reason, not all the connectives are worked on, but only a small part of them.

Flipped Classroom: Students should seek information about the typical structure of an argumentative essay to organise information coherently. In the following session, students will write an argumentative essay on the following topic: “Why is education important for promoting gender equality and social justice in Iran?”.

SESSION 4				
ACTIVITY	🕒	SC	CL TECHNIQUE	MATERIALS
<p>4.1. <i>Argumentative essay creation:</i> Students write individually an argumentative essay draft on the following topic: “Discuss the empowerment of women in Iran”.</p> <p>The teacher asks them to explore the historical context of women’s empowerment in Iran, examine the cultural and societal factors that impact women’s rights, and discuss the progress made and the ongoing challenges they face.</p>	30’	SC2		
<p>4.2. <i>Constructive feedback:</i> Students work in pairs taking turns to share their work and receive feedback.</p> <p>They begin by offering praise and highlighting the strengths of their partner’s work, followed by asking clarifying questions to deepen understanding. Finally, they provide suggestions for improvement to polish the work.</p> <p>Afterwards, students improve and polish their works.</p>	15’	SC1 SC2 SC3	Praise-Question-Polish	
<p>4.3. <i>Final reflection:</i> The teacher facilitates a whole-class discussion by providing guiding questions to stimulate the reflection.</p> <p>Students reflect on their learning journey, sharing their perspectives, experiences and thoughts regarding gender equality and their engagement in group work.</p>	10’	SC3		

In relation to the basic knowledge that is worked on during the two workshops, the relationship between these and the activities can be systematised in the following table:

Table 3*Relation of basic knowledge and activities of the workshops*

Basic Knowledge ⁶	Activities Workshop 1	Activities Workshop 2
Predicting the contents of a text from titles, headings, entries, headings.	1.2	1.3
Inferring the meaning of a section of text from the text as a whole.	1.2, 1.3	1.3, 2.2
Identifying the main ideas to be conveyed, limiting the message to what is remembered and the means available to express it.	1.3, 2.2, 3.3, 4.1	1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, Flipped classroom (session 3), 3.2, 4.1
Recognising the type of text and its typical structure in order to organise information coherently.	3.2	Flipped classroom (session 4)
Paraphrasing, explanation, synthesis, and translation of an oral or written text.	1.3, 3.3, 4.1	1.3, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2
Collaboration in a working group.	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.3, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3
Reformulation of the text to make it more comprehensible.	1.3	1.3, 4.2
Encouragement of group work.	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.3, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3
Expression of opinion through a variety of expressions.		2.3, 2.4, Flipped classroom (session 3), 3.2, 4.1
Simple arguments.	1.4, 2.5	1.4, 2.4, Flipped classroom (session 3), 3.1, 3.2, 4.1
Design: formats, patterns, and graphic elements.	3.2, 3.3	Flipped classroom (session 4), 4.1
Connectors and linking expressions.		3.3, Flipped classroom (session 4), 4.1
Short graphic stories (Comprehension)	1.2, 1.3	1.3
Expression of condition (conditionals 0, 1, 2 and 3 with <i>if</i> and <i>unless</i>).	2.3, 2.4, 4.1	
Collaborative work: sharing resources; regular collaborative review and practice.	1.3, 1.4, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1	1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2

⁶ The “Basic knowledge” section shows all the levels of basic knowledge that are worked on during the workshops as it appears in the *Decree 42/2022*, of July 13th.

5.8. Assessment

5.8.1. Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria (AC), which appeared in the aforementioned *Royal Decree 217/2022*, indicate the expected levels of performance for students in the activities related to the specific competences (SC) at a particular point in their learning process. Table 4 shows the AC that will be considered when evaluating the activities of the innovation proposal, and their connection with the SC.

Table 4*Relation of the assessment criteria and the specific competences*

Assessment criteria	Specific Competences (SC)
1.1. Extract and analyse the overall meaning and main ideas, and select relevant information from oral, written, and multimodal texts on everyday topics, of personal relevance or of public interest close to the learner's experience, expressed clearly and in the standard language through a variety of media.	SC1
2.2. Write and disseminate medium-length texts with acceptable clarity, coherence, cohesion, correctness, and appropriateness to the proposed communicative situation, to the textual typology and to the analogue and digital tools used on everyday matters, of personal relevance or of public interest close to the student's experience, respecting intellectual property and avoiding plagiarism.	SC2
2.3. Select, organise, and apply knowledge and strategies to plan, produce, revise, and cooperate in the elaboration of coherent, cohesive and appropriate texts according to communicative intentions, contextual characteristics, socio-cultural aspects and textual typology, using the most appropriate physical or digital resources depending on the task and the needs of the potential interlocutor to whom the text is addressed.	SC2
3.1. Plan, participate and collaborate actively, through a variety of media, in interactive situations on everyday topics of personal relevance or public interest close to the learner's experience, showing initiative, empathy and respect for linguistic courtesy and digital etiquette, as well as for the different needs, ideas, concerns, initiatives and motivations of the interlocutors.	SC3
3.2. Select, organise, and use appropriate strategies for initiating, maintaining, and terminating communication, taking and giving the floor, requesting and formulating clarifications and explanations, reformulating, comparing and contrasting, summarising, collaborating, debating, problem solving and managing challenging situations.	SC3

5.8.2. Assessment procedures and instruments

According to the *Royal Decree 217/2022*, of 29th March, the assessment of the educational progress of students in CSE shall be continuous, formative, and integrative. The educational curriculum provides a set of tools that allow the assessment process to be carried out within the classroom and, depending on the purpose of the assessment, there are different types of procedures and instruments. In this innovation proposal, both formative and summative assessment will be carried out.

Formative assessment is carried out throughout the teaching-learning process and emphasises the guiding and diagnostic nature of teaching. In this case, there will be a systematic observation and monitoring of the student, which implies considering all the productions developed by the student, both individual and group. These productions include written work, class activities, attitude towards learning, accuracy in language expression, among others. One of the tools to carry out the formative assessment will be a self-assessment questionnaire (Annex I) that students will fill in to assess their performance in the group work. This self-assessment questionnaire also seeks to assess the feasibility of Cooperative Learning. This questionnaire will be done at the end of the first workshop. Thus, with the feedback received from the students, the second workshop can be adapted to ensure that all students have an optimal learning process.

In the case of summative assessment, a written activity will be carried out at the end of the second workshop with the purpose of proving that pupils have assimilated the linguistic contents that are expected. The instrument for assessing this written activity will be a rubric (Annex I). In any case, the assessment procedures will be diverse to be able to adapt to the flexibility required by the assessment itself.

Taking all the above into account, students will be assessed according to the chart below:

Table 5

Unit assessment procedure

Written essay	35%
Collaboration in groups	25%
Motivation and behaviour	15%
Participation in class	15%
Reflection	10%

5.9. Materials and resources

The choice and implementation of materials and resources are crucial and are determined by the educational context in which the innovation proposal is to be developed. The skills and knowledge of the teacher, the skills and familiarity of the students with different resources, and the equipment available in the school must be considered.

On the other hand, the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education plays a fundamental role by providing a wide variety of resources that allow teachers to personalise the design of their classes according to the needs of each moment. Thus, in the workshops we will work with the following teaching materials and resources:

Materials

- Comic books
- Worksheets and handouts
- Video clips
- Infographies

Resources

- Blackboard or digital board
- Computers
- Projector
- Internet connection

As for the comic books used in the innovation proposal, two representative works will be used. One of them is *Dragonslippers: This is what an abusive relationship looks like* by Rosalind B. Penfold. This graphic artist was a woman who, for years, was psychologically, physically, and sexually abused by her cohabiting partner. The Canadian woman - who used the pseudonym Rosalind B. Penfold - was a successful woman in her 30s who ran her own business. Penfold began a relationship with a widowed man, Brian, with four dependent children. She fell deeply in love but soon began to notice signs that Brian was not the kind and loving man he claimed to be. To escape from this and as a way of letting off steam, the author secretly kept a graphic diary. Her experience is recounted in this graphic novel (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Cover of the comic book “*Dragonslippers: This is what an abusive relationship looks like*”

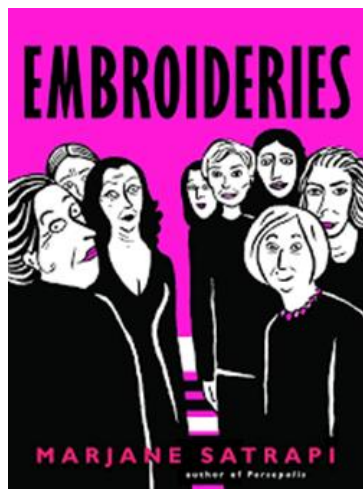


Note. Penfold, R. B. (2005). *Dragonslippers: This is what an abusive relationship looks like*

The second comic book is entitled *Embroideries* by Marjane Satrapi. With tea and pastries as the guiding thread, the author meets with several women from her family, friends, and neighbours to share their most intimate experiences and to elaborate a transgenerational account of the condition of Iranian women. The author uses the graphic novel to discuss themes as universal as personal: arranged marriages since they were minors, life-changing infidelities, attempts to maintain virginity until marriage and the taboo of sex (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Cover of the comic book “Embroideries”



Note. Satrapi, M. (2008). *Embroideries*

Other representative works that could be used as an alternative for this proposal could be: *Drawing Power* by Diane Noomin (2019); *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (2000); *Amazons, Abolitionists, and Activists* by A. D'Amico and Mikki Kendall (2019); *My Body in Pieces* by Marie-Noëlle Hébert (2021); or *The Handmaid's Tale* (Graphic Novel) by Margaret Atwood and Renee Nault (2019).

Regarding the materials, it is intended that the proposal can be developed in most educational centres with digital resources, since it makes use of them. However, this is not intended to highlight a possible digital gap between the different centres in the Autonomous Community of La Rioja. Therefore, it is necessary that the classrooms in which the innovation proposal is implemented have a computer, projector, and internet connection to be able to project all the digital material (videos, questionnaire, etc.). In addition, students must have their own electronic devices to be able to carry out certain activities. On the other hand, it is important to point out that access to the works (graphic novels and comic books) can be done electronically, although it is also possible to work and collaborate with the school library.

In Annex II, the materials, or samples of materials, to be used during the workshops are listed under the name “Materials”, followed by the number of the activity and the name of each document.

6. DISCUSSION

The two workshops incorporate the use of comic books to promote gender equality, student-centered learning, and writing improvement among students. These workshops provide a unique opportunity to integrate comic books and cooperative learning into the curriculum, by promoting active collaboration, critical thinking skills, and an inclusive learning environment where students can learn from one another and develop their writing skills. Likewise, the workshops incorporate a variety of cooperative learning strategies, including think-pair-share, jigsaw, gallery walk, and talking chips to promote communication skills and to develop a deeper understanding of gender equality issues.

The innovation proposal aims to promote the principles of gender equality by ensuring equal participation and positive interdependence among group members. The incorporation of comic books allows students to engage with the topic of gender equality in a visually stimulating and interactive way. The workshops provide opportunities for students to critically analyse and challenge patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes, both in family relationships and broader societal contexts.

The use of cooperative learning not only enhances the students' understanding of gender equality but also improves their writing skills. Through activities such as creating vignettes and writing argumentative essays, students are able to apply the concepts they learn in a practical and meaningful way. For example, peer editing, and the Praise-Question-Polish activities provide valuable insights and suggestions for improvement, fostering a growth mindset and encouraging students to further develop their writing abilities.

However, it must be considered that this proposal may present some challenges and limitations, particularly in terms of addressing the needs of all group members. Some students may find it difficult to work with particular group members, and some groups may struggle to manage their time effectively and complete all tasks within the given timeframe. These challenges highlight the importance of promoting inclusive and diverse group work, and of providing clear instructions and guidance to students.

Furthermore, the implementation of cooperative learning strategies may require additional training and support for educators who may be unfamiliar with these approaches. Educators need to understand the principles and best practices of

cooperative learning and be able to facilitate effective group interactions, provide timely feedback, and manage potential conflicts or unequal participation within groups. As far as learners are concerned, the use of several strategies in the same session can lead to confusion about what is required if instructions are not given clearly enough.

Another possible drawback could be the availability and accessibility of appropriate comic books that address the specific topics of gender equality and challenging stereotypes. It may require careful selection of materials to ensure they align with the learning objectives and are suitable for the students' age and cultural and social context.

In terms of possible future lines of research related to the proposal, the use of multimodal works presents an intriguing opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration between the English, Arts, and History subjects. These subjects can join forces to implement a project where students engage with language, visual elements, and history, allowing for rich connections and cross-curricular learning experiences.

Additionally, this research could explore how the use of comics can challenge gender stereotypes, promote diverse representations, and foster critical thinking and reflection on social issues. Furthermore, future research could also focus on investigating the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing students' writing skills in multimodal contexts. This line of inquiry could explore how cooperative learning strategies specifically designed for writing tasks in the comic format can improve students' narrative development, characterisation, dialogue, and overall writing proficiency.

Finally, it is important to underline that this project is not intended to be rigid, but relatively flexible and can be modified. The material could be changed, and other titles could be used, the number of workshops could be changed or the workshops could be placed at a different time of the academic year, always taking into account the context and the needs of the target group.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Many sexist behaviours, including gender-based violence, are perceived as normal or invisible. Therefore, educating and raising awareness among adolescents is a fundamental task of the education system. Gender equality must be addressed in a comprehensive manner, and measures must be articulated in the educational framework to educate in values of equality and human rights, to prevent new forms of inequality, and for an adequate social coexistence.

The aim of this proposal is to make students aware of this social injustice while working on the linguistic aspect of the English language to make them reflect on gender issues and to promote effective teaching and learning practices. The inclusion of comics as an educational resource and the use of cooperative learning strategies can be useful to achieve these objectives.

Comics are tools that enriches reading, writing and critical thinking. It is a motivating tool for the acquisition of the contents and objectives of the educational curriculum and for the development of moral education. Moreover, the combination of visual elements and written narratives in comics spark creativity, foster students' engagement, and facilitate a deeper exploration of complex social issues.

Furthermore, the incorporation of cooperative learning strategies nurture collaborative skills, promote active participation, and encourage peer feedback and support. Students actively contribute their ideas, engage in debates, and develop their writing skills while working in groups.

In conclusion, the combination of comics, cooperative learning, and gender equality topics offers a promising pathway towards inclusive, engaging, and meaningful education, empowering students to challenge stereotypes, develop critical thinking skills, and become active participants in shaping a more equitable and inclusive society while, at the same time, improving written language skills.

On the other hand, the creation of this innovation proposal is one of the fundamental parts of the Master's course in order to check and demonstrate that everything that is required of a future teacher has been acquired. By designing the workshops, everything that is learnt consciously and unconsciously during the Master's course and during the internship is put into practice. In addition, the elaboration of an innovation

proposal is a good strategy that helps future educators to analyse and reflect critically on the theoretical and practical contents of the Master's Degree; on the methodology used by the different teachers in a classroom; and on the different situations that may arise in it.

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ANNEXES

Annex I. Assessment: *Self-assessment questionnaire and argumentative essay rubric.*

Student Self-assessment: Group Work and Cooperative Learning

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part 1: Evaluate your performance in this project.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I actively contributed to the group work.					
I found it easy to communicate with my group members.					
My ideas and opinions were valued by the group.					
I listened actively to the ideas and opinions of others in the group.					
My group members listened actively to my ideas and opinions.					
The group work was well organized and structured.					
I supported my group members when they needed help.					
I was flexible and willing to learn from the other members of my group.					
The work was shared equally.					
The group work helped me develop my teamwork skills.					
I took initiative where needed.					
The group work was a valuable learning experience for me.					

Part 2: Evaluate the use of cooperative learning strategies in this project.

1. How easy was it to use cooperative learning strategies? (circle the appropriate answer)

- a. Very difficult
- b. Somewhat difficult
- c. Neither easy nor difficult
- d. Somewhat easy
- e. Very easy

2. What challenges did you encounter in using cooperative learning strategies? (Check all that apply)

- Difficulty in understanding the instructions
- Difficulty in working with certain group members
- Difficulty in managing time and tasks
- Difficulty in staying focused and motivated
- Other (please specify)

3. What did you like about the cooperative learning strategies used in the workshop?

4. What did you dislike about the cooperative learning strategies used in the workshop?

5. What suggestions do you have for improving the workshop experience in general?

ASSESSMENT CRITERION (SC2)	2.2. Write and disseminate medium-length texts with acceptable clarity, coherence, cohesion, correctness, and appropriateness to the proposed communicative situation, to the textual typology and to the analogue and digital tools used on everyday matters, of personal relevance or of public interest close to the student's experience, respecting intellectual property and avoiding plagiarism.				
SEQUENCING OF THE CRITERION	ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS				
	UNSATISFACTORY (1-4)	WEAK (5-6)	SATISFACTORY (6-7)	VERY GOOD (7-8)	OUTSTANDING (9-10)
Thesis statement (10%)	The thesis statement is unclear or absent and does not present a clear argument.	The thesis statement is present but vague or general and does not present a strong argument.	The thesis statement is clear and specific and presents a strong argument that is supported throughout the essay.	The thesis statement is clear, specific, and presents a strong argument that is well-supported throughout the essay.	The thesis statement is clear, specific, and presents a compelling argument that is exceptionally well-supported throughout the essay.
Organisation (20%)	The essay is poorly structured and disorganised, with unclear transitions between paragraphs and sections.	The essay is somewhat structured and organised, with some transitions between paragraphs and sections.	The essay is well-structured and organised, with clear transitions between paragraphs and sections.	The essay is well-structured and organised, with clear transitions between paragraphs and sections that effectively guide the reader through the essay.	The essay is exceptionally well-structured and organised, with clear and creative transitions between paragraphs and sections that enhance the reader's understanding and engagement.
Coherence (15%)	The essay is incoherent and illogical, with ideas that do not flow smoothly or logically.	The essay is somewhat coherent and logical, with some ideas that flow smoothly and logically.	The essay is coherent and logical, with ideas that flow smoothly and logically from one to the next.	The essay is coherent and logical, with ideas that flow smoothly and logically from one to the next and that effectively support the thesis statement.	The essay is exceptionally coherent and logical, with ideas that flow smoothly and logically from one to the next and that demonstrate exceptional insight and analysis.
Development of ideas (30%)	The essay presents ideas that are underdeveloped or irrelevant to the thesis statement.	The essay presents some ideas that are relevant to the thesis statement but are underdeveloped or lacking in evidence.	The essay presents ideas that are well-developed and relevant to the thesis statement, with adequate evidence and analysis to support them.	The essay presents ideas that are thoroughly developed and highly relevant to the thesis statement, with ample evidence and analysis to support them.	The essay presents ideas that are exceptionally well-developed and highly relevant to the thesis statement, with exceptional evidence and analysis to support them.
Language and vocabulary (25%)	The essay uses unclear, incorrect, or inappropriate language, with frequent errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	The essay uses generally clear and correct language, but with some errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	The essay demonstrates a satisfactory command of language and style. The language is clear, and the essay adheres to basic grammar and punctuation rules.	The essay demonstrates proficient language use. The writing is clear and coherent. The vocabulary is generally appropriate, and the sentence structure is mostly varied. There may be occasional minor errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation that do not significantly impact understanding.	The essay demonstrates exceptional language use. The writing is clear, concise, and engaging. The vocabulary is varied and appropriate. The sentence structure is varied and demonstrates control. The essay is virtually error-free, with minimal spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes.

Annex II. Materials

Workshop 1.

Act. 1.2. Sample of *Dragonslippers*: This is what an abusive relationship looks like.
Rosalind B. Penfold.





Act. 2.2. Sample of *Violence against women*. World Health Organization.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

Violence against women

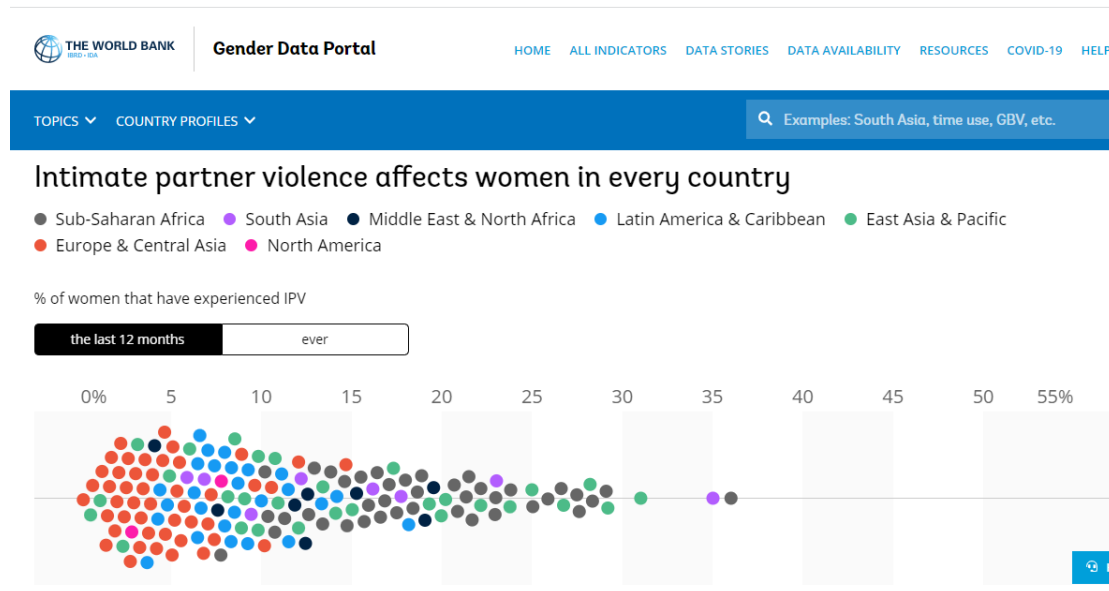
9 March 2021

Key facts

- Violence against women – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence – is a major public health problem and a violation of women’s human rights.
- Estimates published by WHO indicate that globally about 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Most of this violence is intimate partner violence. Worldwide, almost one third (27%) of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship report that they have been subjected to some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner.
- Violence can negatively affect women’s physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.

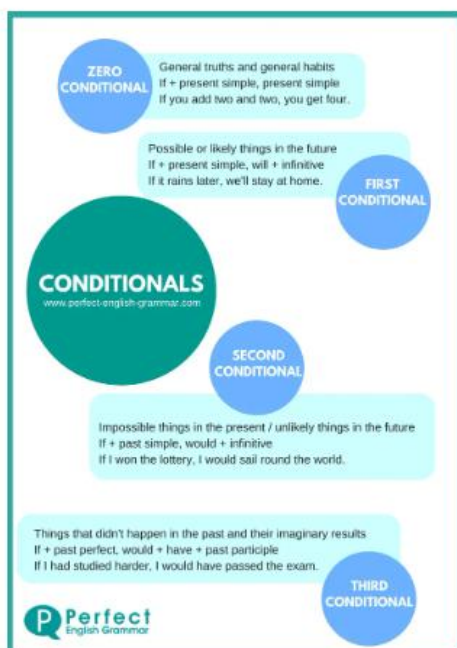
Act 2.2. Sample of *Violence against women and girls – what the data tell us.* World Bank.

<https://genderdata.worldbank.org/data-stories/overview-of-gender-based-violence/>



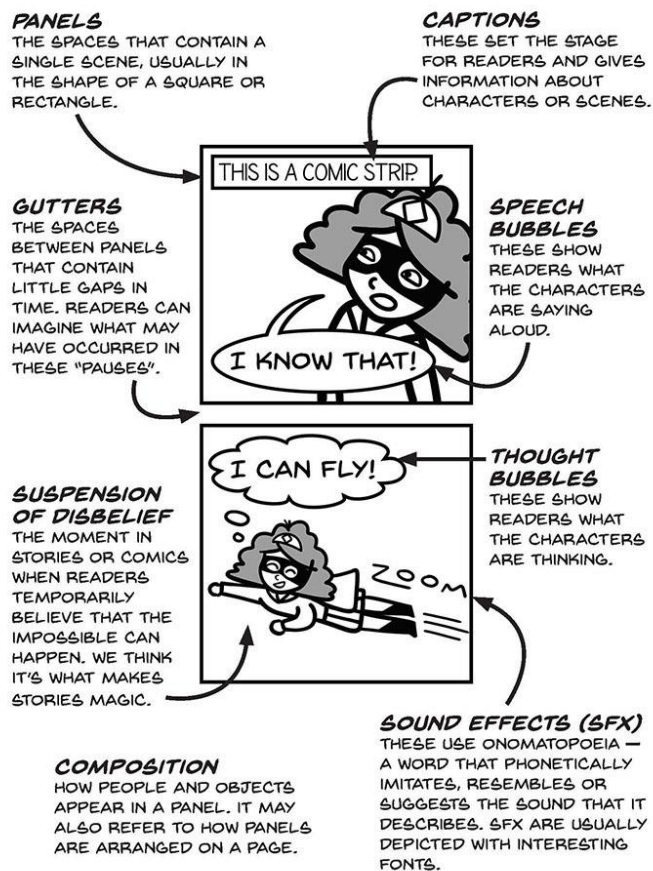
Act 2.3. Infographic of *Conditionals.* Perfect English Grammar.

<https://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/conditionals.html>



Act. 3.2. Elements of comics. Difference Engine.

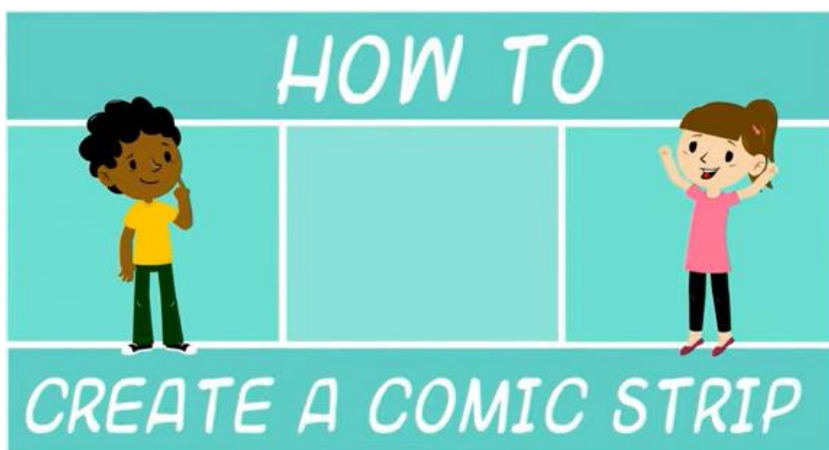
<https://differenceengine.sg/for-educators/elements-of-comics/>



© Copyright 2018 Difference Engine
Website: www.differenceengine.sg
Email: readcomics@differenceengine.sg
f @ @differenceengine.sg

Act. 3.2. Video clip *How to Create a Comic Strip.* Learn.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufOXBuGhVWg&ab_channel=LEARN



Act. 3.3. Sample of *Examples of gender stereotypes*. Gender Equality Law Center.

<https://www.genderequalitylaw.org/examples-of-gender-stereotypes>

Examples of Gender Stereotypes

Early Years

Girls should play with dolls and boys should play with trucks

Boys should be directed to like blue and green; girls toward red and pink

Boys should not wear dresses or other clothes typically associated with "girl's clothes"

During Youth

Girls are better at reading and boys are better at math

Girls should be well behaved; boys are expected to act out

Girls and are not as interested as boys in STEM subjects;

Boys should engage in sports and refrain from more creative pursuits;

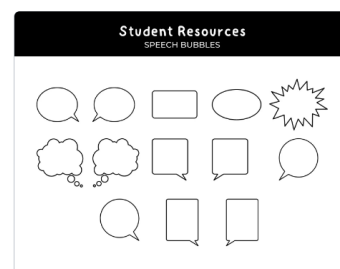
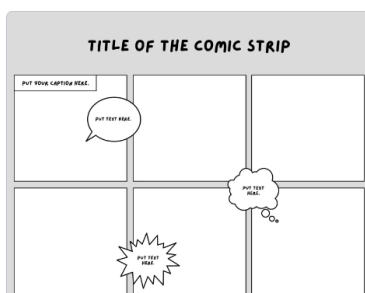
Boys and men are expected to use violence and aggression to prove their manliness;

A boy that doesnt use violence or aggression is an understandable target for bullying;

Girls should be thin and beautiful to make them appealing to men;

Act. 3.3. *Comic strips templates*. Canva

https://www.canva.com/templates/EAE LZ_wpVCg-blank-6-panel-comic-strip/



Workshop 2.

Act. 1.3. Sample of *Embroideries*. Marjane Satrapi.





Act. 2.3. How to effectively express your opinion in an argument. ESLBUZZ.

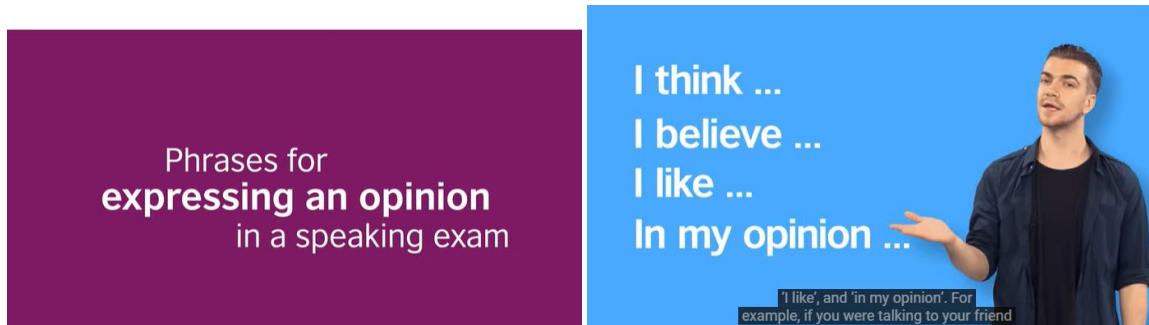
<https://www.eslbuzz.com/how-to-effectively-express-your-opinion-in-an-argument/>

Expressing Opinions

<p>Personal Point of View</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my experience... • As far as I'm concerned... • In my opinion... • Personally, I think... • I'd say that... • I'd like to point out that... • I believe that... 	<p>General Point of View</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is thought that... • Some people say that... • It is considered... • It is generally accepted that...
<p>Agreeing with an opinion </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of course. • You're absolutely right. • Yes, I agree. • I think so too. • That's a good point. • Exactly. • That's true. • Neither do I. • I couldn't agree more. 	<p>Disagreeing with an opinion </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, but... • I'm afraid I have to disagree. • I'm sorry to disagree with you, but... • That's not entirely true. • On the contrary... • I'm not so sure about that.

Act. 2.3. Video clip *Phrases for expressing an opinion.* British Council.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5I7e6oW-GM&ab_channel=BritishCouncil%7CLearnEnglishTeens



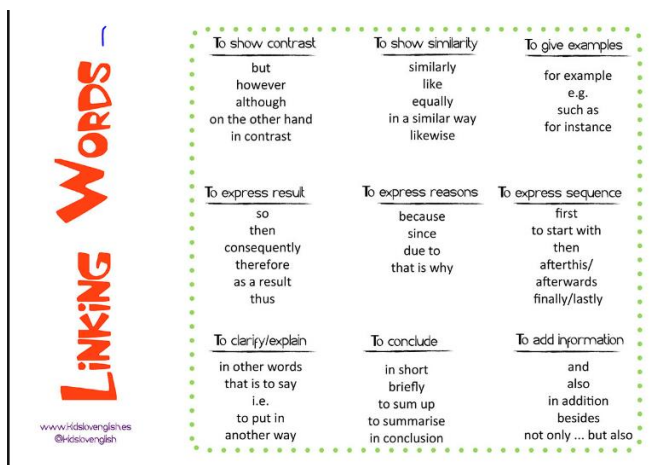
Flipped Classroom (Session 3). Video clip *Woman. Life. Freedom: Honoring the activism of Iranian women and girls.* Equality Now.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHM-Abu762Y&t=48s&ab_channel=EqualityNow



Act 3.3. Linking words. English Teacher.

<http://englishteachermargarita.blogspot.com/2017/02/linking-words.html>



Act 3.3. *Transition words.* Sharing 4 Teachers.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQQhCXwywns&ab_channel=Sharing4Teachers

