Selected Papers from the 48th FAAPI Conference

Edited by

Flavia Bonadeo and Leonor Corradi

Compiled by

Vanesa Polastri

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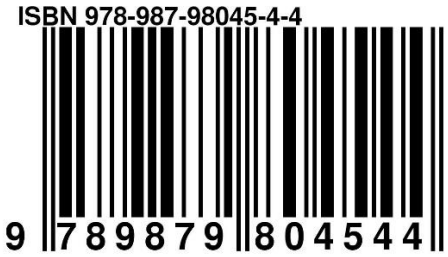

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Introduction

It is an honour to introduce this edition of the *Selected Papers Dossier*, which compiles a selection of peer-reviewed contributions presented during the XLVIII Annual Conference of the Argentine Federation of Associations of Teachers of English (FAAPI), held under the theme *"The Future of English: Challenges, Innovations & Opportunities"*.

The papers included in this volume reflect the diversity, depth, and commitment of professionals engaged in the teaching and learning of English across Argentina and beyond. Each contribution offers valuable perspectives on contemporary issues in English language education, including inclusive pedagogies, linguistic diversity, digital innovation, and the implications of artificial intelligence in ELT.

This dossier not only showcases the ongoing academic and professional conversations taking place within our community, but also serves as a space to critically engage with current challenges and envision new possibilities for language education in increasingly complex and interconnected contexts.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the authors for sharing their work, to the reviewers for their thoughtful input, and to the editorial team for their rigorous and generous efforts in curating this collection.

It is our hope that this publication fosters reflection, dialogue, and renewed inspiration among researchers, teacher educators, and classroom practitioners alike.

Sincerely,

Eugenia Carrión Cantón
President
FAAPI – Argentine Federation of Associations of Teachers of English

1. Exploring Authorship: A scheme to prepare student-teachers to develop teaching materials

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1. Context

This article intends to describe a didactic sequence implemented in the context of the Practicum in an Initial English Language Teacher Education (IELTE) Programme in Argentina; the main purpose of this scheme is to provide student-teachers with basic guidelines to develop situated teaching materials. Throughout the scheme, student-teachers become familiar with renowned local and international authors in the materials development field and engage in collaborative reflection and production activities meant to link the theoretical framework to their day-to-day decisions.

In our IELTE programme, the Practicum is conceived as a track extending from the first to the fourth year. This track is realised in the curriculum as four teaching workshops—one every year—and a teacher research seminar in the last year. The main purpose of this organisational scheme is to offer student-teachers a gradual approximation to schools and the teaching profession. Within this framework, Teaching Workshop IV represents the closest approach to schools and schooling student-teachers experience while still being part of initial teacher education. They are assigned state secondary school classes in urban contexts and typically spend two to three months in charge of those groups.

The teaching workshop encompasses tasks such as: observing the class and keeping narrative records, analysing the syllabus and materials the class teacher follows, developing a didactic project and planning the corresponding lessons to carry it out, designing compatible teaching materials, implementing those plans and materials, assessing comprehension and production practices, and participating in self, peer, and tutor assessment sessions. Since 2016, Teaching Workshop IV has included content and tasks related to materials development, and this choice will be discussed in the present article.

2. Materials development: The igniting flame

As long as 2008, or even before, Teaching Workshop IV has fostered Task-Based Language Learning and more recently Project-Based Learning, as methodological approaches for student-teachers to explore during their Practicum experience. Both approaches have posed the need to assess, select, adapt, and develop relevant teaching materials since the Practicum teaching projects intend to be situated, i.e., based on and inspired by the particularities of the group and the school. Thus, student-teachers cannot but perform the role of materials curators and developers, and almost naturally engage in designing their worksheets, games, and videos, among other materials.

It was in 2015 that a student-teacher who had just finished her field experience suggested systematising and sharing the already large number of materials developed in the context of the Practicum. A couple of teacher educators, some school teachers, and about ten IELTE students embraced the idea: we formed a study group to analyse the materials already created, read together related texts, and established a set of criteria for designing new teaching materials.

The outcome of the study group was the blog *Teaching English in Santa Fe,* which intends to be a reservoir of teacher-developed materials any teacher can adopt and adapt to their classes. A second outcome was the need to include some training in material development in Workshop IV so that the efforts and creativity of student-teachers were guided by some basic, but shared principles. This was the official kick-off of a teaching sequence that has been under implementation, with changes and adjustments, in the past few years.

3. Theoretical Background

A necessary ingredient of the study group—and the subsequent materials development teaching sequence—was the familiarity with renowned authors, both local and international, and their work in the field. What follows is a synthesis of the insights we have gained and the principles identified and prioritised in Teaching Workshop IV through collaborative reading and debate. As this is a work *always* in progress, the list does not claim for completeness:

- teaching materials in the English class should reflect what is currently known about language acquisition factors and processes, i.e., the benefits of rich, varied, and meaningful input, the importance of cognitive and affective

engagement on the part of the students—and the teacher—, the need for plenty of opportunities to notice and develop awareness about language, as well as opportunities to use language for communicative purposes, among others (Tomlinson, 2010, 2011);

- for materials to be cognitively and affectively engaging, they should address topics relevant to the learners. Darío Banegas (2010) reports on a teaching experience in which secondary school students made a list of topics of their interest including psychological disorders, divorce, politics, eating disorders, the Catholic Church, and single parenting, among others, and the class syllabus was developed around these topics;
- when materials are used in compulsory schooling, they should align with contemporary educational policies and curricular principles, e.g., the plurilingual and intercultural perspective in Núcleos de Aprendizaje Prioritarios (CFE, 2012), and the principles of curricular justice and equity in education (Barboni & Simón, 2013), just to name a few;
- for materials to be effective, they should contain facilitating elements, such as the use of the L1, as well as opportunities for comparing and contrasting the L1, English, and other languages students may know, as Mario López Barrios highlights (2008, 2024);
- from a culturally and linguistically responsive perspective, teaching materials should represent the multiple and varied identities in the classroom regarding gender, class, ethnicity, etc. (Igielski, 2014);
- coursebooks rarely comply with the characteristics listed above, especially global coursebooks.

4. The scheme

Even though the didactic scheme meant to derive some basic principles and practical guidelines for developing teaching materials in the context of the Practicum has undergone changes and adjustments over the years, the core stages can be summarised as follows:

- the first step is always to select a set of book chapters and academic articles that deal with the topic of material development in general and with material development experiences in particular;

- the reading is scaffolded through a collaborative task—a wiki, a glossary, or a forum in our virtual learning environment—in which student-teachers, in groups, make choices as regards sound criteria to create materials based on the suggested texts and their understanding of them—this selection activity presupposes a previous analysis of the authors' recommendations and discussion within the group;
- typically, the result is a long list of criteria that is further refined by the whole group, after some debate;
- the second, shorter, list becomes the set of guidelines when student-teachers get to curate and publish their teaching materials in the blog created by the Study Group.

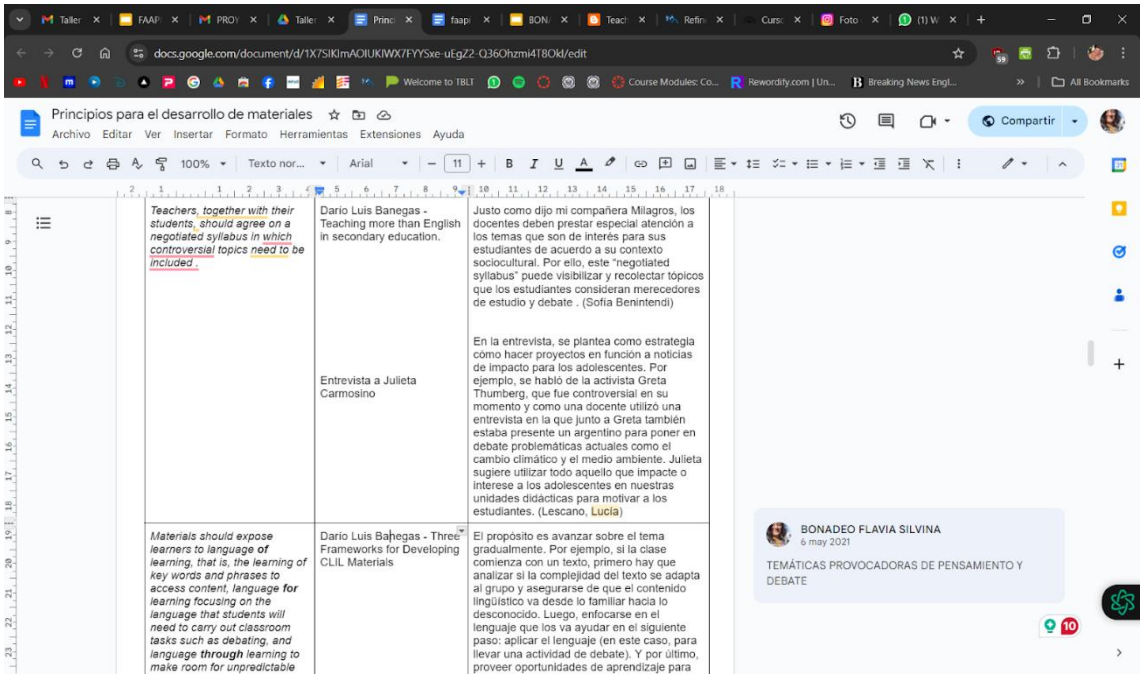
5. The scheme in action

In this section, we will briefly analyse some samples of the collaborative tasks and the resulting materials to showcase the dynamics of the sequence as well as student-teachers' new insights and practices after having participated in it.

Figure 1 is an excerpt of the collaborative task student-teachers carried out in 2021. The assignment this time was to identify a possible criterion or guideline, to quote the author or authors, and to explain, in their own words, what their understanding of the point was. It is worth noticing that student-teachers managed to interact with one another as well as to make the texts interact by identifying and highlighting the commonalities, or recurrent guidelines in them.

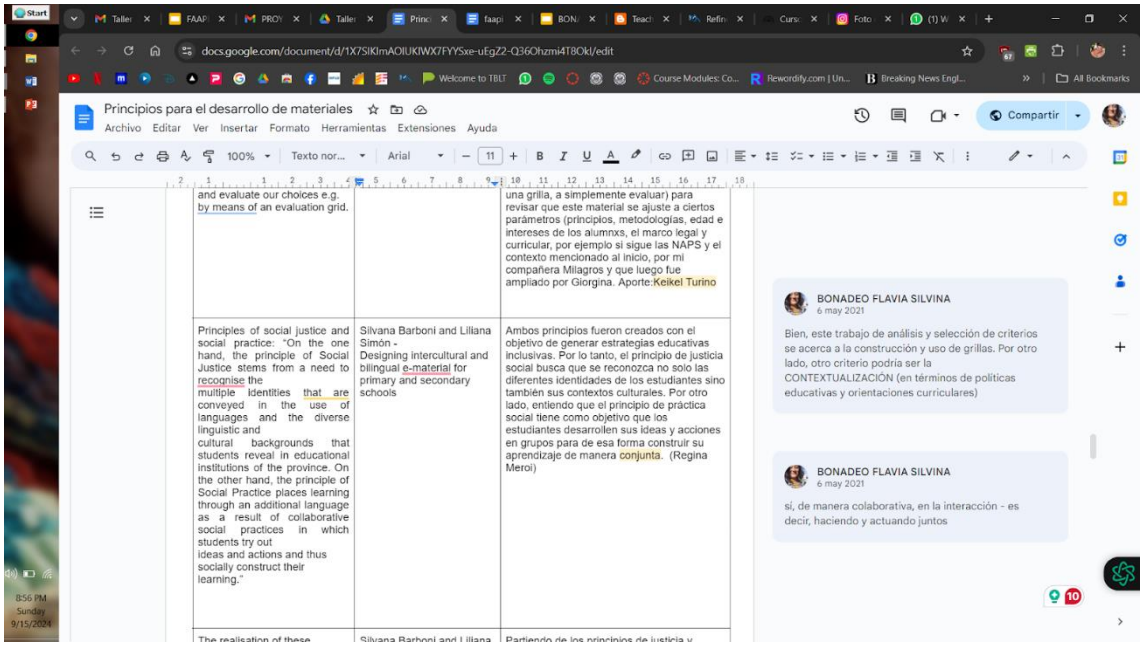
Sofía, for instance, mentioned a previous contribution by Milagros: "Just as my classmate Milagros said, teachers should pay special attention to the topics that interest their learners, depending on their cultural backgrounds". Lucía placed her contribution below Sofía's—"A strategy mentioned in the interview is to base the teaching projects on news that can have an impact on teenagers."—because she understood the two authors were referring to a similar aspect of effective teaching materials.

Figure 1. Student-teachers selected principles and guidelines



A further feature you can notice in *Figure 2* is the tutor's intervention, which is meant to help students find a concise and effective way of naming the principle they have identified. *Contextualization* appears in the comment as a possible name for the principle described.

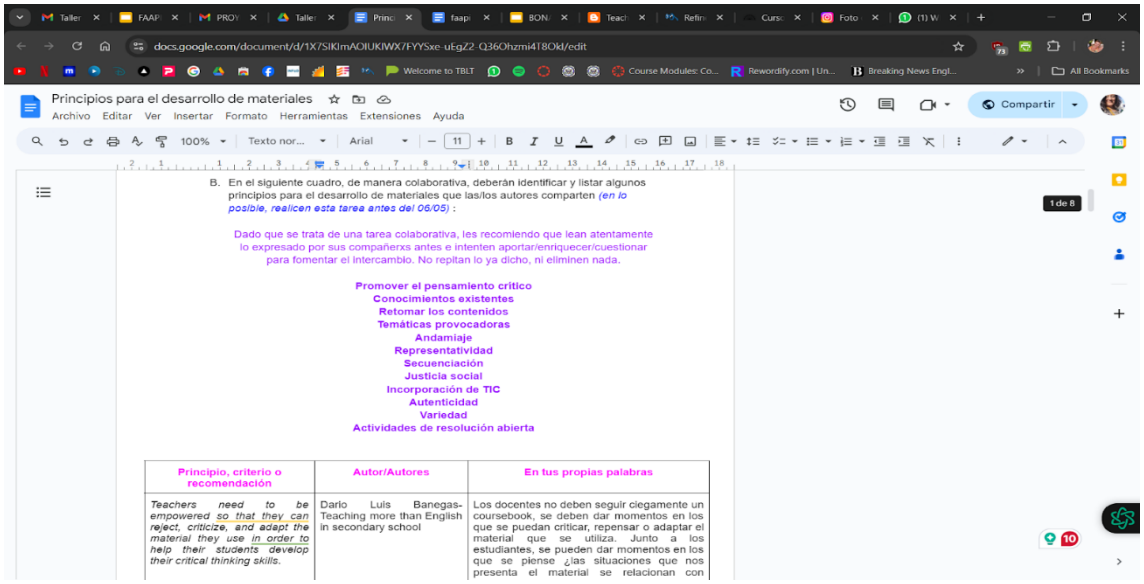
Figure 2. Tutor's scaffolding strategies



Another strategy to scaffold the task, on the part of the tutor, is this synthesis which appears at the beginning of the text but was written when the task was about to

close. This list intends to comprise all the principles agreed on by the student-teachers, as a group, in 2021. From their perspective, and as shown in *Figure 3*, materials should promote critical thinking, use previous knowledge as a point of departure, involve provoking topics, provide lots of scaffolding, be inclusive of diversity, and include authentic texts and tasks, as well as open-ended tasks, among others.

Figure 3. Tutor's scaffolding strategies



Some worksheets developed by student-teachers are presented below to analyse whether the guidelines they constructed were helpful in the design process. *Figure 4* displays a reading task created by José, Carol, and Anabella in 2020. They chose a popular singer as the protagonist of their text, but the main topic is hateful and homophobic comments on social media. The text was written by the student-teachers, based on an original text far above the comprehension level of their students. However, they carefully maintained the features of an internet article, i.e., the generic features of text. *Figure 5* is evidence of the scaffolding strategies student-teachers chose, for instance, the use of input enhancement by writing some words and phrases in bold, the inclusion of a bilingual glossary, and a question in the L1 for learners to identify (near) cognates. This teaching sequence was part of the distance learning scheme implemented during the 2020-2021 coronavirus pandemic.

Figure 4. It's a girl's thing. It's a boy's thing

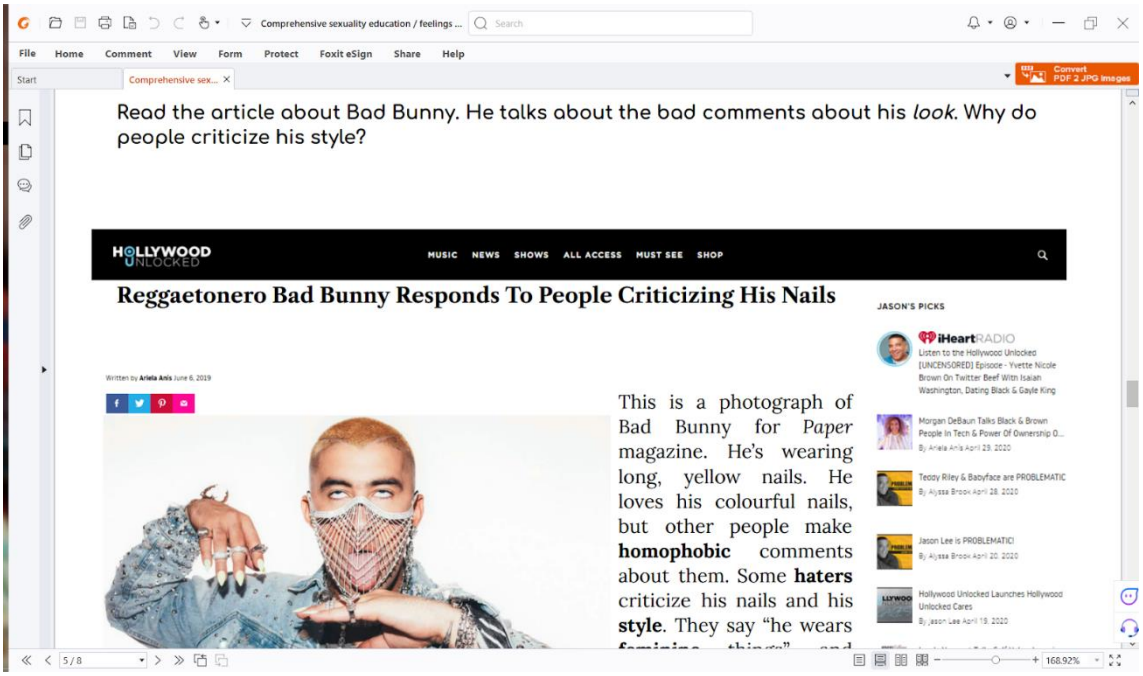
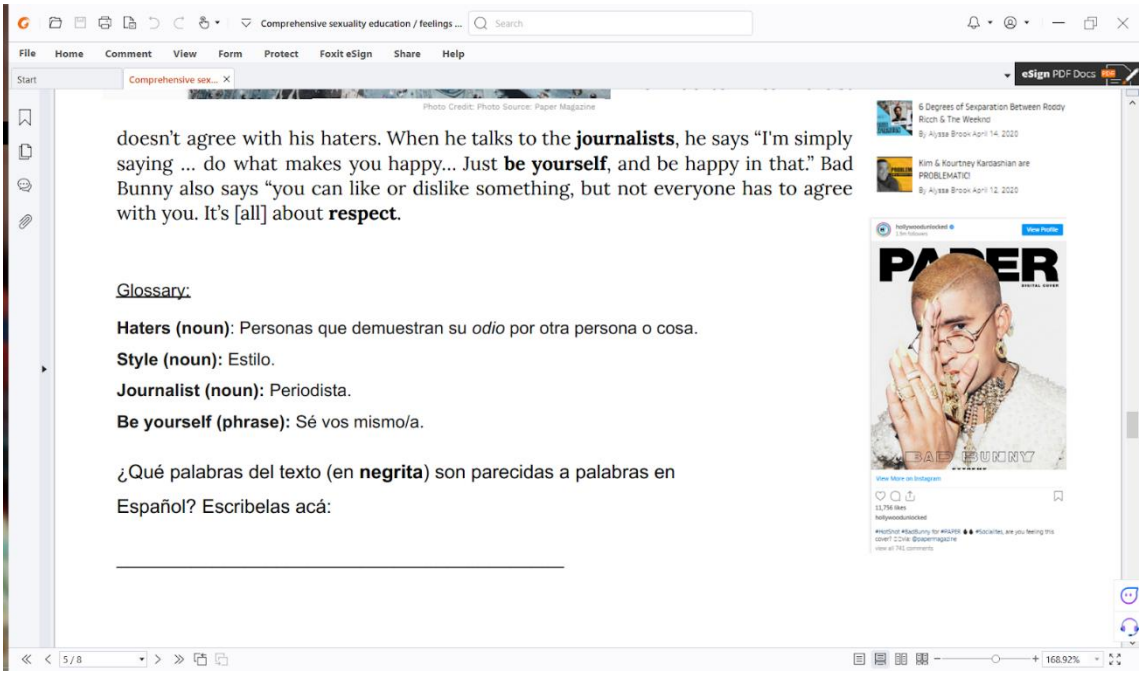


Figure 5. It's a girl's thing. It's a boy's thing



Figures 6 and 7 display a listening and writing sequence developed by Nicolás in 2022. He based the task on the famous boggart scene in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. It is worth noticing that he offered lots of scaffolding through emojis and the first letters of the keywords since he was teaching a first-year class in secondary school and for this group of students this was not only their first time learning English, but also their return to face-to-face instruction after the pandemic. The whole project

was imbued with a call for affective involvement, and the careful treatment of students' emotions.

Figure 6. Facing your fears

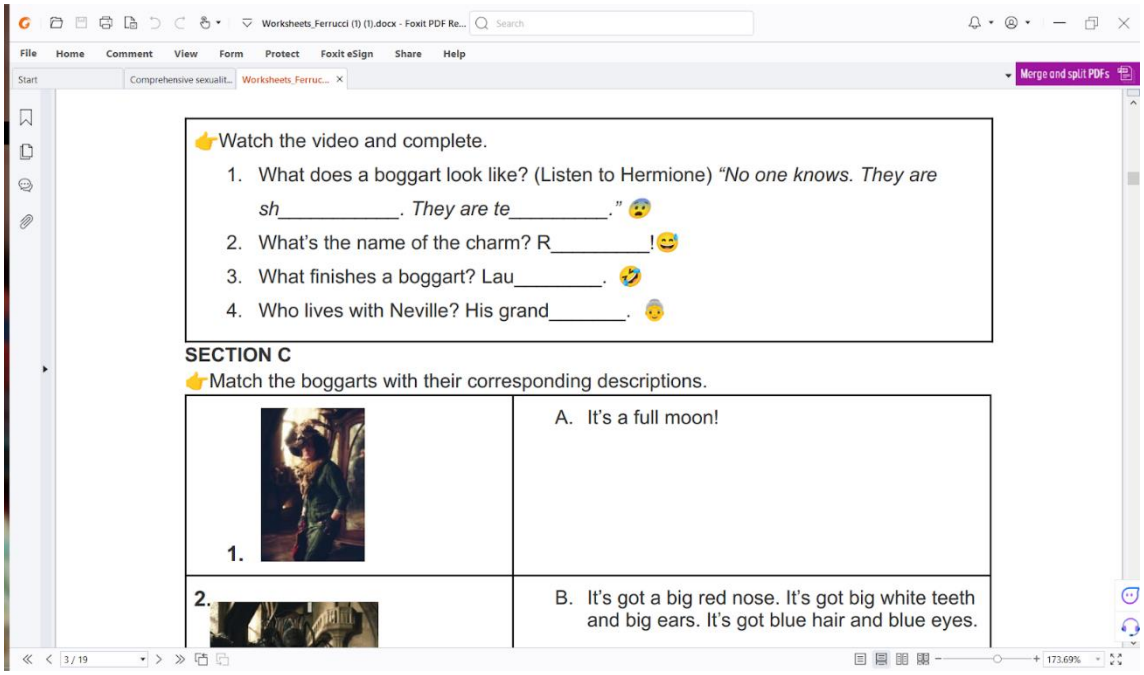
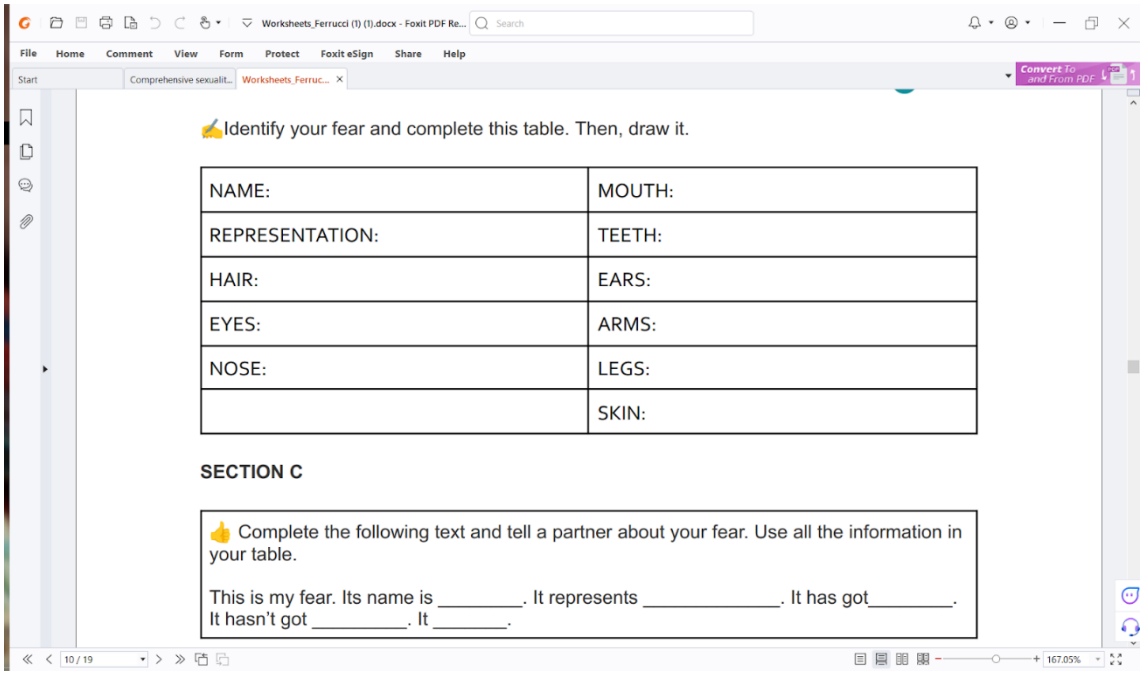


Figure 7. Facing your fears



5. 1. This year's project: A further sample

Over 2024, Teaching Workshop IV participated in an interdisciplinary endeavour involving two other IELTE courses—English Literature III and an optional module on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)—and the theatre company *Chefpeare*. A member of *Chefpeare*—a former student, now a colleague—visited our school and proposed to work collaboratively developing teaching materials based on the play *Turrón de Otelo con rap flambé*.

A sequence of activities was developed to scaffold student-teachers who engaged in the material design task. First, the Literature III class—who were also Teaching Workshop IV students—read Othello, and soon after that *Chefpeare* put on the stage both *Turrón de Otelo con rap flambé* and *Romeo y Julieta a punto caramelo* for several classes of the teacher education and the translation programmes. Consecutively, *Chefpeare*'s writers, actors, and producers offered a workshop for the fourth-year class. Following, advanced classes attended a lecture in which Othello was analysed as a piece of crime literature; in a similar vein, the power of names in Shakespearean literature and the topic of identity as a right from a CSE perspective were addressed in a workshop for the third and fourth-year classes. Even though several classes participated in the performances and the academic events, only Teaching Workshop IV students were part of the material design task.

Challenging as it was, this collaborative project resulted in several benefits for the group of students. First and foremost, the experience of attending not one but two theatre performances was new to many of them; this experience may have not just expanded their cultural horizons but can also impact their future teaching practices positively. Additionally, both the different stages of the project and the final product combined knowledge specific to each of the courses involved, which has the potential to educate prospective practitioners about interdisciplinary teaching. Last but not least, this project added an extra playfield where student-teachers could experiment with the principles and practices of materials design.

In this respect, the class worked in groups to develop four sequences to accompany the performance of *Turrón de Otelo con rap flambé*. For the sake of brevity, only one will be described here. The opening of this sequence consists of two activities meant to retrieve and clarify the specifics of the plot, a virtual game and a traditional ordering task. Next, students are asked to choose adjectives from a list to characterise

Othello, Desdemona, Emilia, and Iago. This typical matching activity is followed by a task meant to be carried out in the language of schooling—Spanish—where students have to recall and retell events in the play that justify their choice of adjectives for each character. Also in Spanish, students are asked to brainstorm about the meaning of *manipulation;* then, they are expected to write a short definition in English. Immediately after that, extracts from the script of the play are analysed to identify instances of manipulation; then, students are asked to write sentences such as "Iago manipulates Othello by …" with the help of some useful phrases in a box. To expand the discussion about the risks of manipulative behaviours in teenagehood, a set of situations are presented and students have to mark them with green, yellow, and red lights. Finally, students are asked to imagine what they would do or say if a friend of theirs was being manipulated by someone like Iago; they have to write their ideas in Spanish and save them for later discussion.

Several principles of materials development are pillars of this sequence: it revolves around a compelling topic, manipulation, and thrives on connections with students' own life experiences, it offers scaffolding in the form of useful phrases and visual support, it incorporates an authentic bilingual text and it relies on the facilitating effect of the L1 in brainstorming and reflection tasks. On the other hand, output production is restricted to writing a definition and completing sentences; these instances, however, represented authentic, meaningful use of the L2.

6. Situated Materials: Achievements and challenges

The present article poses an opportunity to assess the assets of this material development sequence in Teaching Workshop IV and also envisage future challenges. Overall, student-teachers during these years have succeeded in planning their didactic projects around *relevant topics* and those topics have had a positive impact on secondary school students' motivation and engagement. Most student-teachers have also succeeded in imbuing their materials with *authenticity* as they have worked hard on the design of the texts so that they look like texts in real life, even if they are mostly adaptations or teacher-produced texts. The use of *IT resources* has helped a lot in bringing authenticity to the materials and the groups' final products—some teaching projects have resulted in the creation of digital magazines, Instagram posts, leaflets,

short films, and the like. *Scaffolding and sequencing* are catered for when student-teachers receive feedback on their lesson plans—thus, they are almost always ensured. Likewise, TBL and PBL help guarantee thematic transversality and gradual complexity in the proposed interim tasks and the language being taught.

The *variety of the activities* included in the sequences is an aspect that still needs refining. Student-teachers sometimes overuse typical procedures such as gap-filling, or comprehension questions; these types of activities, however, can become an obstacle when it comes to diversifying the lessons and making them accessible and inclusive. *Criticality* is another aspect to focus on with future cohorts; even though student-teachers tend to choose compelling topics for their sequences—such as CSE—, the projects should seek to promote civic engagement and action in the community, ideally. A further problem that requires constant vigilance in the material development process is *the balance between the focus on the thematic content and the language content* since student-teachers tend to concentrate a lot on the topics and relegate the language content.

A final point to address is *sustainability:* classroom practitioners usually lack the necessary time to start from scratch and develop new teaching materials for all their groups and for every content they should teach. However, the experience student-teachers go through in Teaching Workshop IV intends to *empower* them: to invest them with the potential to become content creators whenever the opportunity arises. If they decide to create a worksheet or other materials in the near future, when they are already in service, they will know they can do so because they did it once already.

In addition, to make this activity—material development—more sustainable, a recommendation derived from the Study Group and Teaching Workshop IV experience is to socialise and share teacher-developed materials and adopt and adapt what others have developed. This can become the kick off for establishing a community of practice around the task of developing teaching materials; as we all know very well, when it comes to challenging endeavours, collaborative thinking and collective action make the desirable doable.

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2. Re-examining the effectiveness of peer feedback in L2 writing through the lens of translanguaging

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1. Introduction

Compared to other language abilities such as speaking, L1 writing is not a skill that people acquire naturally but in formal educational contexts. Similarly, when people learn another language, they often need formal instruction in order to acquire effective writing strategies. Therefore, it is not surprising that having the skills to convey ideas clearly, achieve the intended purpose and address a specific audience is challenging regardless of the language(s) being used.

At the same time, in order to develop and improve such skills, one needs constant and meaningful feedback. The majority of writing instructors often feel overwhelmed when they are required to provide feedback on learners' drafts as it is time-consuming and challenging (Junqueira & Payant, 2015). However, a teacher's feedback should not be the only source of information on which learners rely to improve the quality of their texts. In fact, given that learning is a cognitive activity that takes place in social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978), I believe that the implementation of peer feedback in the L2 writing classroom should be actively promoted. Hence, the main focus of this literature review will be on this type of feedback.

In terms of theoretical frameworks, Sociocultural theory (SCT) supports the use of peer feedback in L2 writing. More specifically, two concepts, *mediation* and *zone of proximal development* (ZPD), provide a solid foundation in favor of this activity. For instance, on the one hand, according to SCT, human mental functioning is a mediated process which includes human mediators (teachers and peers), technological mediators (computers, dictionaries, etc.) and semiotic mediators (languages). Furthermore, Lantolf et al. (2015) indicate that development processes take place through participation in culturally, linguistically and historically formed settings including schooling and peer interaction. Thus, mediation highlights the collaborative nature of the learning process and the active co-construction of knowledge which are features of peer feedback.

On the other hand, writing development also depends on one's capacity to think and act either by becoming more proficient in the use of mediational resources or by relying less on external mediational means (Thorne & Tasker, 2011). This is directly related to the concept of ZPD which focuses on a concrete dialogic relationship (Lantolf, Thorne & Poehner, 2015) between experts who have more writing proficiency and experience and those who do not, so that both can move towards greater self-regulation of their own capacities and writing abilities to complete a particular task. Based on this, I claim that peer feedback provides learners with an opportunity to engage in such a dialogic relationship.

2. Previous research on peer feedback in L2 writing

In the last decades, a growing body of research has extensively examined the advantages of peer feedback. The most important benefit is associated with learners' affect during the whole process of writing. When learners exchange comments on their drafts, not only do they improve their overall writing performance by learning from others, but they also feel less stressed and anxious (Bolourchi & Soleimani, 2021) and more confident to complete a writing task in English (Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015). Another benefit is that providing learners with various sources of feedback helps them improve different aspects of their writing. This was demonstrated in a study by Yang, Badger, and Yu (2006) where participants used teachers' feedback to fix problems at the surface level and peers' feedback to fix issues related to meaning. Furthermore, they recognized that this practice allowed them to become more autonomous during the writing process. Nevertheless, some L2 researchers as well as some L2 writing instructors express their reservations towards the efficacy of peer feedback and, generally, agree on the following problems: learners tend to focus solely on correcting or signaling errors related to grammar and mechanics, they may misinterpret or overinterpret writers' intentions when revising their peers' draft and learners who receive feedback benefit more than peer reviewers.

In the light of these limitations, another strand of research on this topic is committed to proving that the effectiveness of peer feedback does not depend on the practice itself but on how it is actually implemented in the classroom. For instance, when learners receive previous formal training, they are able to provide significantly more

comments to peers and incorporate a higher number of those comments into their revised texts, which leads to better text quality (Sánchez-Naranjo, 2019). Moreover, they are able to boost their competence and confidence as readers (Min, 2005) so both peer reviewers and receivers benefit from this practice.

3. Multilingual turn in L2 writing

Although the previous research studies have contributed enormously to our understanding of peer feedback in L2 writing, they did so without considering an important movement in applied linguistics known as the *multilingual turn* (Meier, 2017). This multilingual turn has been highly influenced by the process of globalization resulting in an increased attention to the dynamic, hybrid, and transnational linguistic repertoires of multilingual speakers in rapidly diversifying urban conurbations worldwide (May, 2014). Hence, the emphasis is on multilingualism rather than monolingualism as the norm. While this idea is at the core of foreign language education, we as language educators sometimes continue to teach a second language through a monolingual lens, expecting our learners to switch off their mother tongue in order to acquire a second or third language. Yet, bi/multilingual speakers are not simply the sum of two or more monolingual speakers (Grosjean, 1989). Consequently, we need to redefine the concept of multilingualism in our field. In fact, different terms have been introduced in research to describe this natural phenomenon: *translanguaging* (García, 2009), *code meshing* (Canagarajah, 2011), *flexible bilingualism* (Creese et al., 2011), among others.

Now, despite these new theoretical frameworks, I strongly agree with May (2014) in the fact that mainstream SLA and TESOL continue to ignore this turn towards multilingualism. For instance, in the case of L2 writing research, there have been some attempts to acknowledge the importance of allowing L2 learners to rely on the use of their L1 during the writing process. However, some researchers continue to treat the L1 as a mere cognitive tool (e.g., Woodall, 2002) or as a mere writing strategy (e.g., Kim & Yoon, 2014) that, if is used too much, will contaminate and hinder the goals of the L2 writing classroom. Certainly, the findings from these studies cannot be overestimated but it is also necessary to consider other theoretical frameworks that align with this *multilingual turn*. For this reason, in what follows, I describe how *multicompetence*

theory and *translanguaging pedagogy* can shed light on understanding why peer feedback is not always successful in the L2 writing classroom.

4. Multicompetence theory and translanguaging

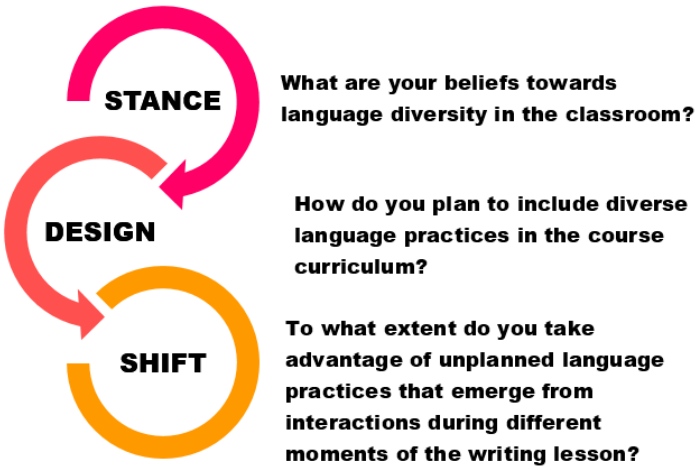
When considering a *multicompetence perspective*, Cook (2016) discusses two important premises: on the one hand, researchers acknowledge that all languages that a particular speaker uses are integrated into a single merged system. On the other hand, they no longer compare the performance of a bi/multilingual speaker based on the performance of an ideal monolingual speaker. In the case of L2 writing research, these premises have important implications. For instance, if all languages are part of a person's total language system, then, some of the challenges that L2 learners experience during peer feedback might be related to constraints in language usage rather than to a lack of language and/or writing proficiency. Put differently, if learners only use English, which is not their strongest language yet, they might focus on the language itself to produce and understand feedback instead of focusing on content that can actually help their peers improve their work. Consequently, since learners are not usually allowed to make full use of their linguistic repertoires, this is a compelling argument to claim why peer feedback is not always successful across different writing programmes. For this reason, I lean towards the use of translanguaging practices during this writing activity.

The term *translanguaging (Trawsieithu)* was coined by Cen Williams (1994), an educator who developed a pedagogical practice where in the same room, and with the same teacher, the language of input and the language of output were different. Translanguaging can be defined as "the dynamic process whereby multilingual language users mediate complex social and cognitive activities through strategic employment of multiple semiotic resources to act, to know, and to be" (García & Wei, 2014, p. 12). Now, in the remainder of this paper, I am going to employ the term *translanguaging pedagogy* to refer to an approach that can be employed in an L2 classroom regardless of the context (ESL or EFL) and regardless of the student population (emergent or late bilinguals).

In broad terms, *translanguaging pedagogy* involves three elements*: stance, design, and shift*, which are intertwined in practice. However, among all the elements, a *translanguaging stance* plays a pivotal role in implementing this pedagogy, as it requires

L2 writing instructors to question the monolingual bias inherent in the language practices of most programmes. In other words, L2 writing instructors who truly adopt a translanguaging pedagogy reject linguistic hierarchies and subtractive language ideologies in their classrooms. This means that they view their learners' language and cultural knowledge as effective and valid resources. Within this pedagogy, teachers allow learners to assemble different features of their entire semiotic repertoires to make meaning (Aleksić & García, 2022). In this way, the emphasis is placed on supporting the voice of learners regardless of the language used. Based on these ideas, the aim of the following section is to properly reexamine peer feedback in L2 writing through the lens of translanguaging, considering its implications for both L2 writing research and the L2 writing classroom.

Figure 1. The three elements of translanguaging pedagogy



5. Re-examining the effectiveness of peer feedback in writing through translanguaging

5. 1. From the research standpoint

From the research standpoint, although there is a limited number of studies that examine the use of L1, they provide a solid foundation for subsequent research. For instance, in 2014, Yu and Lee analyzed written comments generated by 22 college students during peer feedback in China. Their results indicated that the L1 was mostly used for issues related to content and organization while the L2 was used almost exclusively for providing corrective feedback on language use. In a similar study, Yu

(2016) not only corroborated the previous findings but also investigated the differences between feedback in the L1 and in the L2. Participants were also Chinese college students and were randomly assigned to two parallel groups: a control group where participants could only use their L2 (English) to give feedback and an experimental group where they could only use their L1 (Chinese). Overall, his analysis revealed that language choice did not influence quantity but it did influence the level of specificity: when these L2 learners were allowed to use their L1, they were able to produce more specific feedback on their peer's drafts.

Nevertheless, there are two major limitations in these studies: first, participants provided peer feedback on a single draft. Second, the research site was not a real classroom setting. In light of these issues, Yeh (2018) conducted her study in an authentic classroom setting in Southern Taiwan. 17 college students participated in four rounds of peer feedback: two in their L1 and two in their L2. Despite the fact that this study focused on a strict language separation policy, she discovered instances of translanguaging when learners encountered vocabulary problems, referred to grammatical concepts and showed appreciation and affect.

Although these studies focus on the use of the L1 when providing feedback, they refrain from employing the term translanguaging. Interestingly, there is only one recent study that deals with translanguaging practices although researchers do not provide a clear definition. Specifically, Kim and Chang (2020) were interested in exploring the extent to which Japanese L2 learners translanguage to mediate their written comments in peer feedback. To this end, they analysed 48 peer-review drafts and concluded that these L2 learners preferred the use of L2 and symbols to provide corrective feedback. Additionally, in the case of feedback that included comments, they found that there was not a significant difference between the L1 and the L2, which contradicts previous findings. In fact, language choice for this type of feedback was found to be influenced by much more complicated factors including L2 proficiency, learner's writing goals and teacher's feedback practices.

All in all, there have been some attempts to conduct research that acknowledges and embraces the multilingual turn in relation to peer feedback in L2 writing. However, L2 researchers and instructors should focus more on the social functions of the L1 apart from emphasising cognitive aspects. Therefore, this calls for more classroom-based

research in which they work collaboratively, considering the following aspects related to theory and research methodology:

1- Given that proponents of *translanguaging* might differ in the way they conceptualise this term—compare García and Wei's work (2014) work with MacSwan's (2017)—, it is fundamentally important that scholars provide a clear definition and justify their position. Moreover, if they wish to conduct classroom-based research, then it is equally important that they ground their work in a translanguaging pedagogy. Without this, the main purpose of allowing learners to rely on their L1 during peer feedback will be undermined.

2- A more ecological perspective such as ethnography should be used to investigate this topic from multiple perspectives increasing validity and reliability.

3- L2 learners often perceive the use of the L1 as an interference in their L2. Therefore, addressing their concerns, reactions and questions in relation to the use of more than one language in the same classroom is vital. In the same vein, conducting interviews to uncover L2 learners' beliefs about language learning and L2 writing can shed light on this topic. After all, translanguaging is concerned with disrupting purist language ideologies in education, and the L2 writing classroom is not the exception.

4- The number of comments that peers include in their revised drafts should serve as another source of data to determine the efficacy of peer feedback based on translanguaging pedagogy. Considering all of this, these are some of the research questions that should be answered in a future research study.

R1: To what extent do L2 writers translanguage to mediate written and oral feedback?

R2: What is the correlation between language choice during peer feedback and the quantity of feedback that receivers incorporate in their subsequent pieces of writing?

R3: What are L2 writers' attitudes and perceptions towards translanguaging during peer feedback?

5. 2. From the classroom standpoint

At present, based on the current evidence and knowledge available, I propose a potential pedagogical framework drawing on the work of Chamcharatsri (2017) and Lam (2010). This framework consists of four stages:

1) Modelling

First, teachers explain the purpose of peer review. Second, the whole group should discuss past learning experiences with peer feedback to clear up misunderstandings and uncertainties. Third, teachers explain the rationale of the training procedure. Finally, the teacher emphasizes the importance of using both L1 and L2 throughout this process.

2) Exploring

This stage can be divided into two peer-review training sessions. During the first one, learners provide feedback on a mock paper or a paper from a former student. They should complete this assignment without following detailed instructions in order to see what types of feedback they provide.

During the second session, the teacher introduces specific procedures to the whole class to deepen their understanding about this learning activity. One possible procedure might be a two-step evaluation where learners identify and report what they notice as the strengths and shortcomings of a particular text. Second, they reflect on the best way to communicate these thoughts to the writer.

3) Peer review activities

During this stage, learners are explicitly invited to use their L1 and L2. First, learners provide written feedback on peer's drafts where they focus on content unless grammatical mistakes interfere with the meaning of a particular sentence and/or paragraph. Additionally, learners are encouraged to make comments related to the structure and organization of a text or to make specific suggestions on how to improve it. After written feedback, learners should provide oral explanations to their peers to clarify questions and comments.

4) Reflection

To conclude this experience, learners complete a post-peer-review activity. Some options include: A Likert-Scale questionnaire where they anonymously indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with the feedback received and/or a short reflective paragraph to capture their views on this practice.

6. Concluding remarks

In this paper, on the one hand, I have explored the concept of peer feedback and its advantages and disadvantages according to research based on Sociocultural theory. On the other hand, I have explained why it is important that future research studies focus on multicompetence theory and translanguaging if we want to finally be part of the multilingual turn in applied linguistics.

Now, to conclude, I emphasise that apart from developing a good command of language skills and effective writing strategies, L2 writing instructors should also motivate bi/multilingual writers to use all the linguistic and semiotic resources they have available during the different stages of the writing process. If they already can do a lot in one language, imagine the potential when they leverage their entire linguistic repertoire. Moreover, given that writing is inherently a collaborative activity in both L1 and L2 contexts, peer feedback should be encouraged. Allowing learners to provide and receive peer feedback using various languages recognises and values their linguistic and cultural identity. Thus, this contributes enormously to the development of their authorial voice which should be the main goal of any writing course.

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3. Creative approaches in critical language education in difficult contexts

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1. Introduction

It has become commonplace to say that English language education has a role to play in the country and beyond to contribute to fostering students' development as critical citizens and societies as democratic, peaceful, just and sustainable (Byram, Porto & Yulita, 2023). Although English language teaching can take different forms and have varied purposes in different contexts, some of which can certainly be instrumental, in education systems nowadays its critical and social justice foundation is generally acknowledged. However, it is not always clear how this agenda can be enacted in real classrooms. The suggestion here is that the cornerstone of his agenda comprises imaginative, ethical, citizenship, and critical dimensions, which can be realised through creative, arts-based and outdoor learning experiences (Porto, 2022, 2024). The theoretical framework comprises three aspects, namely critical language education, creative and arts-based perspectives, and outdoor learning approaches. Four cases located in primary and secondary schools in the province of Buenos Aires in Argentina, characterised as vulnerable or difficult, are introduced. Teacher-made, locally produced, critical materials were used. Pedagogical implications are considered.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Critical language education

Critical education can be traced back to the French revolution (Crookes, 2013). Figures such as Proudhon, Ferrer, Freinet, Pestalozzi, Dewey and Freire have made significant contributions, for instance by conceptualising education and learning in terms of personal development and social transformation, involving autonomous learning; project work; analysis, introspection and reflection; negotiation and

discussion; experiential and activity-based work; interdisciplinary content, and an inquiry-based curriculum. In language education, although this critical agenda is generally undisputed, challenges arise in contexts with difficult circumstances (Barboni, 2013a; Crookes, 2013, 2021; López-Gopar, 2019) such as those usually found in Argentina and other countries and regions in the Global South (Cabaluz Ducasse, 2015; Gluz & Rodríguez Moyano, 2018; Guelman, Cabaluz & Salazar, 2018; Kuchah Kuchah & Shamim, 2018). These hardships are of a different kind than simply lacking resources or infrastructure, or having large classes. They involve difficulties staying on topic, understanding and following instructions, understanding and participating in the dynamics of classroom interaction, and seeing the purpose of being in the classroom when your parents are unemployed or you have to take care of your siblings. These difficulties affect children and youth in significant ways, for instance in terms of how they perceive their own possibilities in life (Gluz & Rodríguez Moyano, 2018). Critical language education in contexts with difficult circumstances has an important role to play: it can foster a sense of self, pride and self-efficacy in students. In this sense, it is a form of empowerment education (Cabaluz Ducasse, 2015; Guelman, Cabaluz & Salazar, 2018).

One way in which critical literacy in practice (Janks, 2018) can be enacted in English language education is using a six-stage questioning strategy called SHOWED (Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991): Learners identify significant problems in their lives, assess their historical and cultural roots, imagine a better future for themselves and their communities, and take action to begin to resolve those problems.

> **S** - **SEE**. Name the problem. What problem do we SEE here? Describe the situation.
> **H** - What is really **HAPPENING**?
> **O** - How does this story relate to **OUR** lives and how do we feel about it?
> **W** - **WHY** has this happened? Identify the social, historical, and cultural root causes of the problem.
> **E** - Explore how we can become **EMPOWERED** with new understanding.
> **D** - What can we **DO** about these problems in our lives and in our community?
>
> (Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991, p. 252).

2.2 Creative, arts-based perspectives

Language practices are fluid and dynamic, and comprise all available semiotic repertoires and means (Canagarajah, 2022) to make meaning beyond the linguistic. Creative and arts-based pedagogies incorporate visual, digital, auditory, performative, artistic, gestural, and other dimensions. These repertoires and means include creative, multimodal, imaginative and artistic forms of expression and communication (Harvey & Bradley, 2023). As these vast repertoires and means are enabled, welcomed and cultivated in the classroom, the principle of recognition in social justice is taken care of. This principle refers to the importance of providing meaningful, relevant and culturally and linguistically responsive learning experiences (Tikly & Barrett, 2011) because such experiences foster students' self-affirmation. In this conceptualisation, multimodality disarticulates the privileged position of language to convey meaning (Harvey & Bradley, 2023), particularly in formal education and in language education, where reading, writing, speaking and listening are generally favoured (García & Otheguy, 2020).

2.3 Outdoor-learning pedagogies

Finally, outdoor learning pedagogies consider that the outdoor environment is not only a setting for learning: it is also an educational resource, a formative experience, and a powerful developmental tool (Marinho & Reis, 2017; Norling & Sandberg, 2015). Outdoor learning experiences value students' emotions, affects and experiences related to nature, and enable the appreciation of, and identification with, the local natural heritage. These pedagogies can take different forms but always cultivate a sense of bonding with and for the natural world.

3. Teacher-made, locally produced materials

These theoretical perspectives were supported by four *English Primer Readers* developed for primary and secondary schools (Figure 1) and used in the cases described here. They were written by Silvana Barboni who developed them as critical materials in times of policy innovation in the province of Buenos Aires (see Barboni, 2022). The booklets, grounded in the notions of multiliteracies, intercultural dialogue, translingual practices, plurilingual practices, and task-based learning, illustrate how Barboni, a local

teacher, introduced a critical orientation in English language teaching in contexts with difficult circumstances characterized by social inequalities and high vulnerability.

Figure 1. English Primer Readers (*Cuadernos de trabajo para el aula*) (Barboni, 2013b).

4. The cases

The cases described next are examples of how local teachers in real classrooms have used and creatively adapted the *English Primer Readers* to critically empower their learners in formal schooling in Argentina (see Porto, 2022 for further details). The cases were part of a research project under my supervision carried out between 2020 and 2024. The project aimed at investigating the development of intercultural and citizenship perspectives in English language classrooms in primary and secondary schools in the Province of Buenos Aires. Ethical guidelines characterising qualitative research frameworks were used (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) and parents signed informed consent forms. The teachers' names used here are real.

The first case is set in a 4th grade English language classroom in a suburban context in La Plata characterised by poverty, unsatisfied basic needs and lack of family support for school tasks. The children had Bolivian, Paraguayan or Brazilian backgrounds and spoke Guarani or Quechua at home in addition to Spanish. English was consequently a third additional language for many of them—a language they had just begun to learn at school. The teacher fostered participation and reflection by engaging children's creativity and imagination in addition to their linguistic resources in all available languages. In this way, the children developed a sense of self and identity as their languages, backgrounds and interests were valued and appreciated in the classroom. The children chose the themes that were addressed in the classroom, for instance animal hunting and pollution in the local area. Although initially the teacher faced simple difficulties such as the children's lack of attention and their difficulty staying focused and following class discussions, she was able to foster participation by welcoming Spanish, artistic expression, curiosity, imagination, creativity, and personal anecdotes about the languages used in children's homes. The children decided to investigate chemical pollution and fight it by creating awareness-raising posters and leaflets and sharing them with the school community.

The second case is located in a 5th grade classroom in an urban school in La Plata where the children addressed the theme of mobility, migration and its consequences in cultural and linguistic terms. The teacher encouraged them to learn about other children's lives by doing simple tasks such as writing an account of the first day at school, finding out about habitual activities classmates did at weekends and imagining the feelings of a book character, asking questions to her and answering those questions from her perspective. To do so, they had to identify, collect, analyse and synthesise information; compare and contrast activities, experiences and feelings; share opinions and views; and be curious and inquisitive. The children also created an 'It's Okay' book—based on Todd Parr's *It's Okay to Be Different* (Little Brown and Company, 2001)—to appreciate diversity locally and to share their experiences of migration and social integration with others. In this way, they developed empathy and mutual understanding by engaging their reflective skills to make sense of their own worlds and also understand other people's worlds.

The third case focuses on a rural multi-grade primary English classroom in Verónica—a small town in the province of Buenos Aires. The English teacher implemented interdisciplinary projects in cooperation with the Social Sciences and Natural Sciences teachers on a variety of themes. She welcomed and valued the children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds, for instance by enabling the use of Guarani, in addition to Spanish and English. One day the class invited a child's mother to the classroom and learned greetings and animal names in Guarani. The teacher also fostered the use of creative and artistic means of meaning-making. One theme in particular mobilised the children to engage in action: hunting and animal protection. They created posters and poems to raise awareness in the school and their community about the dangers of indiscriminate hunting and the importance of protecting local fauna like ostriches. This action phase illustrates the citizenship and social justice dimensions of critical literacy and critical pedagogy as fostered locally.

The fourth and final case reports an outdoor learning experience in a secondary school that stimulated student community engagement in a disadvantaged context. The teacher planned and implemented a school visit to a local park called the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson, located in their city, Florencio Varela. The students did not know the park or Willian Henry Hudson, a local writer and scientist. The teacher encouraged the use of leaflets, videos, comics, novel excerpts and the visit itself to study the important work that the writer had developed in their community and its influence around the world. The visit was a starting point to foster a sense of identification and bonding with the community and to develop students' initiatives to affirm their heritage and improve the local conditions. This happened, for example, as the students learned about the local tree *tarumá,* planted one, took it to their school and took care of it. This initiative is evidence of their collective sense of responsibility toward the environment in general, and toward their local heritage in particular. The students discovered that their hometown, Florencio Varela, had become known on other continents thanks to Hudson's writings in English and this proved to be highly motivational. Furthermore, by sharing the knowledge they had gained during the school visit with their families and peers, they also contributed to the preservation of this local heritage by spreading their interest and enthusiasm to others. Some families visited the park during Strawberry Day,

a local festivity, and, in this way, this outdoor learning experience cultivated bonds among the school, the families and the community.

5. Implications and conclusions.

The cases show that the teachers welcomed, valued and appreciated the use of Spanish, English, Quechua, or Guarani in their classrooms. In this way, they cultivated the children's awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, particularly through art and creativity in a collaborative atmosphere. For instance, one teacher invited the children to create and draw new characters for the *English Primer Reader* they were using. One child of Bolivian origin drew a man with a Bolivian hat who spoke Quechua. In another class, the teacher used maps, atlases and encyclopedias to teach continents and countries as well as the different languages spoken in each region/country. One child from Paraguay used Guarani to comprehend those materials. Everyone expanded their knowledge of continents and countries, developed spatial awareness, and nurtured their research skills by using all their available languages as well as other resources such as those maps, atlases and encyclopedias. In the classroom located in a rural area, the class addressed the topic of hunting and animal protection in connection with the local custom of bird killing and slaughtering in their community. They discussed ethical perspectives on the issue raised by the children themselves, for example whether those children whose families practised slaughtering were in fact 'killing'. The class decided to take action: they created bilingual posters in Spanish and English to raise awareness of the dangers of indiscriminate hunting and the importance of protecting local fauna like ostriches. In addition, they drew and described crazy animals and they also read animal poems and created their own. In this way, they used art, imagination and literature to develop not only their language skills but also their thinking skills and importantly, an ethical bond with animals.

These are examples of critical and creative classrooms, only that they are not the usual mainstream ELT classrooms in privileged contexts reported in the literature (Crookes, 2013; Kuchah Kuchah & Shamim, 2018; López-Gopar, 2019). The learning experiences that took place in these contexts cannot be judged or evaluated by the usual parameters of how much accurate English the children used and produced, i.e., in terms of competence, grammar and proficiency (Canagarajah, 2022). It is true that the children

and teenagers in these contexts produced or used 'little' English when compared to other classrooms. So, the question for teachers and teacher educators is: What does English language teaching mean and involve in contexts with difficult circumstances?

The teachers in these cases conscientiously anchored their teaching to a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) foundation (Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2024) as they addressed themes that were relevant to their students' lives such as migration and mobility, countries and continents and languages spoken in different places, animal hunting, and pollution, among others. They also aimed at developing their students as ethical beings and fostering a sense of citizenry, in addition to the learning of English itself. In this respect, one key pillar is the development of criticality and involvement with local civic action in concrete ways. In these four cases, this was achieved through:

a. Leaflets designed in collaboration among the children and intended to raise awareness of the importance of taking care of the environment. The children focused on ideas against hunting and polluting, and in favor of helping protect animals and the environment, spreading information and volunteering to take care of nature. In this way, they showed a strong commitment toward the environment and took concrete actions to protect nature (Case one, by Carolina Moirano, the teacher in charge of the class).

b. A book created by the children, called 'It's Okay', where they described and illustrated the various ways in which it is okay to be different. They shared the book with the school community and began an anti-bullying campaign by displaying it in a slide presentation at the end of the school year celebration (Case two, by María Emilia Arcuri).

c. A campaign against indiscriminate hunting in the rural area of Verónica, where ostriches and other species are hunted without regulation and control. The children made posters and leaflets aimed at raising awareness of this local problem. For instance, one child drew a man hunting an ostrich as an explicit call to stop that action (Case three, by Bárbara Bezuch).

d. A school visit to William Henry Hudson Ecological Park, in Florencio Varela, to become aware of the local cultural and natural heritage. After the outing, the secondary school students decided to take responsibility for the preservation of an old species that represents the community's heritage, the *tarumá*, for future generations. They planted one and took it to their school where they took care of it on a daily basis, developing an

ethical bond with nature and a strong sense of identification with their local community (Case four, by Adriana Helver).

These cases point to the important role of English language teachers in contributing to making a significant impact on their students' lives (Biesta, 2024), particularly in contexts with difficult circumstances. This is why teacher preparation in teacher education programmes, together with support (administrative, legal, procedural, developmental, curricular) from institutions (schools and universities), is essential to help teachers embrace this important role. The use of teacher-made materials which are produced locally deserves a special mention as they enable teachers to acknowledge, appropriate, contextualise, re-resource, re-signify, and act upon the specificities, challenges and difficulties of their distinct settings.

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4. Resistance, assimilation, and return: Exploring postcolonial subjectivity in picture books

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1. Introduction

Postcolonial literature has been extensively studied and holds a central place within the field of cultural studies. Its analysis allows for a deep understanding of power dynamics, Indigenous resistance, identity formation, and the historical and political processes that shape the relationship of domination between the centre and the periphery. Gabriela Leiton proposes that "The analysis of postcolonial literature addresses how new communities and identities are formed, and how historical and political processes are shaped by the dominant centre-periphery relationship (2024, p. 438)." Such literature acknowledges how colonial legacies continue to influence the formation of new identities and communities.

Given the vast landscape of postcolonial literature, we must consider how to introduce these complex ideas to young minds. Throughout history, illustrations, storytelling, and both pictorial and written texts have been used to convey stories of the past. Clare Bradford claims that "Children's texts reinvoke and rehearse colonialism … through narratives that engage with history in realistic or fantastic modes" (2007, p. 3). Picture books combine narratives and illustrations that bring characters and their stories into social, cultural, and historical context, offering visual representations that spark children's imaginations and invite them to explore history with curiosity—often leaving them with more questions than answers.

Through postcolonial-themed picture books, children can gain access to a broader, more comprehensive view of the world, one that represents minorities often excluded in colonial narratives. I will argue that postcolonial literature, particularly through the lens of picture books, offers a unique opportunity to engage children with

a more inclusive and critical understanding of language and subjectivity.

0. Theoretical framework

I propose a theoretical framework that explores the intersection of language and postcolonial subjectivities, as examined in Clare Bradford's work (2007) on children's narratives. This framework draws on the theories of Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Homi Bhabha (in Ashcroft et al., 2007*)*, linking them to Gabriela Leiton's theory (2021) on resistance, assimilation, and return within postcolonial literature.

Lacan's psychoanalytic theory will offer valuable insights into the formation of the postcolonial subject. Foucault's analysis of the *discourse of power* will provide a means to analyse how postcolonial subjects challenge the language of the coloniser, constructing counter-discourses that resist assimilation and mimicry. Bhabha's theory of *hybridity*, *mimicry*, and *the third space* will provide a framework for understanding the complex negotiations of identity and cultural assimilation in postcolonial contexts. Since the analysis centres on how picture books function as both linguistic and cultural spaces where postcolonial narratives of resistance, assimilation, and return are both constructed and challenged, Leiton's periodisation stages in postcolonial literature will be visited. Building on these renowned scholars, Bradford's studies (2007) on postcolonial narratives in children's literature will provide the grounds for exploring postcolonial stories that invite children to engage with the complexities of language as it both defines and disrupts the boundaries of colonial and postcolonial experiences.

Through this theoretical framework, we will see how picture books allow children to engage with the ambiguities of postcolonial existence, where language is both a tool of domination and a means of resistance, and where the postcolonial subject navigates between cultural spaces of assimilation, mimicry, and hybridity. The picture books I propose to analyse are *Guarani Legends* (2020), written by Clarisa Pereira González Aguiar and illustrated by Agustina García Albarido; *My Two Blankets* (2014), written by Irena Kobald and illustrated by Freya Blackwood; and *Islandborn* (2018), written by Junot Díaz and illustrated by Leo Espinosa. These unsettling stories will enable a dialogue between language and postcolonial subjectivity. Before proceeding with the analysis, it is necessary to clarify several key concepts, though.

1. Key concepts

Gabriela Leiton's proposed theory (2021) is framed within a temporal periodisation; however, the stages it presents—resistance, assimilation, and return—offer valuable insights into language and postcolonial subjectivities, which will be examined in the selected picture books. The stages of *resistance, assimilation*, and *return* highlight key themes: active opposition to colonial domination, integration into the dominant culture, and reconnection with roots and origins.

This periodisation in postcolonial literature, where the coloniser and colonised intersect, provides fertile ground for a psychoanalytic perspective of Lacan's concepts of the *other* and the *Other* (in Ashcroft et al., 2007*)*. The *other* refers to the individual's self-recognition and differentiation, while the *Other* signifies the authoritative figure shaping identity. In postcolonial contexts, the colonised are often positioned as the *other* to the coloniser's *Other*, their subjectivity defined by their difference. Lacan's notion of desire as a quest for recognition within the gaze of the Other further illuminates the dynamics of power and identity in colonial relationships.

Drawing on Lacan's and Leiton's theory, we can foreshadow a clear tension between Indigenous identity and colonial power. Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and mimicry offer insights into this dynamic. Hybridity, the blending of coloniser and colonised cultures, challenges the stability of colonial authority. Mimicry, the imperfect imitation of the coloniser, further undermines colonial control. As Bhabha argues, "colonial discourse is inherently ambivalent, as it emerges from the tension between the colonising and colonised subjects, which 'decentres authority from its position of power' and allows authority itself to become hybridised when influenced by other cultures" (in Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 11). This *blurred copy* of the coloniser's culture, as Bhabha describes it, "reveals a crack in the supposed certainty of colonial dominance" (2007, p. 125), exposing the fragility of colonial power.

Foucault's work highlights the role of discourse in shaping *subjectivity*. As Foucault claims, "Just as the subject, in psychoanalytical terms, is produced by, and must operate within, the laws of language, so discourse produces a subject equally dependent upon the rules of the system of knowledge that produces it" (in Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 205). Discourse, broader than ideology or language, produces different subjects within

different systems of knowledge. While individuals may be influenced by multiple discourses, their *subjectivity* is primarily shaped by the dominant discourse of their time.

Introducing the concept of *unsettling narratives,* Bradford (2007) argues that postcolonial picture books disrupt fixed, Eurocentric storytelling. These books challenge dominant narratives by reimagining the subjectivity of the colonised. They present fragmented, multi-layered narratives that encourage children to question traditional historical accounts and consider marginalised perspectives.

3. Language and postcolonial subjectivity in children's narratives

Postcolonial literature challenges traditional history by exploring marginalised perspectives and the role of language as a tool of colonial control. The global spread of English during colonisation imposed a new linguistic and cultural framework, frequently marginalising Indigenous languages and identities. As Ngugi wa Thiong'o states, "the domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised" (wa Thiong'o, 1981, in Bradford, 2007, p. 19). In contexts like northern Argentina, languages such as Guarani act as forms of cultural resistance, preserving the history, values, and worldview of Indigenous peoples.

a. *Guarani Legends*

Guarani Legends (2020) highlights Guarani myths and legends that explore identity, culture, and connection to the land. Pereira Gonzalez Aguiar (2020) narrates four legends—*Land Without Evil*, *Anai*, *Chajá*, and *Mainumbi*—to convey core Guarani values. The book is envisioned as a poetic picture book employing *generic transgressions* (Leiton, 2021, p. 62) that blend prose, poetry, and storytelling to achieve a subversive narrative form. While English is uncommon in northern Argentina, the author includes it to create a trilingual edition, alongside Spanish and Guarani. This choice, I argue, enhances the book's accessibility and enables the sharing of Guarani culture across linguistic and cultural borders.

The use of three languages in *Guarani Legends* (2020) reflects Leiton's idea of "structural fragmentation and hybridisation, forming what might be described as a *generic collage*" (2021, p. 63). Pereira Gonzalez Aguiar starts each legend with dialogue

and transitions into poetry, using Spanish, Guarani, and English, each distinguished by different colours. The coexistence of genres and languages mirrors the author's identity as a Spanish-English translator and a native of Corrientes, where Guarani is spoken.

For this analysis, I will be focusing on *Land Without Evil* and *Anai*, as both stories highlight the survival and resistance of Indigenous communities and show how storytelling and language preservation empower peripheral voices.

Land Without Evil portrays the colonisation as the arrival of evil. Depicted as the Other, the colonisers brought misfortune to a benevolent land upon their arrival: "All of a sudden, other people appeared in the land, these people did not believe in a land without evil" (p. 22). In response, the native people leave, seeking new lands. The illustrations reinforce this resistance, showcasing empowered Indigenous people united in community, rejecting the imperialist nostalgia often seen in colonial portrayals. Unlike nineteenth—and early twentieth—century colonial photographs that depicted Indigenous peoples as a *dying race* (Bradford, 2007, p. 21), García Albarido's artwork challenges the view of Indigenous cultures as static and doomed to extinction, presenting them as resilient, dynamic, and vibrant instead.

In *Land Without Evil*, language shapes the power dynamics between colonisers and the colonised. Bradford states, "Language is the primary mode through which colonisers and colonised encountered one another, and it is the principal means whereby relations of power are challenged and altered" (2007, p. 15). The legend highlights this divide: "They did not speak the same language either" (p. 22). Under this lens, Foucault argues that discourse involves "relations of power, not relations of meaning" (Bradford, 2007, p. 32), viewing language as a battleground where power is contested, and resistance is expressed through the revival of Indigenous languages and cultures.

The legend of *Anai* narrates the tale of a Guarani warrior, who defies the Spaniards, resisting not only through physical struggle but also by concealing herself, symbolising the silent yet persistent defiance of Indigenous peoples in the face of colonial violence. The colonisers, as agents of cultural erasure, destroy everything in their path to strip the Indigenous people of their resources, including setting fire to the tree where Anaí was last seen—a symbol of cultural memory and continuity.

The tree's response to Anai's disappearance, by blooming flowers in her skin tone, symbolises the resilience of Indigenous cultures in the face of colonial oppression. The flowers represent a reclamation of identity, a return of the *other* that colonial powers sought to suppress, as theorised by Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry, this 'not quite' quality of cultural difference, and the survival of culture through the hybrid spaces created in the aftermath of colonial violence. *Anai* reaffirms the resilience and resolute spirit of Indigenous peoples, reclaiming a narrative of resistance and the persistence of cultural identity despite the forces of colonial domination.

In the resistance phase, postcolonial literature challenges colonial domination, often focusing on the struggles of colonised peoples and their assertion of agency against imperial forces. Leiton asserts that "Language as an artifice, therefore, presents situations of power and disempowerment, of appropriation, and subjection" (2021, p. 65). In this line, *Guarani Legends* (2020) mirrors Bradford's concept of unsettling narratives, as it challenges dominant historical accounts by highlighting Indigenous resistance and the preservation of cultural identity, even in the face of colonial oppression.

b. *My Two Blankets*

My Two Blankets (2014) by Irena Kobald and illustrated by Freya Blackwood explores postcolonial themes through the story of Cartwheel, a young immigrant navigating language, culture, and identity in an unfamiliar land. Cartwheel's journey begins when she flees her homeland due to conflict, underscoring the postcolonial experience of migration from conflict-ridden regions. As Cartwheel faces cultural alienation and shifts in identity, she resists her new, hostile environment, which is depicted as grey and unwelcoming in the illustrations.

In the first pages, Kobald and Blackwood (2014) portray Cartwheel feeling alienated and estranged in a land that is cold, unfamiliar, and overwhelming, as if every sound and sight around her spoke a language she could not understand. "When I went out, it was like standing under a waterfall of strange sounds. The waterfall was cold. It made me feel alone" (p. 6). "Strange," a lexical item that recurrently appears in the text, carries a particular thematic or symbolic significance, foregrounding Cartwheel's resistance to adapt to the new culture. In this section, the narrative emphasises the pain

and confusion caused by forced relocation, a common experience in postcolonial contexts.

In *My Two Blankets* (2014), the term “blanket” also carries both symbolic and metaphorical meaning. Cartwheel’s "old blanket" symbolises the comfort of her home culture and language, while the "new blanket" represents her effort to assimilate into a new society and language. “When I went home, I hid under my old blanket … I wondered if I would ever feel like me again” (p. 17). Cartwheel needs to create a space that hybridises her identity, blending both languages. “Every time I met the girl, she brought more words” (p. 21). These lines illustrate how Cartwheel navigates these spaces, constructing a blended identity that incorporates both old and new cultural elements. This process evokes Homi Bhabha’s concept of the *third space*, where new hybrid identities are created in the tension between cultural preservation and adaptation.

Assimilation in *My Two Blankets* (2014) is revealed not as the loss of one's original identity, but as layering new experiences over the old, creating a hybrid identity, emerging as the necessity of resembling and merging with the culture of the host country. When immigrants adopt the language of their destination country, the host “ceases to be perceived as an oppressor or enemy and instead becomes the model to emulate and the object of desire” (Leiton, 2021, p. 97). This materialises when Cartwheel gradually becomes more comfortable with her "new blanket" while still keeping her old one, symbolising that she doesn’t have to abandon her heritage to find a place in the new society. This hybrid identity echoes postcolonial discussions on how migrants create spaces that bridge past and present by blending elements from both cultures in a way that empowers rather than erases.

Blackwood’s illustrations offer visual cues to Cartwheel’s inner feelings, with the colours and textures of her "blankets" changing as she grows more comfortable in her new environment. These visual contrasts highlight the emotional and psychological effects of migration, showing how external environments shape and challenge an individual’s sense of self. This visual representation resonates with Clare Bradford's notion that in postcolonial picture books, images work alongside text to represent the power dynamics and inner conflicts faced by individuals straddling different cultures.

c. *Islandborn*

Islandborn (2018), written by Junot Díaz and illustrated by Leo Espinosa, journeys into the exploration of memory, identity, and collective trauma, revealing how these layers of cultural meaning align with key postcolonial themes. The story starts when the teacher in Lola's class asks the students to draw a picture of where their families emigrated from. Every kid in Lola's school comes from a place that makes them unique, yet Lola's place—the Island—remains unknown to her. Díaz and Espinosa illustrate this by arranging the other children's places in a large block on the page, while Lola's is depicted alone, isolated, emphasising her disconnection from her cultural roots.

Islandborn (2018) *uses* memory and cultural heritage as a foundation for exploring the formation of identity, echoing Jacques Lacan's theory. Lola's journey can be seen as a form of *mirror* experience, where, through the stories and images of her Island home, she begins to recognise a piece of herself that was previously unknown or fragmented. Through questions to her family and community, Lola learns of a home she left as a baby, described as "so beautiful, even the people danced while they worked" (p. 10). Lola's quest to understand her Island can be seen as a mirror stage where she becomes aware of her cultural self, piecing together a composite diasporic identity that includes both her life in the United States and the Island she has never consciously known.

Additionally, Lola's journey draws on Lacan's concept of the *Other*, representing the Island as a distant, enigmatic presence that shapes her sense of identity. Through her search, Lola grapples with the Otherness of her Island heritage, which seems unfamiliar and foreign at first but slowly becomes part of her. This interaction with the Other aligns with the experience of diaspora, where identity is constructed in response to both one's immediate cultural surroundings and a distant but powerful cultural origin. In postcolonial theory, the Other often represents the colonised or the outsider; however, in *Islandborn* (2018), it represents Lola's own cultural heritage, which she must integrate to achieve a fuller sense of self.

Lola learns about the Island's history through both personal stories and the lingering effects of fear and control imposed by a dictator, depicted as a monstrous figure, reflecting the broader colonial experience of power imbalances and cultural erasure. Mr. Mir, the character connecting the Island and the US, refuses to speak of the monster, stating that "even the most beautiful places can attract a monster" (p. 26). The

oppressive dictator in the story illustrates Foucault's concept of power and discourse in shaping social narratives, as Díaz writes, "It was the most dreadful monster anyone had ever seen" (p. 27). Espinosa's illustrations (2018) depict a threatening scene of people fleeing, with the tyrant metaphorically representing Foucault's view of power shaping knowledge and discourse through authoritative narratives. The community's collective memory of the dictator continues to influence how Islanders perceive themselves and their past, demonstrating how colonial or dictatorial power endures through cultural memory.

At this point, I'd like to explore Mr. Mir's journey back to the Island to confront his past, in search of a postcolonial identity through unearthed memories. Leiton claims that "Returning to find identity and completion; to seek one's name, one's words, one's land, carries both a literal and a metaphorical point of view" (2019, p. 1). While Leiton suggests that seeking one's identity involves a journey of self-completion and reconnection, Mr. Mir's resistance to returning—whether in memory or identity—highlights the complexities of such journeys. However, by sharing the Island's history with Lola, he ultimately connects with his past and the resilience of his community.

In *Islandborn* (2018), the illustrations bring the Island's vibrancy and challenges to life, contrasting idyllic landscapes with depictions of fear under the dictator's rule. Bradford argues that postcolonial texts often engage young readers with themes of displacement, belonging, and cultural complexity, frequently using images to reinforce the narrative's emotional weight. This visual duality, which Bradford identifies as key to postcolonial picture books, helps readers grasp the complexity of postcolonial identity by juxtaposing the beauty of cultural heritage with the darkness of historical trauma.

4. Conclusion

I have explored three picture books that examine postcolonial literature through language, spaces, and communities as defining features of postcolonial and migrant identities. *Guaraní Legends* (2020) vividly illustrates not just acts of resistance but also the communal spirit that sustained it. The Guarani people, through their oral traditions, preserved their identity and language despite immense pressure to assimilate. These legends often depict heroic tales, underscoring the value placed on cultural preservation and the strength found in unity. Such legends serve as a testament to the profound

resilience of Indigenous communities, where language and identity are intrinsically linked to their survival and resistance.

My Two Blankets (2014) presents assimilation not as the erasure of one's original identity but as a process of layering new experiences over the old, resulting in a hybrid identity. The narrative and visuals highlight the necessity of adapting to and merging with the culture of the host country. Through this process, the new language and culture transform from being perceived as foreign or imposing to becoming a source of inspiration and connection. The narrative illustrates how maintaining one's heritage while embracing new cultural elements allows for the creation of a space that bridges past and present, reflecting postcolonial discussions on identity as an empowering blend rather than a loss.

Islandborn (2018) delves into the process of confronting a painful past, uncovering buried memories, and reconnecting with them as part of the search for postcolonial identity. This journey, which involves both literal and metaphorical dimensions, underscores the necessity of returning to the past to fully understand and embrace a shared heritage. While this process can foster resilience and communal strength, it also reveals the emotional complexities and challenges of revisiting historical trauma. By bringing the past into the present, the narrative highlights the role of memory in shaping identity and community.

Postcolonial literature, especially when explored through picture books, offers a path to help children develop a more inclusive and critical perspective on language and identity. *Guarani Legends* (2020), *My Two Blankets* (2014), and *Islandborn* (2018) challenge the traditional, often Eurocentric, narratives by offering alternative representations of identity, history, and culture. Through language, imagery, and storytelling, these texts present subjectivity as dynamic and evolving, resisting static or stereotyped colonial representations.

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5. Transnational Telecollaborative Projects and Global Citizenship: High School Teachers' Perceptions

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1. Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) has emerged as a crucial educational approach aimed at preparing students to navigate and contribute positively to a diverse and complex global landscape. Central to GCE is the development of students' ability to understand and engage with global issues, appreciate cultural diversity, and actively participate in creating a more equitable and sustainable world (Saleem et al., 2022). One innovative method of advancing these educational goals is through transnational telecollaborative projects—initiatives that utilise digital platforms to facilitate collaboration and to seek solutions to shared problems among participants across national boundaries.

This research paper explores the impact of transnational telecollaborative projects on advancing GCE, with a specific focus on high school teachers in Argentina who participated in virtual training programmes organised by STAR Scholars Argentina, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering global education through meaningful partnerships and research, during 2023 and 2024. The study investigates the teachers' perspectives on these programmes, which were designed to equip them with the skills needed to create and implement transnational telecollaborative projects that promote GCE (Falasca, 2023). By analysing the teachers' perceptions, the study aims to reveal both the advantages and challenges of these initiatives and offer practical recommendations for enhancing their effectiveness.

The central research question guiding this study is: How do a small group of high school teachers in Argentina perceive the impact of transnational telecollaborative projects on GCE, and what are the key factors influencing their effectiveness and challenges in this context?

This question is critical for several reasons. First, it seeks to capture teachers' perceptions of how transnational telecollaborative projects influence GCE, particularly in enhancing cultural understanding, communication skills, and collaborative learning among students. By gathering insights from teachers, the study aims to highlight the tangible benefits and challenges these projects bring to educational practice.

Second, the question addresses key factors that affect the effectiveness of these projects, such as logistical challenges, technological constraints, and the need for ongoing professional development. Identifying these factors is essential for understanding the success and limitations of these initiatives. Finally, the research question provides a framework for discussing specific challenges educators face in implementing these projects, including project management, technology use, and training. Understanding these challenges can inform future strategies to enhance the design and implementation of transnational telecollaborative projects.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study examines the impact of transnational telecollaborative projects on GCE using a multi-faceted theoretical framework. Central to this framework is GCE, which aims to enhance students' awareness of global issues, social justice, and intercultural understanding, as outlined by Oxfam (2006). This framework evaluates how these projects foster cultural awareness, critical thinking, and empathy, which contributes to a more inclusive educational environment.

Complementing this analysis are Wenger's Community of Practice (CoP) theory (1998) and Koehler and Mishra's Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (2008). CoP theory highlights the importance of learning within social contexts where individuals with shared interests engage in collective activities. In telecollaborative projects, this theory underscores how teachers and students, united by common goals, can foster a collaborative learning environment. By working together across cultural and geographical boundaries, participants exchange knowledge, strategies, and perspectives, enhancing both individual and group learning. This shared purpose and active collaboration mirror the principles of CoP, where learning thrives through interaction and mutual support.

Lastly, the TPACK framework explores how educators effectively integrate technology into their teaching, focusing on the integration of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge. In telecollaborative projects, this framework helps teachers use technology to facilitate cross-cultural collaboration, ensuring that tools are thoughtfully applied to improve communication and learning across borders.

Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of how transnational telecollaborative projects advance GCE. They emphasise the importance of cultural exchange, technological integration, and collaborative learning, empowering students to engage with diverse perspectives and tackle complex global challenges with critical thinking and a sense of responsibility.

3. Literature Review

GCE is an educational paradigm designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to engage effectively and responsibly in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. The overarching goal of GCE is to cultivate individuals who are not only culturally aware but also actively involved in addressing global challenges and in contributing to a more equitable and sustainable world. According to Oxfam (2006), GCE aims to foster a sense of global identity and responsibility among students, encouraging them to think critically about international issues and to engage with diverse perspectives. This educational approach emphasises the development of intercultural understanding, empathy, and critical thinking—key competencies that enable students to navigate and influence the global landscape.

Transnational telecollaborative projects, initiatives that leverage digital platforms to facilitate collaboration between participants from different countries, are increasingly recognized as pivotal in advancing the objectives of GCE (Toscu, 2023). These projects create opportunities for students and educators to engage in virtual exchanges, thus fostering interactions that bridge cultural and geographical divides. By participating in such projects, students can gain exposure to a range of perspectives, which enhances their understanding of global issues and promotes inclusivity within the educational environment. Moreover, transnational telecollaborative projects are valuable tools for improving communication and collaborative skills, as they require participants to engage in meaningful dialogue and problem-solving across cultural

boundaries. These interactions help to develop a global mindset, which is central to the ethos of GCE (O´Dowd, 2020).

However, the literature also identifies several challenges associated with the implementation of transnational telecollaborative projects. Technological constraints, such as unreliable internet connections and limited access to digital tools, can hinder the effectiveness of these initiatives. Additionally, O'Dowd (2020) points out that varying levels of digital literacy among participants can negatively impact the quality of collaboration and learning outcomes. These technological and literacy challenges require careful planning and support to ensure that all participants can effectively engage in the project.

Furthermore, the success of telecollaborative projects is significantly influenced by teachers' perceptions and their level of preparedness to integrate these initiatives into their teaching practices. According to Emir and Yangin-Ekşi (2024), teacher perceptions are paramount in shaping the effectiveness of telecollaborative projects. In their view, teachers' attitudes towards technology and their ability to manage virtual collaborations play a crucial role in the overall success of these projects. Similarly, Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia (2019) highlight the need for ongoing professional development to support educators in overcoming the challenges associated with telecollaboration. They argue that targeted training can help teachers build the necessary skills to effectively utilise digital tools, manage cross-cultural interactions, and integrate telecollaborative projects into their curricula.

In summary, GCE offers a strong foundation for promoting global awareness and responsibility among students, and transnational telecollaborative projects play a key role in advancing these goals by boosting intercultural understanding and collaborative skills. However, to fully realise their potential, it is crucial to address technological constraints, enhance digital literacy, and provide comprehensive professional development for educators. Specifically, the literature emphasises that a combined approach, integrating both technological support and pedagogical training, is essential for the effective implementation of these projects in education (Toscu, 2023).

4. Participants and Methods

a. Participants

This study engaged 24 high school teachers from Argentina who took part in two virtual training programmes designed and implemented by the STAR Country Director for Argentina in 2023 and 2024. The sample was purposefully selected to provide a representative view of educators involved in transnational telecollaborative projects.

The demographic and professional backgrounds of the participants are detailed in Table 1. As shown, the participants were female (24) and were distributed across various provinces in Argentina, reflecting a broad geographical representation. The distribution of participants was as follows:

Table 1. Demographic information and background of the participants.

Category	**Description and number of participants**
Gender	Female (24), Male (0)
Province	Buenos aires (6), CABA (5), Chaco (3), Córdoba (3), Jujuy (2), Salta (1), Santa Cruz (1), Santa Fe (1), Tucumán (2)
Type of School	Public (16), Private (8), Bilingual (0)
Subject(s) taught	English (16), Global Perspectives—in English (2), History—in English (2), Literature—in Spanish (1), Comprehensive Sexuality Education—in Spanish (1), Ethics—in Spanish (1), Art—in Spanish (1)
Age group(s) taught	12–14 (15), 15–17 (9)
Level(s) of English taught	A1 (2), A2 (4), B1 (8), B2 (4), C1 (1), C2 (1)

As shown in the Table 1, the majority of teachers in the virtual training programmes are from state-run schools (16). The largest group is based in the province of Buenos Aires (Six), followed by the capital city of Argentina, CABA, (Five), and smaller numbers in Chaco and Córdoba (Three each), as well as Jujuy and Tucumán (Two each). Salta, Santa Cruz, Santa Fe, and Tucumán each have one teacher. Most of these teachers teach English as a subject (16), while a few teach Global Perspectives and History in

English (Two each). Regarding students' English proficiency, the majority are at a B1 level (Eight), followed by those at B2 and A2 levels (Four each). A smaller number of teachers instruct subjects in Spanish, such as Literature, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), Ethics, and Art (One each). Additionally, 15 teachers work with students aged 12–14, while nine teach students aged 15–17. This data underscores a strong focus on English instruction for younger students at the B1 level, with less frequent involvement in other subjects and age groups.

b. Methods

The study used a mixed-methods approach to thoroughly analyse teachers' experiences with transnational telecollaborative projects. Data were collected via an online questionnaire, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative elements. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis, which were analysed using descriptive statistics to provide a statistical overview of teachers' perceptions. Open-ended questions provided qualitative data, which were examined through thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes in teachers' experiences, benefits, and challenges.

This mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of how telecollaborative projects impact GCE. Quantitative data offered a broad statistical view, while qualitative insights provided a deeper understanding of personal experiences and specific challenges. This combination of methods enabled a detailed exploration of the projects' effectiveness and the nuanced experiences of the teachers involved

5. Results

The study revealed several significant benefits and challenges associated with transnational telecollaborative projects aimed at enhancing GCE, based on both quantitative data and qualitative feedback from participating teachers. These insights highlight the complex dynamics of implementing such projects and underscore the need for tailored strategies to address these issues effectively.

One of the most notable benefits reported was the enhancement of cultural understanding, with 13 teachers (54%) highlighting this aspect. In particular, teachers observed that these projects significantly broadened their students’ awareness and

appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives. This exposure enriched their teaching practices and fostered a more inclusive educational atmosphere. As one teacher noted, “Grasping the concept of telecollaboration and its advantages has been truly eye-opening. I now appreciate how it allows students to collaborate with peers from around the world, enhancing their global perspectives and deepening their intercultural understanding.” Another teacher emphasized how the projects helped students come into contact with other cultures and understand the realities experienced by peers their age, contributing to their awareness of global issues and inspiring them to seek change and improvement through collaborative tasks.

Collaborative learning was also identified as a significant benefit, with seven teachers (30%) noting improvements in teamwork and problem-solving skills, as derived from the students' self-assessment surveys, where they highlighted the possibility to work together, share ideas, and develop solutions collectively. This was echoed by one teacher who stated, “Discovering telecollaboration has been enlightening. I now understand how it enables students to connect with others around the world, improving their global view and teamwork skills.” Such experiences foreground the value of these projects in fostering essential collaborative skills among students.

Improved communication skills were reported by four teachers (14%), who observed enhancements in both their own and their students’ language and interaction abilities. The necessity of engaging with peers from different cultural backgrounds led to the development of effective communication strategies and improvements in the students’ interaction abilities. One teacher reflected, “The project helped me and my students improve our language skills and learn how to communicate more effectively across different cultural contexts.”

Despite these benefits, several challenges were reported. Logistical issues were the most frequently cited problem, affecting 11 teachers (46%). Difficulties related to time zone differences and scheduling conflicts often disrupted the coordination and smooth execution of collaborative activities. As one teacher explained, “The project had to be adjusted due to external factors, such as the start date of classes abroad, the availability of the teachers with whom I had to share the ICT room (at my school), as well as the different time zones of my telecollaborators.”

Technological barriers were also a significant challenge for eight teachers (32%). Issues such as unreliable internet connection and insufficient technical support sometimes disrupted the flow of collaboration and impacted the overall effectiveness of the projects. This was underscored by a participant who noted, “The project was a great opportunity, but my telecollaborator’s frequent internet connectivity issues and limited technical support made it challenging to stay engaged and collaborate effectively. We really need troubleshooting support to make these projects run smoothly.”

Lastly, five teachers (22%) highlighted the need for further professional development as a key challenge. They expressed a desire for more comprehensive training to effectively manage and integrate telecollaborative projects into their teaching practices. One teacher observed, “While the idea of transnational telecollaborative projects is exciting, I found myself struggling with the technical aspects and project management. We definitely need more targeted training to help us navigate these tools and manage international collaborations effectively.”

6. Discussion

The study highlights the considerable promise of transnational telecollaborative projects in advancing GCE, revealing their substantial benefits in enhancing cultural understanding, improving communication skills, and fostering collaborative learning. These findings are consistent with the existing international literature, which underscores the transformative impact of digital collaboration on educational practices and student outcomes (Toscu, 2023).

The data indicate that transnational telecollaborative projects significantly enhance cultural understanding among both educators and students. With 13 teachers (54%) identifying increased cultural awareness as a major benefit, it is clear that these projects facilitate meaningful interactions across diverse cultural contexts. The qualitative feedback further supports this conclusion, with teachers noting that these projects allow students to explore different cultural perspectives, thereby broadening their global viewpoints. This experience is crucial for developing the empathy and intercultural competence essential for effective global citizenship, aligning well with

Oxfam's (2006) emphasis on the role of GCE in fostering a global perspective and engagement with international issues.

Improved communication skills emerged as another benefit, although less pronounced than cultural understanding. Approximately four teachers (14%) reported improvements in their students' interaction skills, regardless of their level of English. This suggests that the necessity of interacting with peers from varied cultural backgrounds provides a valuable platform for practising and refining communication skills. Effective communication is integral to successful collaboration and is crucial for achieving the goals of GCE. The improvement in communication skills highlighted by both quantitative and qualitative data underscores the role of telecollaborative projects in preparing students for a globalised world, where clear and respectful communication is vital.

Collaborative learning was also recognised as a perceived benefit, with seven teachers (30%) appreciating the development of teamwork and problem-solving skills. As they noted, these projects encourage students to work together on shared tasks, fostering skills such as cooperation, negotiation, and collective problem-solving. Their qualitative feedback further highlights how the collaborative nature of these projects builds a sense of community and mutual support among students, enriching their learning experience.

Despite these notable benefits, several challenges were identified that must be addressed to fully realise the potential of telecollaborative projects. Addressing these issues is crucial for optimising the effectiveness of telecollaborative initiatives and ensuring they deliver consistent, impactful outcomes for Global Citizenship Education (O´Dowd, 2020).

Logistical issues, reported by 11 teachers (46%), such as time zone differences and scheduling conflicts, often impede the smooth execution of collaborative activities. Addressing these challenges requires careful planning and the development of strategies to manage time zone differences and coordinate activities effectively. Implementing structured planning processes and establishing clear communication protocols could alleviate these issues and enhance project execution.

Technological barriers were a significant challenge for eight teachers (32%). Problems such as unreliable internet connections and insufficient technical support can

disrupt collaboration and undermine the effectiveness of these projects. Ensuring that all participants have access to reliable technology and adequate support resources is crucial for the success of transnational telecollaborative initiatives.

The need for enhanced professional development was highlighted by five teachers (22%), who expressed a desire for more comprehensive training to effectively manage and integrate transnational telecollaborative projects into their teaching practices. Addressing this need involves offering targeted professional development that focuses on both technical skills and project management strategies.

In essence, while transnational telecollaborative projects offer substantial promise for advancing GCE, addressing the identified challenges is essential for maximising their effectiveness. By implementing targeted support measures, such as improving logistical coordination, enhancing technological infrastructure, and providing comprehensive professional development, educators and organisations can overcome current obstacles and fully leverage the potential of these projects.

7. Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is essential to enhance the effectiveness and impact of transnational telecollaborative projects, which are instrumental in advancing GCE. These projects, by their nature, bring together diverse participants across geographical boundaries, creating unique opportunities for cultural exchange, collaborative learning, and improved communication skills. However, the potential of these projects can only be fully realised if certain foundational elements are addressed.

To tackle the technological challenges identified in the study, it is imperative to establish a solid technological foundation involving upgrading internet connectivity and ensuring access to high-quality hardware and software. Additionally, creating a dedicated support team to provide real-time assistance and troubleshooting can help mitigate disruptions caused by technical issues. This support should be readily accessible to all participants to prevent connectivity problems from undermining collaborative efforts. Regular maintenance and updates to technological resources are also crucial to keeping pace with evolving digital tools and platforms.

For telecollaborative projects to be effectively integrated into educational practices, educators require specialised and ongoing professional development. This

training should address both technological and pedagogical aspects, including practical workshops on using digital tools and platforms, strategies for managing virtual collaborations, and methods for assessing the impact of these projects on student learning. Moreover, professional development programmes should offer continuous support and resources, such as access to online communities of practice where educators can share experiences and solutions. Tailoring training to the specific needs of different teaching contexts and incorporating feedback from previous project experiences can further enhance its effectiveness.

Moreover, efficient management of logistics is essential for the smooth execution of transnational telecollaborative projects. Developing strategies to handle time zone differences and coordination challenges can greatly improve project outcomes. Implementing structured planning processes, such as creating detailed project timelines and establishing clear communication protocols, can help address these issues. Tools such as shared calendars and project management software can facilitate better coordination among participants. Additionally, fostering open communication channels and setting up regular check-ins can help preemptively address potential scheduling conflicts and ensure that all stakeholders are aligned throughout the duration of the project.

By addressing these areas with targeted interventions, the effectiveness of transnational telecollaborative projects can be significantly enhanced. Improving technical support, providing comprehensive professional development, and streamlining logistical processes will not only overcome existing challenges but also help to fully realise the potential of these projects in advancing GCE.

8. Conclusion

Transnational telecollaborative projects offer significant potential for advancing GCE by fostering cultural understanding, improving communication skills, and encouraging collaborative learning. Aligned with the GCE framework, these projects support the development of informed, empathetic, and engaged global citizens. They broaden participants' perspectives through interactions across diverse cultures, reinforcing the core objectives of GCE.

The CoP theory emphasises the importance of building supportive learning communities. By providing opportunities for regular interaction and collaboration, transnational telecollaborative projects build learning communities that not only promote global citizenship but also enrich the teachers and students´ overall educational experience regardless of the subjects taught or the levels of English involved.

The TPACK framework highlights the need for a balanced approach to technology integration. In transnational telecollaborative projects, effective use of technology can enhance communication, facilitate collaboration, and provide access to diverse resources. However, it is crucial to ensure that technology is used to support learning and not to hinder it.

Despite their potential, transnational telecollaborative projects face challenges such as logistical issues, technological barriers, and the need for quality professional development. Addressing these challenges through enhanced technical support, targeted training, and streamlined logistical processes will improve the effectiveness of these initiatives and strengthen their role in promoting global citizenship. By refining technological integration and supporting collaborative practices, these projects can more fully realise their potential, enriching global citizenship education and preparing students for an increasingly interconnected world.

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6. Empowering pre-service teachers for the digital age: Life competencies and AI literacy.

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1. Introduction

The digital era, with the emergence of powerful and advanced technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, demands a reassessment of the skills and competencies that pre-service teachers need to thrive in this new world. Contemporary society requires educators capable of equipping students with global skills so as to fully participate in 21st century life (Mercer et al., 2020).

The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, in this particular case, the course *Tecnología Educativa para la Enseñanza del Inglés*, in the Teacher Training College at the National University of Rio Cuarto, is an appropriate educational setting to foster the development of 21st century skills. Communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, citizenship, emotional self-regulation and digital literacies are some of the competencies integrated into the curricula of the subject. Regarding digital literacies, they are vital to prepare pre-service teachers for their future teaching practices so as to enable them to design learning environments in line with the new ways of teaching and learning by integrating generative AI.

The purpose of this paper is to communicate the teaching proposal of the university course including some key concepts highlighted in the syllabus as well as a brief explanation of the theoretical frameworks that guide the selection of activities and didactic strategies integrating technology. To conclude, pedagogical implications for pre-service teachers will be considered.

0. An overview of the course

Tecnología Educativa para la Enseñanza del Inglés is developed in the first semester of the third year of the Teacher Training Programme. It is a three-hour university course that adopts a blended mode of delivery instruction (Bates, 2016). Face-to-face lessons are combined and complemented by asynchronous learning on EVELIA, the virtual campus of our university. By adopting a blended modality, we take advantage of classroom interactions between students and teachers while fostering collaborative learning through discussion forums online. By working under this mix or hybrid mode of teaching and learning, digital literacy is enhanced.

Regarding the pedagogical strategies implemented, we promote student-centred approaches. This methodology is an essential part of the course since it helps pre-service teachers develop the attitudes, resourcefulness, and skills necessary to aid students to become lifelong, strategic, and motivated learners, with an ability for independent inquiry and a sense of responsibility for their own learning (Ang et al., 2001).

Around 20 pre-service teachers attend the course. This small-sized classroom allows students and teachers to have a good quality of interaction, thus creating a safe environment to encourage students' involvement and active participation either in online or in-person activities. On campus, the classes are delivered in a language lab where there is one computer available per two students and a Wi-Fi connection in case students want to use their own laptops or mobile phones.

0. Core content elements

The course is based on the study and discussion of some key concepts which constitute the core elements of the syllabus. Among them, *global skills*, also known as 21st century skills, are an integral part of the subject. Those skills demanded in contemporary society include five interconnected clusters: i) communication and collaboration, ii) creativity and critical thinking, iii) emotional self-regulation and well-being, iv) digital literacies, v) intercultural competence and citizenship (Mercer et al., 2020). The skills in each cluster support each other and can be integrated into pedagogical approaches for English Language Teaching (ELT) at any stage of the learning journey: pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education and even in the workplace.

Bloom's Taxonomy (Armstrong, 2010) and the *SAMR Model* (Puentedura, 2014) are contents discussed during the course since they are useful tools for curriculum planning, instructional delivery and assessment when integrating technology. Bloom's Taxonomy helps pre-service teachers design lesson plans by following six cognitive levels of complexity. Remember, understand and apply are the lowest levels whereas analyse, evaluate and create are the highest levels of cognition. In other words, recalling facts and basic concepts, explaining ideas and using information in new situations are at the bottom of the pyramid while higher-order level skills such as drawing connections among ideas, justifying a stand or decision and producing new or original work are at the top. The taxonomy is hierarchical, in that each level is subsumed in the higher levels. In sum, the taxonomy becomes a powerful tool to classify learning tasks according to educational goals or objectives.

The SAMR Model, which stands for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition is another relevant concept to assess technology integration in EFL lessons. It is usually represented as a ladder which is coupled to Bloom's Taxonomy. As the task moves from lower to upper levels of the taxonomy, it also moves from lower to upper levels of SAMR. The two *Enhancement levels* of SAMR (Substitution and Augmentation) are associated with the three lower levels of Bloom (Remember, Understand and Apply), while the two *Transformation levels* of SAMR (Modification and Redefinition) are associated with the upper levels of Bloom (Analyse, Evaluate and Create). In other words, the lowest levels of the ladder enhance learning, while the upper levels transform the learning process.

Another concept that we have deeply dealt with in the course is *digital literacy*. It is defined by Law et al. (2018) as:

> The ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. It includes competencies that are variously referred to as computer literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy and media literacy. (p. 6)

This concept has become even more prominent with the emergence and development of powerful AI technologies. Undoubtedly, every aspect of human activity will involve AI tools. That is why it is important to approach AI literacy in the teaching

and learning processes. The new era, known as the 'Age of AI', poses significant implications for education. So, in order to prepare pre-service teachers for the transformations that AI is provoking in students' lives, including their future workplaces, we have included *AI literacy* in the course syllabus. This term can be defined as "the ability to readily engage with AI by leveraging AI tools, systems, and frameworks to effectively and ethically solve problems in a wide range of sociocultural contexts" (Wang & Lester, 2023, p. 229). These authors present a framing of AI literacy that involves three key components: i) understanding AI capabilities; ii) utilising AI for problem-solving; iii) applying AI in sociocultural contexts. The authors imply, through these components, that students in their future working life will be required to understand AI capabilities at varying levels of technical expertise depending on the tasks associated with a particular job; they will be required to use AI to solve problems effectively, efficiently and ethically and they will also need to be able to engage in AI teaming in a variety of sociocultural contexts.

0. Theoretical frameworks used as a guide in the subject

Based on the core elements of the course, we have integrated into the curricula The Cambridge Framework for Life Competencies (Cambridge, s.f.) and the Framework of Digital Literacies (Pegrum et al., 2022, in Pegrum, 2024). Both frameworks have served the teachers as a guide for the selection of activities and didactic strategies implemented along the course.

The Cambridge Framework for Life Competencies has been developed to help teachers prepare students to succeed in this rapidly changing world. To do so, the framework proposes different life skills that are grouped into two main dimensions. The cognitive dimension includes thinking and learning skills, and the social and emotional dimension involves the social component of the learning process. Creativity, critical thinking, digital literacy and learning to learn are within the former component whereas communication, collaboration, emotional development and social responsibilities are in the latter. What is interesting about this framework is that the competencies can be broken down into component skills and at the same time each component includes a set of 'Can Do Statements' which describe what a learner can do in relation to each

competency at the end of each stage of the learning journey: pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education and in the workplace.

The Framework of Digital Literacies 3.0 designed by Pegrum et al. (2022) includes four components or four foci: communicating, informing, collaborating and redesigning. Literacy in the first focus goes through a continuum from print, hypertext, multimodal and immersive literacy to the highest level of complexity such as the ability to read, write and modify computer code including generative AI literacy. The second focus, informing, involves the ability to use metadata in the form of tags to find information and curate digital materials, to make use of a wide range of search engines, to reduce information overload through strategies and even to develop the ability to discern between information, disinformation and misinformation. The third level focuses on collaboration, and it involves the ability to acquire an online identity and to interact with others through personal or professional networks (PLE, PLN) that allow the construction of collective intelligence while respecting cultural diversity and contexts with ethical sense. The last level corresponds to redesign and, at this stage, what is emphasised is the ability to direct and manage attention intentionally in the present moment towards the information that comes from oneself, others or the environment, whether analogue, digital or mixed. It also refers to the ability to apply a critical eye to all aspects involving digital technologies and to be able to exercise agency through redesigning, modifying and/or combining cultural artifacts through collaborative networks increasingly integrated with generative AI.

In sum, both frameworks are complementary and they remark the significance of life competencies and digital literacies for educators in the 21st century. Possessing them is a fundamental aspect of teacher readiness to face the challenges of this crescively digital world.

0. AI Literacy in the classroom

During the development of the course, students are engaged in a process of awareness-raising regarding the use of generative AI tools. The concept of AI is introduced and questions are raised as to whether it is helpful or harmful to society. After this, students reflect on the potential and the risks of introducing AI in EFL lessons and the roles teachers have in raising awareness with their own students on this topic.

An activity where students have to think critically about the originality of students' work is presented and questions are asked to help them analyse different scenarios where students use AI tools to develop different productions.

Several AI tools are introduced during the course. Although *ChatGPT* is one of the tools that has become more popular, students are also asked to explore other AI sites such as *CoPilot* and *TinyWow*. The sites *Magicshool* and *Twee* are also explored and several tools for planning and assessment are analysed.

After reflecting on the impact of AI in society, we conclude as a class that developing soft skills in the era of AI is more important than ever. Teachers should aim at fostering skills such as collaboration and empathic listening, value student-teacher interactions so as to ensure human agency, and put human flourishing at the centre of the educational experience (Miao & Cukurova, 2024).

5.1. Didactic activities and strategies integrating technology

Throughout the course, pre-service teachers take an active role and are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning process by recognising the importance of every learning activity for their future teaching practice. The tasks designed and the didactic strategies implemented are supposed to integrate technology in a meaningful and genuine way so that pre-service teachers can value its potential for enhancing and transforming education.

Taking the case of the midterm activity, pre-service teachers are asked to integrate the key concepts developed in the course by creating collaborative mind maps. In this case, the cluster of the global skills communication and collaboration is fostered. *Miro, Coggle* and *Mindmeister* are some of the digital tools suggested to fulfill the assignment. In general, the productions are varied and students value their learning outcome as a positive experience integrating technology.

In order to explore the pedagogical use of several apps and websites, students are asked to make presentations showing the analysis of different aspects, such as the purpose of the app, its advantages and disadvantages, the uses they find of the app for an EFL class, and the connections they can make between the uses of the app and the global skills. The design of an activity integrating technology is another requirement of the pair-work presentation. It is meant to be carried out in the classroom and addressed

to their classmates as the target audience. During the presentation, students are also required to explain how the activity relates to the SAMR model and Bloom's Taxonomy. Among the tech tools explored and analysed are *Mentimeter, Quizlet, StoryJumper, Make Beliefs Comix, Liveworksheets, Wordwall, Elllo* and *ChatGPT.*

Based on the consideration that variety in feedback provision is essential in the teaching and learning processes, we set out to train pre-service teachers to give peer feedback. For this purpose, we use the website *Socrative* where students select among options in a multiple-choice format, and, at the end, can provide qualitative feedback in a comments section. Students are instructed to give concise and constructive feedback. The feedback is meant to be completed during their classmates' oral presentations. The teachers can see who answers, what they choose and what comments they write. After all the feedback is provided, teachers collect it digitally and then send it to the presenter.

The final project of the course consists of planning and designing activities integrating technology that can be carried out in a public school, at the primary or secondary level. Students are asked to think of the mode of delivery, either a face-to-face lesson, a blended lesson, or a fully synchronous live session. Students have to set pedagogical objectives for the lesson, including language learning goals and global skills goals, and design activities to implement considering a specific moment of the lesson.

5.2. Interactive engagement in the lessons

Students engage interactively in all the lessons throughout the course. They are stimulated to use a wide variety of tools and to reflect on their pedagogical purpose so as to integrate them into their future teaching practice. For example, at the beginning of the course, we usually use *Padlet*, where students can write their expectations about the subject. In this way, the app becomes a useful digital technology for socialising ideas. *Genially* is another site we often integrate in our lessons. On our first face-to-face meeting on campus and with the purpose of getting acquainted with the students, we ask them to create a timeline showing their relationship with technology. Through this activity, students explore one of the many affordances of the website. *Genially* is also used to revise some concepts developed along the course. For instance, the content

related to the teacher roles in the digital era is reviewed by playing a trivia game in which students are asked to answer some questions based on that given topic.

In almost all the lessons, the contents are introduced with *Google Slides,* an app which allows us to add extensions so as to create interactive presentations. *Pear Deck* and *Slido* are examples of powerful content generator tools that can be integrated into Google Slides. They help teachers transform presentations into interactive learning experiences. Students can interact with the lesson by making drawings, choosing between true or false, or just writing responses to a question. Either *Pear Deck* or *Slido* make the classroom more engaging and fun.

The sites *Quizizz and Kahoot* are some of our favourites since they serve to provide students with instances of gamification for revising and recycling content. *Mentimeter* is another app widely used to encourage students' involvement, either by creating a wordcloud to activate prior knowledge and brainstorm on a new topic, or to provide answers to different questions.

The website *PollEverywhere* is used to ask students about their own emotions when solving a task. In this case, we make pre-service teachers think of the importance of implementing social and emotional learning strategies in an EFL lesson as they are integrated in The Cambridge Framework for Life Competencies.

0. Pedagogical Implications

Integrating technology into a pre-service teacher course at a Teacher Training College has several significant pedagogical implications. These implications impact both the learning experience of pre-service teachers and their future effectiveness as educators.

Having an educational technology course enhances pre-service teachers' teaching competencies, since it helps them familiarise themselves with digital tools and provides opportunities for them to design more engaging and differentiated lessons. It also promotes student-centred learning, since learning is active, students are continuously engaged, and a collaborative teaching style is fostered.

Educational technology as a course also helps pre-service teachers develop digital literacy skills and gain experience in developing lessons that can be adapted to a variety of teaching modalities. This course enables the students to use digital

assessment tools, which can be different ways to assess students' understanding and progress, including online quizzes, portfolios, and peer reviews, among others. The course also engages pre-service students in reflective practice, in considering ethical issues regarding the use of technology, and in raising cultural and global awareness.

In summary, the integration of a course on Educational Technology in pre-service teacher training offers profound pedagogical advantages, fostering digital fluency, enhancing instructional strategies, and preparing teachers for the diverse, technology-rich classrooms of the future.

7. Conclusion

Designing *Tecnología Educativa para la Enseñanza del Inglés* has always been a very challenging and exciting experience. As part of the closure of the course, students anonymously fill in a Google Form to evaluate several aspects, such as the materials used, the delivery methods, among others. These are some of the comments we collected from our latest cohort of students:

> *Sometimes it's hard to fuse technology and pedagogy and I think that the teachers did a great job at making us see and appreciate both sides (technology and pedagogy) by providing us with extremely helpful apps that will help students in the future.*
>
> *I think that the course was helpful for designing classes and being aware of some aspects as the global skills, the SAMR model and Bloom's taxonomy. In addition, now I am more concerned about the issues related with copyright and creative commons, which is something I can take into account in the future.*
>
> *Teachers did a great job in giving protagonist to the students and that made the classes engaging, didactic and fruitful.*

In conclusion, it can be said that the course helps equip pre-service teachers with the life competencies and digital literacies essential for 21st century classrooms. In the use of different apps, activities and technologies, the global skills clusters are embedded. Integrating frameworks such as Bloom's Taxonomy, the SAMR model, the Cambridge Life Competencies, and the Digital Literacies Framework, the course

emphasises both foundational and advanced digital skills alongside global competencies. This approach prepares future educators to design and deliver lessons that foster creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication in a digital context, preparing them to meet the needs of diverse learning environments.

The focus of the course on AI literacy, a skill increasingly relevant across educational and professional landscapes, also highlights its forward-thinking approach. By encouraging hands-on experiences with AI tools and providing opportunities for reflection, students gain practical insights into using technology effectively and ethically. This experience not only builds technical skills but also helps pre-service teachers develop a critical perspective on the role of AI in education, fostering their ability to adapt to future advancements in the field.

Student feedback from the course has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the balanced emphasis on technology and pedagogy, the interactive and student-centred teaching methods, and the practical application of theoretical models. As education continues to evolve in the digital age, courses like this serve as crucial platforms for empowering teachers to navigate technological change and promote meaningful learning experiences. This successful integration of digital and pedagogical strategies within the given course demonstrates its value as a model for teacher training, equipping educators with the skills and adaptability necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

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