

**Enhancing 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' English speaking skill through the implementation of  
communicative games: A qualitative action research**

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## General presentation

As an attempt to fulfill the requirements of the practicum stage for pre-service teachers in the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree, of the University of Pamplona, this ongoing multi-step study is broken down into four chapters, as follows: Pedagogical component, research component, community component and administrative component.

Initially, the pedagogical component entitled “*Enhancing 8th grade students’ speaking skills through the implementation of communicative games: A qualitative action research*” introduces a research proposal aiming at addressing the main problem of this study which was clearly identified by observing the setting and participants involved during one week. It encompasses a sequential process consisting of an introduction, methodology and data analysis.

In the second place, the research component comprises the macro-project entitled “*Reflective spirit training in pre-service teachers from the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree, training tool to qualify the practicum stage*” in which pre-service teachers are intrinsically engaged during the practicum. Generally, it focuses on implementing reflection for trainee teachers to self-assess their work while carrying out the practicum.

Similarly, as a third, the community outreach component includes the sub-project entitled “*Verb-based online competition with secondary students, by using Kahoot*”. In general, this component aims at addressing a second need also identified by observations. However, the participants are not 8<sup>th</sup> graders but only 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Finally, the administrative component shows the different pre-service teachers’ roles when getting involved with extra-curricular activities and events set by the educational institutions engaged, during the practicum stage. It contains a specific timeline to be followed.



## **Introduction**

Rajathurai Nishanthi (2018) suggests that, among the many existing languages in the world, English has become essential in different fields in view of being “the greatest common spoken language universally”. According to this author, some relevant reasons why the English language is worthy of learning, are related to international communication, news media, internet, business and education.

Notwithstanding that the importance of getting high English proficiency is evident to become involved with this globalized world, in certain nations such as Colombia, for example, the standards of English levels are quite poor. As stated in *Publimetro* journal (2019), the English Proficiency Index – Education first declared that Colombia ranked the 60<sup>th</sup> position amid 100 countries in which citizens master the foreign language. Moreover, in terms of bilingual education, Colombia was positioned in 58<sup>th</sup> place out of 70 countries according to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (RCN Radio, 2019).

This panorama unmistakably shows that the National Bilingual Programme (PNB) (Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo), established by the National Ministry of Education from 2004 to satisfactorily increase “participation in the largely English-speaking global economy” by 2019, (British Council, 2015, p.14) was insufficient.

Considering the aforementioned difficulties for Colombia to reach optimal English proficiency levels, this sequential study presents an action research proposal to specifically address this issue from the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree practicum stage. It is emphasized on enhancing high school students’ English speaking competence by implementing communicative games while simultaneously working on listening skills.

## **Justification**

Bearing in mind that learning English as a foreign language involves a series of competences to be developed, it is vital to work on them integrally in order to learn the language as a whole. These competences are classified into productive skills which comprise speaking and writing; and receptive skills including listening and reading.

Inopportunately, many have witnessed how teachers focus the English teaching and learning processes on grammar only. This situation not only remains in higher education contexts but also in schools where, apart from teaching and learning English traditionally, more hindrances that negatively affect the development of the language skills are presented. Among them, we find time constrains, overcrowded classrooms, textbook-oriented classes, overuse of the mother tongue, grammar-based instruction and so on.

Taking into consideration the setting where this study aims to take place, the students frequently practice their writing in English throughout note-taking about the lessons, gap filling exercises and classroom activities in which they are required to write short sentences. Reading is typically practiced when reading the instructions of worksheets, and listening only when they listen to the teacher talking in English during the lessons a few times, or when they are asked to watch any video which commonly mixes English and Spanish. The speaking competence on the other hand, has not been taught nor worked on so far, and the emphasis on grammar topics is still evident.

Therefore, considering that speaking is necessary for students and people in general to “enhance their career, improve business, build confidence levels, get better job opportunities, make public speeches, attend interviews, participate in debates and group discussions [and] give presentations...” (Parupalli Rao, 2019), the proposal of this multi-step study pretends to

provide the students with a specific space in which they have the opportunity to gradually develop their speaking competence and, at the same time, work on the other language skills jointly, leaving aside the focus on structures and isolated vocabulary.

## **Objectives**

### **General objectives**

- To enhance 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' speaking competence through the implementation of communicative games.

### **Specific objectives**

- To implement the reflection practice as a transformative tool of the pedagogical processes proper to integral practice.
- To promote the critical spirit development in pre-service teachers in order for them to analyze their pedagogical work.
- To provide secondary students with verb-based adaptively online competitions through the use of Kahoot as suitable tool.
- To participate in Provincial San José School extra-curricular activities during the first semester of 2020.

## **Institutional observation**

As a start to carry out pre-service teachers' practicum stage in the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree, trainee teachers are required to first observe the educational institutions in which they are assigned so as to gain insight about them, and then being able to identify an issue that needs to be evidently addressed from the English language teaching and learning field. In doing so, pre-service teachers also become familiar with the context and learn how to well manage different situations that may emerge during their practicum stage in such places. Therefore, as an attempt to meet this requirement, the educational institution in which this project will be carried out, will be presented taking into consideration aspects such as the Institutional Educational Project (Proyecto Educativo Institucional, PEI in Spanish), the rulebook and activities timeline.

## **Location**

Provincial San José School is divided into five seats: The main seat which is "Provincial San José" seat, along with "La Salle", "Santa Cruz", "Gabriela Mistral" and "José Rafael Faría Bermudez" seats. They all are located in the urban area of Pamplona, Norte de Santander. However, this proposal will be conducted in José Rafael Faría Bermudez seat only, specifically located on the 8<sup>th</sup> avenue of the city.



Figure 1. José Rafael Faría Bermúdez seat

## **Authorities**

Provincial San José School authorities follow the hierarchical organization below:

- Hernando Ibarra Campos (The dean).
- Marín Cuy (Provincial coordinator)
- Eufemia Carrillo Vera (Faría coordinator).

## **Institutional Educational Project (PEI)**

Provincial San José School principles are clearly set upon Christianity and Catholicism and simultaneously framed under numerous educational elements. Below, you will find the most significant ones:

### **Mission**

Provincial San José School of Pamplona guarantees education in preschool, primary school and high school in order to train upright, competent, peace-loving human beings with an investigative spirit, in a pluralist, globalized and changing society. It aims at educating individuals who respect human rights, personal freedom and human dignity values based on Santanderinos and Lasallistas principles: honor, science and virtue.

### **Vision**

Provincial San José School of Pamplona will be widely recognized by 2020 for providing high-quality education based on humanistic and pluralist principles, harmony and updated pedagogical and investigative practices, so as to face current challenges and needs, and commit to build peace.

## **Institutional objectives**

### ***General objective***

- To train individuals integrally by facilitating scientific, technological and human development.

### ***Specific objectives***

- To provide a solid academic training that allows students to gain admission to tertiary education and be part of society change agents.
- To encourage respect and values by stimulating the development of socio-affective processes.
- To implement conflict management into the classrooms by respecting individual differences and plurality as peace shaping elements.
- To develop communicative competences and the suitable use of new technologies and investigation practices.
- To favor individuals' physical and mental health through the use of rational free time.
- To respect, properly use and preserve the environment as shared heritage.
- To promote investigation practices in different fields as pedagogical strategy to contribute to ICT-based knowledge building.

## **Pedagogical model**

The aim of Provincial San José School pedagogical model is the continuous human talent training for in order for individuals to contribute to the regional development, become leaders, live harmoniously, protect the environment and provide quotidian problem-solving strategies.

Consequently, this school adopts the Active learning approach which aims at answering the following questions: How to teach in the school? What to teach? Why and when to teach? What to use to teach? This approach is student-centered and allows students to gain insight in order to grow personally and develop different skills.

This approach focuses on critical and meaningful learning. Therefore, teachers' role is based on supporting and promoting analysis and reflection jointly to learn with and from students, and consequently, distinguish reality and rebuild it together.

### **Methodological approach**

Provincial San José School follows the APA methodological approach (Aprendo, Practico y Aplico, in Spanish). Thus, learning process is broken down into three different stages:

- Introduction of new content through students' current real-life experiences or concrete situations that develop students' competences and guide individual/group work.
- Identification of emerging challenges/issues derived from such experiences/situations in order to practice the contents individually or in groups.
- Analysis of available data and search of suitable solutions, and implementation of contents over students' context.

This methodological approach aims at finding the balance between “know how to”, “how to do” and “how to be” (saber, saber hacer, saber ser, in Spanish). This also allows to identify what they learn, how they do it and why it is used for.

## **Handbook**

Provincial San José School handbook is framed under a series of principles aiming at promoting coexistence among the school community in general and subsequently, looking for a peace-grounded culture inside the institution. Below, you will find such principles:

- Identity
- Self-esteem
- Respect
- Responsibility and commitment
- Honesty
- Solidarity and fraternity
- Comradeship
- Tolerance
- Communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Excellency
- Leadership
- Inclusion

Therefore, with the effort of preserving these principles, the handbook also provides a number of different protocols and procedures to address any offence that threatens the community school harmony.



## **Offences classification:**

### ***Offences N°1:***

For offences such as indiscipline, unjustified delays and absences from classes, furniture damages, rudeness, violent protests, inappropriate use of the school uniform and generally, misbehavior, the handbook recognized the following protocols to attend this issue:

- To carry out a meeting with those who are implicated in order to listen to their viewpoints and consequently, seek reconciliation in the institution.
- To establish an impartial, equitable and fair solution in search of reconciliation.
- To monitor the case and commitments thoroughly as an attempt to verify the effectiveness of the established solution or decide if resorting to the protocols to attend offences N° 2 and 3.

### ***Offences N°2:***

For offences like misuse of school technological devices, misappropriation of social networks inside the institution, robbery of other people's objects, repetitive physical, mental and psychological aggressions, false accusations, cheats in evaluations, disobedience, intentional mockery towards teachers and students, continuous indiscipline, damages to the establishment and incompleteness of academic activities, the handbook proposes the following protocols to be implemented:

- To provide those who are implicated with immediate mental and physical health attendance (considering physical, mental and psychological aggressions).

- To inform parents and family members about the situation as an effort to be on record.
- To carry out a meeting with those who are implicated along with their parents and family member in order to listen to their viewpoints and consequently, seek reconciliation in the institution.
- To establish constructive actions that aim at finding a suitable solution and at the same time, to identify an appropriate punishment for those who promoted the offence.
- To monitor the case and commitments thoroughly as an attempt to verify the effectiveness of the established solution or decide if resorting to the protocols to attend offences N° 3.

***Offences N°3:***

Finally, for facing offences such as repetition of the above-mentioned offences, bullying, cyberbullying, false accusations, defamation, extortion, subornation, sexual abuse, misbehavior, document falsification, sexting; carrying weapons, smoking, drinking alcohol and drugging inside the institution, promoting to integrate gangs and stimulating any type of aggression, the handbook offers a specific series of protocols. For example:

- To provide those who are implicated with immediate mental and physical health attendance (considering physical, mental and psychological aggressions).
- To inform parents and family members about the situation as an effort to be on record.

- To inform in written the executive secretary of the school coexistence committee about the situation by presenting evidenced material.
- To inform the national police about the case as an attempt to be on record.

### **Physical plant distribution**

José Rafael Faría Bermudez seat which belongs to Provincial San José School, is composed of two floors and around 13 classrooms with approximately 30 students per room. It also has a computing and an English laboratory; a chapel, a small cafeteria, a specific room for the coordinator of the institution and a spacious field in which the students practice sports, spend their break time and the school community celebrates ceremonial flag raisings.

### **Organization chart**

- The dean.
- Administrative board (The dean, two representative teachers for primary and high school education, two representative parents, one representative student per seat, and a representative ex-pupil).
- Academic board (A guiding agent, one teacher responsible for resources rooms' management and one academic coordinator per seat; around 80 teachers and a representative in charge of teaching approaches administration).
- Student board (A spokesperson student and representative students per grades).

### **School's calendar**

To this day, there is still an absence of an official institutional calendar of Provincial San José School for each seat.

## English classes schedule

The English classes schedule established so far for secondary students, specifically for 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders is the following:

HOUR	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	7-7:30 Formación-titulatura				
FIRST	7:30 – 8:20 Ninth 04	7:00 – 7:55 Eleventh 02	7:00 – 7:55 Ninth 03	7:00 – 7:55 Tenth 03	7:00 – 7:55 -----
SECOND	8:30 – 9:10 Tenth 03	7:55 – 8:50 Tenth 04	7:55 – 8:50 Ninth 03	7:55 – 8:50 Ninth 04	7:55 – 8:50 -----
THIRD	9:10 – 10:00 Tenth 04	8:50 – 9:15 Ninth 03	8:50 – 9:15 Tenth 04	8:50 – 9:15 Ninth 03	8:50 – 9:15 Eleventh 02
-----	B	R	R	R	R
FOURTH	10:30 – 11:20 Eighth 06	10:15 – 11:10 -----	10:15 – 11:10 Eleventh 02	10:15 – 11:10 -----	10:15 – 11:10 Eighth 06
FIFTH	11:20 – 12:10 -----	11:10 – 12:05 Ninth 04	11:10 – 12:05 Tenth 03	11:10 – 12:05 Tenth 04	11:10 – 12:05 Tenth 03
SIXTH	12:10 – 1:00 Eleventh 02	12:05 – 1:00 Eighth 06	12:05 – 1:00 -----	12:05 – 1:00 Eighth 06	12:05 – 1:00 Ninth 04

Figure 2. English classes schedule for 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th graders

## English classes observations

During the first week of the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree practicum stage, some 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade English classes belonging to secondary school were observed. Generally, aspects such as the use of the target language along with the mother tongue inside the English classrooms were identified. Additionally, the sequence in which the teacher of such courses broke down the English classes, started by praying Our Father in English with the students, and continued with the explanation of the topics (the alphabet and simple present tense) mostly in Spanish. After that, she implemented different grammar or short oral exercises for practicing the topics. Throughout this time, she made use of the English language and boosted the students to talk or answer questions by using the target language. However, they still preferred to communicate in Spanish. Coupled with that, some regular verb evaluations were identified. The teacher carried out this evaluative practice at the end of

the week. The reason why she did it and still does it, is for training the students in terms of verbs memorization for them to be able to compete in a verb contest at the end of Provincial San José School first term.

### English classes planning

English classes are planned with the following Provincial San José School planning format:



	<b>COLEGIO PROVINCIAL SAN JOSÉ</b> <small>INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA</small> <small>PROVINCIA SAN JOSÉ</small> <b>PLANEACION DE CLASE</b>	
<b>AREA:</b> Humanidades Lengua Castellana e Idioma Extranjero	<b>ASIGNATURA:</b> Inglés	
<b>TEMA:</b>	<b>FECHA:</b>	<b>GRADO:</b>
<b>PROPOSITO(S) DE APRENDIZAJE</b>		
<b>EXPERIENCIAS DE APRENDIZAJE</b>		
<b>INICIO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> <b>DESARROLLO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> <b>CIERRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
<b>EVIDENCIAS DE APRENDIZAJE</b>		
Teacher will get grades from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
<b>OBSERVACIONES</b>		

Figure 3. English classes planning format

### English classes books

Considering 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, teachers are required to use the following English books proposed by the Ministry of National Education (MEN) (Ministerio de Educación Nacional):

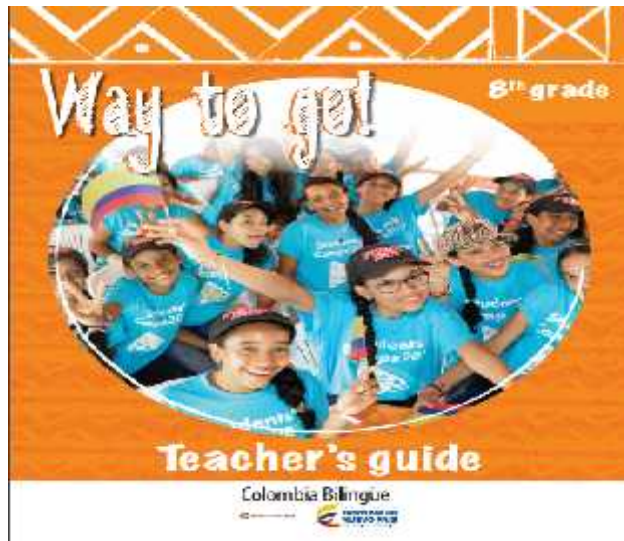


Figure 4. English book for 8th graders entitled “Way to go”

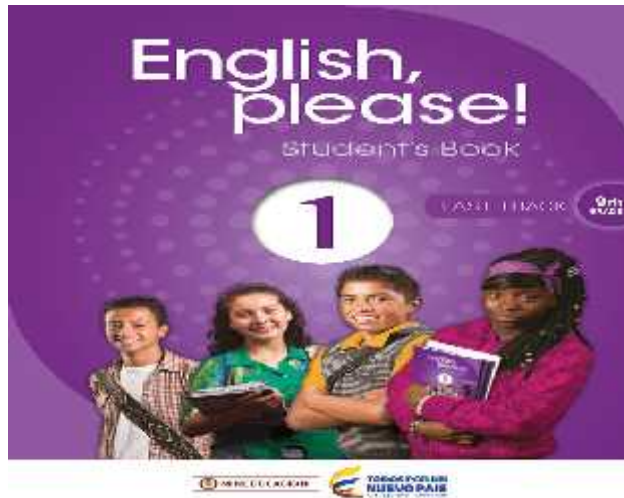


Figure 5. English book for 9th graders entitled “English, please”

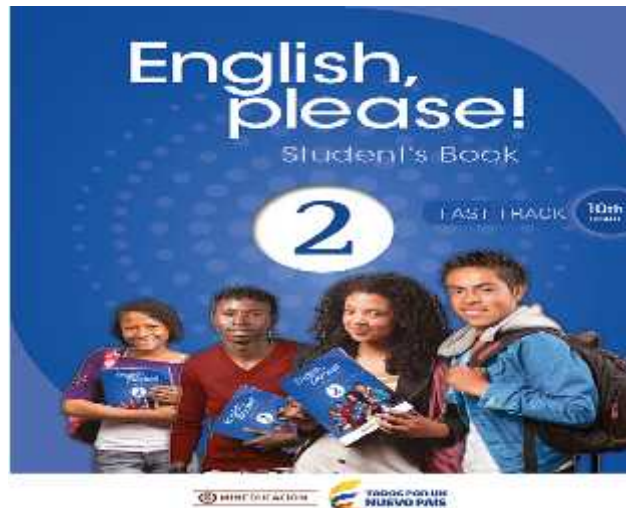


Figure 6. English book for 10th graders entitled “English, please”

Nevertheless, the teacher in charge of these secondary courses, does not usually employ the required books in the development of the English lessons.

## **Chapter I: Pedagogical component**

### **Enhancing 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' English speaking skill through the implementation of communicative games: A qualitative action research**

#### **Introduction**

Nowadays, the importance of mastering the speaking skill is evident in view of the current “position of English as a language for international communication” (Nazara, 2011). In this sense, becoming skilled at speaking not only empowers people to express their ideas and thoughts in the target language but also prompt them with many chances to apply for better jobs and consequently, get involved in globalization.

Unfortunately, as numerous learners live in non-English native countries, they “...do not have many opportunities to practice speaking other than in the classroom” and thus, their probabilities to “... improve their oral communicative skills are reduced” (Vaca & Gómez, 2017). As a result, EFL teachers must leverage these spaces to employ various strategies that enable learners to gradually develop and enhance speaking instead of focusing on language structures teaching only.

Among the many strategies and techniques that EFL teachers use to work on speaking, communicative games have been constantly highlighted. For Dewi, Kultsum & Armadi (2017), these games are useful to promote interaction among learners, build confidence to speak and generate a “positive effective atmosphere” in the classroom. Besides, Akdogan (2017) affirms that “...a teacher can use them [communicative games] to create contexts in which the language is useful”.

Considering the above benefits of communicative games on oral production development, the central focus of this study is to stimulate 8<sup>th</sup> graders speaking skill through



the adaptation of a series of games to real-life based communicative situations. Bearing in mind the School emergence for identifying teaching-learning strategies for secondary students to appropriately and easily use the English language, communicative games will be implemented as an alternative to address this need.

Although this project aimed at being carried out inside a classroom, the communicative games had to be virtually adapted in view of the health crisis the world experiences nowadays, caused by the corona virus outbreak. The way in which this situation affected each part of the execution of this proposal, will be explained in its different sections.

This proposal would be guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent can communicative games foster 8<sup>th</sup> grade students speaking skill?
2. What sort of real-life situations can 8<sup>th</sup> grade students adapt through communicative games?
3. What kind of structures and vocabulary can 8<sup>th</sup> grade students practice through the implementation of communicative games?
4. How do 8<sup>th</sup> grade students react towards the use of communicative games?

## **Justification**

According to Provincial San José School Art and Humanities field current planning, there is a need for improving students' English oral production gradually, as an effort to reach the national policies related to language competences proposed by the Colombian Ministry of National Education (MEN) (Ministerio de Educación Nacional). Nonetheless, although English teachers have made use of different strategies to address this issue, secondary students continue avoiding the use of the language orally. Indeed, taking into consideration a

number of English classes observed, despite students seemed to be highly motivated during the lessons, they preferred to constantly communicate and interact in L1 with their teacher and classmates.

Hence, as the aforementioned issue is still present in Provincial San José School, this proposal aims at contributing to students' speaking skill enhancement through an innovative and different learning strategy, which is communicative games. In doing so, students will not be expected to only actively participate in the English lessons but also to interact and use the language meaningfully in games adapted to real-life situations, in which vocabulary and language structures already learnt will be used orally.

## **Objectives**

### **General objective**

- To stimulate 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' speaking skill through the implementation of communicative games.

### **Specific objectives**

- To provide 8<sup>th</sup> graders with communicative games adapted to real-life meaningful situations.
- To practice English language structures and vocabulary already learnt through the implementation of communicative games.
- To prompt 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with an entertaining learning environment in which they can use and practice the target language orally.

## **Theoretical framework**

Since this research is focused on stimulating speaking by implementing communicative games, this section is aimed at introducing Carter and Nunan (2001)'s theory

about speaking development which comprises: conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring; and Hadfield's (1994) theory about communicative games in EFL teaching and learning. They will guide this proposal and will help to better comprehend the need of its execution.

### **Speaking development**

Generally, speaking skill development in learners who manage different languages from English, has been seen as an arduous process since it encompasses a series of complex cognitive steps. For Levelt (1989), for instance, the speaking skill comprises four primary processes: "conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring" (As cited in Carter and Nunan, 2001).

As Carter and Nunan relate conceptualization to conceive what needs to be expressed orally, they state that this step is grounded on "(...) background knowledge, knowledge about the topic, about the speech situation and knowledge of patterns of discourse" (2001, p.16). In this sense, learners as a first have to learn features and vocabulary of the target language, and identify the circumstances of the situation in which they are involved, in order to well accomplish this stage.

The second step which is formulation, is understood by these authors as the identification of "the words and phrases to express the meanings, sequencing them and putting in appropriate grammatical markers (such as inflections, auxiliaries, articles)" (2001, p.16). Therefore, throughout this phase, learners must be able to structure and arrange their ideas for them to be able to communicate later on, by going through the third step which is articulation.

Articulation is represented as “the motor control of the articulatory organs; in English: the lips, tongue, teeth, alveolar palate, velum, glottis, mouth cavity and breathe” (2001, p.16). As this is the specific time in which learners produce their messages orally, they must be aware of well articulating the words so as to avoid misunderstandings about the content of the messages.

Lastly, the final cognitive step that learners face during the process of speaking, is the self-monitoring process in which the authors claim that it “...is concerned with language users being able to identify and self-correct mistakes” (2001, p.16).

Considering the aforementioned stages, it is not a secret that developing speaking is undoubtedly difficult for elementary learners. In addition to these cognitive processes, people who reside in non-English speaking countries, just as the participants in this study, deal with insufficient exposure to the language and, sometimes, with EFL teachers who hinder the development of speaking inside the classroom, which is possibly the unique space in which learners have the opportunity to do it. As discussed in Carter and Nunan’s work, some teachers still root in delivering traditional classes by emphasizing more on language structures, translation and writing rather than speaking.

In the context of this study, it was evidenced that the EFL students remain in the first step (conceptualization) out of the four ones previously explained, in the reason that the teacher only concentrates on providing them with knowledge about the language. Although she sometimes tries to communicate ideas about the grammar topics to the students in English, she does not open a specific space for them to talk spontaneously nor with preparation prior to. She only measures their pronunciation through tape-recordings tasks which do not really foster learners’ speaking competence (Carter & Nunan, 2001, p.14)

because this sort of technology does not allow real-life communication. Consequently, lack of emphasis on real-life speaking not only neglects learners' oral production but also generates long-termed issues in view of students' unfavorable possibilities of getting better professional opportunities in the future and subsequently, non-becoming involved in the global world.

### **Games in EFL teaching and learning**

Games in EFL teaching and learning processes have been increasing since they provide learners with meaningful situations in which they can spontaneously use the language. Hadfield indicates that "the emphasis in the game is on successful communication rather than on correctness of language". That is why this same author makes a call for integrating games into the language study program, given that they permit "... as much as concentrated practice as a traditional drill, (...) an opportunity for real-life communication (...) and thus, constitute a bridge between the classroom and the real world" (1984, p.4).

Nevertheless, as Hadfield differentiates two types of games, which are competitive games and communicative games, this study is solely focused on the latter. The reason behind this choice is that competitive games are based on achieving a goal competitively which may "distorts the language used" (Hadfield, 1984, p.4), while communicative games on the other hand, prioritize, as its name indicates, communication. This enables learners to center on well communicating instead of only succeeding at a goal.

As this study attempts to stimulate and develop students' speaking skill through the implementation of communicative games as a strategy, it is indispensable to detail the advantages that they possibly bring into the context. Among the many benefits that communicative games present, the first one and the most important is to provide learners with a space explicitly designed to practice speaking amusingly, by employing language structures

and vocabulary already learnt, intrinsically. In second place, as communicative games offer the possibility to be modified according to specific situations, they can be adapted to real-life language in order to make communication purposeful, by considering also learners' context. Finally, the implementation of games in EFL teaching and learning processes is seen as a way to end with monotony in classrooms, which means that students may be more interested in participating in the activities and, in this way, be more motivated to practice their speaking. In addition to this, it is worthy to highlight that this communicative-game based strategy is aimed at making learners stop remaining at the first speaking development step (conceptualization). Through these games, they are granted the opportunity to experience formulation, articulation and self-monitoring. This means that students, for the first time, would be conscious about the process that speaking spontaneously involves.

## **Literature review**

Having in mind that the purpose of this study is to develop and stimulate 8<sup>th</sup> graders' speaking skill through the implementation of communicative games, this section introduces a general review of five inquiries presenting comparable and dissimilar notions about games influence on students' oral production. It is broken down into one single category, as follows:

### **Impact of communicative games in EFL speaking competence**

The use of games as tool to enhance students' oral production is not new. Still, the positive impact they have caused over speaking, has been considerably highlighted.

Focusing nationally, Urritia and Vega's (2010) study, carried out in a public school, indicated that caring and sharing, guessing-speculating, and story games in EFL classroom not only enhanced students' speaking but also their cooperation and involvement in the

lessons, self-confidence, motivation and performance, pronunciation and learners' free expression.

This panorama was also reflected internationally, since Yunanda, Asib & Setyaningsih (2013), Dewi, Kultsum & Armadi (2017), Gopal & Quah (2018), Murtiningsih, Kailani & Farid (2019), corroborated that games in EFL teaching and learning processes gradually improved students' speaking competence as well as some other related aspects, such as: self-confidence, interest and participation in the classes. Yunanda, Asib & Setyaningsih (2013) and Dewi, Kultsum & Armadi (2017) for example, agreed that games also contributed to students' fluency when speaking and their enthusiasm. Nevertheless, in spite of the previous advantages, Dewi, Kultsum & Armadi (2017) and Gopal & Quah (2018) also found a few factors that somehow complicated the implementation of games at the very beginning. The most remarkable ones were students' concern when the teacher asked them to use the target language, and some difficulties learners presented in expressing their ideas.

These research was taken into consideration since they definitely show a number possible outcomes that this proposal may encounter after having being executed. This will allow the researcher to better address the situations presented by the prior studies if they emerge with the participants and in context of the proposal.

### **Research methodology**

This methodology was established to be followed before the covid-19 emergence and outbreak. However, it could not be executed given that virtual work hindered the implementation of the project. Since this health crisis arose, pre-service teachers could not carry out the project inside a classroom and consequently, could not implement video recordings of the workshops nor interviews to collect data.

## **Design**

The present study would be framed under an action research design in order to directly address the proposed issue. For Creswell, an action research “addresses a specific, practical issue and seeks to obtain solutions to a problem”, therefore, “(...) researchers seek to empower, transform, and emancipate individuals from situations that constrain their self-development and self-determination” (2012, p.577).

## **Participants, sampling and setting**

This proposal aimed at being implemented with 8th graders from Provincial San José School, specifically, from José Rafael Faría Bermudez seat. However, as the study was virtually adapted, eight students were selected under a convenience sample, defined by Creswell as having those “willing and available to be studied” (2012, p.145). Therefore, the students who were chosen as participants, were those who currently have technological devices and internet in regard to the actual conditions in which this study would take place. Regrettably, only eight students out of 33 who conformed 8<sup>th</sup> grade at this school, would be involved in the study.

## **Instruments**

In terms of data collection techniques, field notes, video recordings and semi-structured interviews would be implemented.

Until the present, only field notes were used, defined by Creswell as “text (words) recorded by the researcher during an observation in a qualitative study” (2012, p. 216). This instrument was carried out during the first institutional observation and allowed the researcher to identify the need for the intervention of this proposal. During this observation week, the



pre-service teacher could identify that in some other secondary English classes, speaking was constantly omitted. Below the figure, you will find the direct link to these field notes.

**First observation**

- **Date:** February, 24th
- **Topic:** Grammar test review
- **Grade:** 9-04 grade

The teacher explained to the students that on Tuesdays and Fridays, specifically, she would attend students with materials to dispense doubts. The teacher talks to the students in English. She explained carefully the activity by using the English and Spanish language. The students first prayed "Lord's father" prayer, then sat down on their chairs and finally, were asked to make groups with their partners of the same line and arrange some letters in order to find out today's topic. (The alphabet). They stood up and completed the activity. After that, she introduced the topic by highlighting the importance of it in real-life situations such as: The airport, a test. The teacher emphasizes on short commands and alternates English and Spanish a lot. After introducing the alphabet on the board along with the pronunciation, she asked the students located in front of the classroom to spell their names orally. Then they all were asked to spell them in written, on their notebooks. Afterwards, students in the middle of the room were asked to tell their mother's name. And some others to spell different classroom objects: Pencil and book. Finally, students were asked to study the alphabet at home for a test that would be carry out soon.

Figure 7. First observation carried out in 9th -04 grade

**First observation**

- **Date:** February, 27th
- **Topic:** Grammar test review
- **Grade:** 9-05 grade

The teacher started the class by making the students pray in English. After that, they were asked to sing a song about the alphabet, topic already reviewed by the students and the teacher. Then, the students took a short quiz about such topic, which was based on spelling the students' names, their mothers' names and a classroom tool. The students took about 10-15 minutes in doing so. After collecting students' tests, the teacher provided them with a sheet in which three catholic prayers were presented in order for the students to learn them gently because they would be evaluated orally after Easter. Therefore, the teacher taught them the correct pronunciation of each prayer in her own way. In this sense, she wrote down some words pronunciation on the board in Spanish, without taking into account the English phonetic. They all repeated each prayer. When finishing with that, the teacher asked them to study the verbs for taking the test tomorrow. Then, she continued informing the students about how they would be able to recover their grades if they failed the test.

Figure 8. First observation carried out in 9th - 05 grade

### First observation

- Date: February, 24th
- Topic: Grammar test review
- Grade: 10-04 grade

The teacher talks to the students in English. She is going to ask students questions about a grammar test they made and the ones with right answers are going to take a candy. Although some students did not seem to be quite motivated, a few others did. Candies were a motivation for students to participate. After the students read their answers, she asked them to translate them into Spanish. Later on, the teacher asks to the students to write down the date on their notebooks every class, as follows: Today is Monday the twenty fourth (24<sup>th</sup>) of February 2020. After students shared their answers about the grammar test, the teacher asked them to calculate their grades in order to know the overall diagnosis test grade. Then, the teacher asked them to write down the following title: My performance in vocabulary is, and

Figure 9. First observation carried out in 10th - 04 grade

### Second observation

- Date: February, 27th
- Topic: Grammar test review
- Grade: 9-04 grade

The teacher first played "Lord's prayer" with the students. Then she wrote down the alphabet on the board in order to teach the alphabet song to the students. She wrote down some words pronunciation on the board so students would easily sing. After a competition among men and women singing the song, the teacher provided the winners (men) with 2 points for each one of them. Then, she asked a few students some questions in order to spell their names, mothers' names and classroom objects. When finishing with that, the teacher delivered the alphabet test to the students for them to solve it. The test was based on the previous activity. The teacher interacted with the students most of the time in Spanish.

Figure 10. Second observation carried out in 9th – 04 grade

### Second observation

- Date: February, 26th
- Topic: Grammar test review
- Grade: 10-04 grade

The students first presented the roles of the laboratory in English and Spanish. Then, she asked the students to continue sitting on the chairs they were assigned to during the rest of the term. Then the teacher asked them about a list of regular verbs that would be evaluated on Friday. Therefore, as they had those verbs in a folder, she asked them to deliver such folder on Monday. After that, the teacher asked the students to remember the topic they would work on today, in what some of them said: Simple present. Next, the teacher played a video through the projector about such topic. The video was about a young woman who explained all the rules in simple affirmative present tenses for third person. Later on, after watching the video, the teacher asked the students to go to the board voluntarily for translating 8 sentences from Spanish to English by using the simple present tenses. The majority of students seemed to be motivated to participate actively in the activity. The ones who wrote down the sentences correctly, got 1 or 2 points. Such points would be taken into account for grading the students at the end of the term. After finishing with the sentences, the teacher played another videos from the same speaker in order to learn the negative and interrogative form of the simple present tense. Nevertheless, there were no time left to watch it.

Figure 11. Second observation carried out in 10th – 04 grade



Figure 12. Third observation carried out in 10th – 04 grade

All the field notes are available in the following link:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aH0bvtyKZIT1XiMo\\_hfuBBuzOKGCR8IO?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aH0bvtyKZIT1XiMo_hfuBBuzOKGCR8IO?usp=sharing)

Oppositely, the video recording technique, understood as “a sequence of moving images that may be replayed for immediate or later viewing using a camera, recording device, and monitor screen” (Penn-Edwards, 2004), has not been implemented, given that the project has not been conducted so far. However, as it was adapted to be carried out virtually through different online platforms such as Skype and Zoom, the teacher would have the possibility to record the interventions of the students by means of the recording option that these resources offer.

In relation to the semi-structured interviews, one unique interview would be executed when the implementation of the project is about to be concluded, if it is implemented. This interview would have the purpose of identifying the effectiveness of communicative games-based workshops on students’ speaking skill, and would be carried out virtually.

### Interview Protocol

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Hour:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Objective:** To identify students' perceptions about the effectiveness of communicative games on their speaking skill.

Questions	Participant's answers
1. Estimado estudiante, ¿Cómo se sintió durante el desarrollo de los juegos comunicativos?	
2. ¿Le gustaron los tres juegos que se llevaron a cabo? ¿Por qué?	
3. ¿Considera que tuvo el tiempo necesario para capacitarse en inglés realmente?	
4. ¿Considera que los juegos mejoraron la participación suya?	

Figure 13. Semi-structured interview to be implemented when concluded the project  
 The interview is available in the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1x5PzQgO8nWpXdh0mRUAhlgxDYw5Sp3U1?usp=sharing>

### Timetable

This project was planned to be executed by considering the following timeline and communicative games:

ACTIVITIES AND STAGES	MARCH				APRIL				MAY			
	WEEK				WEEK				WEEK			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
1 Introduction of the project		X										
2 "Spider web" game			X									
3 "Guess the object" game					X							
4 "Snake and ladders" game							X					
5 "Charades" game									X			

Figure 14. Timetable to be followed before the virus outbreak

Nonetheless, bearing in mind the pandemic everybody has been currently going through, the previous timeline could not be implemented. Thus, as this proposal had to be virtually adapted, only two games out of the four previously proposed, were planned to be carried out along with another new one, with the support of different online platforms.

### **Ethical considerations**

Participants' identity would be protected under anonymity by means of nicknames; and participants' permissions would be requested by the following letter of consent:

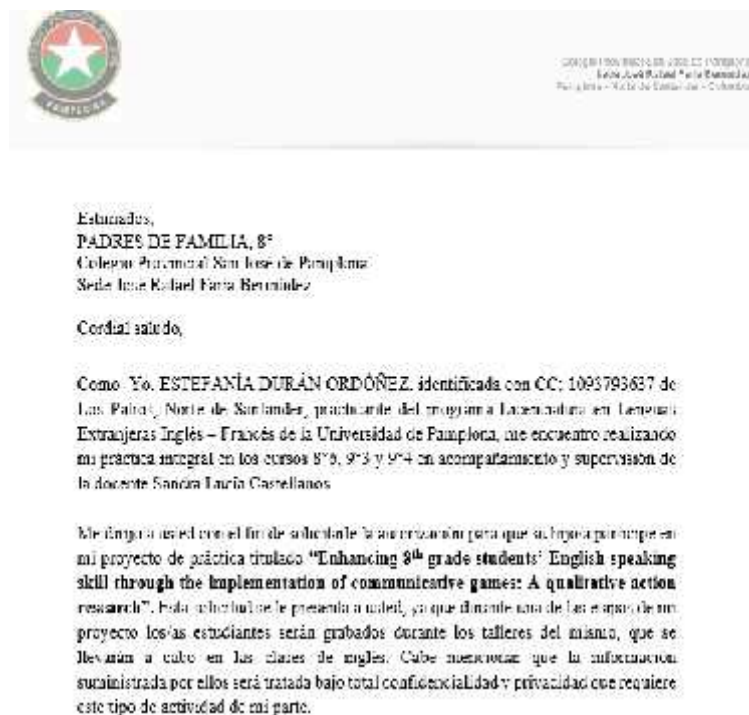


Figure 15. Letter of consent to ask for participants' permissions

### **Methodology**

During the only in-person training week at Fariá School, the researcher could not present the general aspects of this project to the participating students nor did the consent form due to time constrains caused by the constant changing calendar of the school.

Subsequently, she could not even carry out any workshop.

Therefore, considering that this project will be delivered to Provincial school in order for teachers to execute it, the researcher firstly proposed some general instructions to be taken into account and to be followed before starting with the implementation of the game-grounded workshops.

**General considerations before implementing the workshops**

**Level:** A1  
**Group:** Eighth Grade.  
**Participants:** The teacher and 8 students

**Instructions:**  
Before starting with the first workshop, I suggest to the teacher to go through the following steps:

- ✓ As a first, the teacher must create a Whatsapp group in which she/he adds those 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have a smartphone with enough space in the memory card and access to internet directly (approximately only 8 students out of 33 taking into account the context of this project)
- ✓ In second place, the teacher has to inform the students about the activities/games that are planned to be carried out along with their purpose. She/he can do this through the same Whatsapp group or another platform (Gmail, Google classroom, Edmodo, etc.) It depends on each teacher. Generally, the teacher should provide the students with the following information:  
  
*"Good morning, dear students. You have been chosen to participate in a series of games/activities aiming at improving your speaking skill in English. Such games/activities will be developed through the help of different online platforms such as Whatsapp, Skype, Kahoot and so on. Do not worry if you do not know how to use them. For each activity, I will explain to you what you will have to do, in detail. I wish you to enjoy and get advantage of those workshops. Take into account that the rest of your classmates, unfortunately, do not have the needed tools to participate in*

Figure 16. General instructions to a better execution of the project

In second place, the widely known “Charades” game was planned to be implemented as an attempt to practice vocabulary about animals. In doing so, each participating student would be provided with different words related to this lexicon for them to embody by actions or mimics to the rest of the students. In this way, the others would try to guess what each student performs.

### Charades: 1<sup>st</sup> workshop

**Level:** A1

**Group:** Eighth grade

**Participants:** The teacher and eight students.

**Topic:** Vocabulary about jobs and professions.

**Competence:** Linguistic and communicative.

**Materials:** Computer with camera, audio and microphone, and a smartphone

#### Instructions:

##### 1. Creating a Zoom conference:

Bearing in mind the current health crisis we have been going through, the teacher must resort to any online platform that allows her/him to carry out the activity. That is why I recommend "Zoom". Therefore, as a first step, the teacher must create a Zoom conference in order to make a videocall with the students to inform them about the instructions and rules of the game and the way it is planned to be executed.

Therefore, the teacher must look for the official webpage of Zoom on Google through the following link: <https://zoom.us/>. She/he has to click over the option "Regístrate, es gratuita" which is located on the right-hand side of the webpage, at the top.



Figure 17. First workshop entitled "Charades"

For a third encounter, the game "Pictionary" would take place. This game will address vocabulary about fruits, body parts and place. In this sense, each participating student will be provided with a series of words that they will have to represent through a drawing. As a result, the rest of the students will have to name each drawing according by considering the previous lexicon.

### Pictionary: 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop

**Level:** A1

**Group:** Eighth grade

**Participants:** The teacher and eight students.

**Topic:** Vocabulary about animals.

**Competence:** Linguistic and communicative.

**Materials:** Computer with camera, audio, microphone and a smartphone.

#### Instructions:

##### 1. Creating a Zoom conference:

Bearing in mind the current health crisis we have been going through, the teacher must resort to any online platform that allows her/him to carry out the activity. That is why I recommend "Zoom". Therefore, as a first step, the teacher must create a Zoom conference in order to make a videocall with the students to inform them about the instructions and rules of the game and the way it is planned to be executed.

Therefore, the teacher must look for the official webpage of Zoom on Google through the following link: <https://zoom.us/>. She/he has to click over the option "Regístrate, es gratuita" which is located on the right-hand side of the webpage, at the top.



Figure 18. Second workshop entitled "Pictionary"

Finally, as an effort to practice the verb to be with WH questions, the game entitled "Snake and ladders" was planned to be carried out. During the execution of this game, students would be asked to answer personal information questions orally by using two specific platforms.

**Snake and ladders: 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop**

**Level:** A1  
**Group:** Eighth grade.  
**Participants:** The teacher and eight students.  
**Topic:** Verb to be.  
**Competence:** Linguistic and communicative.  
**Materials:** Computer with audio and microphone and smartphone.

**Instructions:**

**General aspects to be taken into account before implementing the workshop:**  
This game only allows people to play with no more than three participants on a board. Therefore, it depends on the teacher how to divide the students in order to carry out the game suitably. I recommend that the teacher divides the students into two groups of three students and another group of two students. This will enable the teacher to play with them and be aware of the process. In addition to this, as there will be three groups to play with, the teacher must set different schedules for carrying out the workshop with each group.

**1. Creating the online conference (Skype):**  
First of all, the teacher has to create a videocall with the students in order to inform them about the instructions of the game, the rules of the activity, the way in which it will be carried out and finally, how to download the game.

Therefore, as a first step, the teacher must look for the official webpage of Skype on Google through the following link: <https://www.skype.com/es/>

Figure 19. Third workshop entitled "Snake and ladders"

Bearing in mind that these previous workshops will be delivered to Faría's School teachers and students, they all were uploaded to two different platforms.

The first one, which was designed solely for teachers, is a blog in which they will find the general considerations of this project along with the workshops, in detail. This blog was made for them to have a solid guide about the implementation of the games.





Figure 20. Blog containing the workshops as a guide for the teachers to implement them. Found at <https://communicativegames.blogspot.com/>

Given that the homepage only shows the general considerations to execute the project and the first workshop, the teacher has to go to the final of the page and click over “Entradas antiguas” to check the other workshops.

In the second platform, which is Edmodo, the researcher created an account focusing more on the participating students. Hence, she uploaded some specific instructions for the students to participate in the games along with a video, which is also available on the blog, to motivate them and inform them about the importance of speaking.



Figure 21. Edmodo account as a guide for students to participate in the workshops  
User: [1798ed@gmail.com](mailto:1798ed@gmail.com)  
Password: speakingworkshops

## Expected results

It is not a secret that through the implementation of such few workshops, the participating students do not accomplish the main goal of this project at all, which is basically enhancing their speaking skill. However, there is still a hope that the students, at least, can practice their oral production during the quarantine period. Practicing their speaking with these workshops would enable them to review vocabulary and few structures already learnt. Moreover, with regards the last workshop, the students would have the opportunity to realize the way in which they could use the English language in real-life situations since the game that would be executed, addresses personal information questions for the students to answer.

Apart from the above mentioned awaited results, some other expectations in relation to modifying virtual teaching methodologies are also presented. Considering that Faría School

roots in a sort of traditional teaching, which is reflected in the amount of virtual workshops teachers provide students with, it is expected that the teacher who gets this project transforms her/his virtual pedagogy and uses many of the different platforms that internet offers. In this way, she/he would generate an entertaining and innovative learning environment and would encourage his/her students to actively participate in the activities by leaving aside monotony.

## **Conclusions**

Having totally modified this project towards virtual modality was a challenge for every single pre-service teacher from the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree program. In this case, this process was completely arduous in the reason that the original proposal was designed to work with games inside a classroom with the participating students. Therefore, searching the correct manner to continue with the development of this project virtually, was complicated in the sense that not all the online platforms available for teachers and students allowed to carry out the workshops as the researcher would have desired.

Nonetheless, in spite of the previous circumstances, it is essential to recognize that this proposal succeeded at some of the objectives formerly established. Although this project could not be implemented to stimulate 8<sup>th</sup> graders speaking skill, the researcher achieved the goal of designing virtual communicative games to practice vocabulary, language structures previously learnt and one meaningful real-life situation. Hence, from this point on, the total completion and success of this project will depend on the teacher who wants to execute it. Even though, it is hard to expect that a teacher, who probably has not become entirely familiar with technological resources carries out the project satisfactorily, there is still a hope that she/he can succeed at the implementation of these games by considering the in-detailed explanations of them available on the blog.

## **Recommendations**

The hindrances presented by this project to be conducted, show the need for further research on this phenomenon. Since teachers may face difficulties when trying to implement the proposed workshops in view of the unpredicted change towards virtual modality, they may find it easier to leave it aside. That is why future trainee researchers must search some other alternatives to develop and enhance students' oral production hopefully when face-to-face classes return. However, if virtual education continues, it would be better to address strategies way too different to communicative games since it is complicated to well design them and find platforms that allow their execution.

## **Training development**

### **In-person training**

As one of the requirements of pre-service teachers from the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree is based on becoming engaged in the English classes from the institutions by imparting classes and evaluating the students, the researcher could only carry out an in-person training week. Throughout this time, she executed two English classes with 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and three with both 9<sup>th</sup> graders. In the first course, the researcher made known “El pacto de aula” which is a sort of commitment that the students sign to become familiar with the rules of the class; “The lord’s prayer”, which was practiced orally with the students; and the way they had to write the date. Otherwise, in the second courses, the researcher carried out two regular verbs evaluation and delivered a single class with only one of the two 9<sup>th</sup> grades, based on definite and indefinite articles. Below, you will find an example of the planning executed with 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

COLEGIO PROVINCIAL SAN JOSE		PARROQUIA		MONTE CASAS Y VIEJO	
PLANIFICACIÓN DE CLASE					
AREA:	Humanidades Lengua Castellana e Idioma Extranjero	ASIGNATURA:	Ingles	GRADO:	9TH
TEMA:	ARTICLES	HOW LONG?	TWO HOURS		
PROPÓSITO(S) DE APRENDIZAJE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete sentences using right indefinite articles.</li> <li>• Identify when to use or not the definite article.</li> <li>• Differentiate definite and indefinite articles.</li> </ul>				

EXPERIENCIAS DE APRENDIZAJE
<p><b>INICIO</b></p> <p>Tasks SS to identify the word that is repeated most.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T Shows SS the following text. (power point presentation)</li> </ul> <p>In my family I have a grandmother, a sister, an uncle, a nephew, a cousin and a pet. The family is important. The family loves pet. The pet is a dog. The dog is small. The dog is Angel. The dog is my happiness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks SS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What words we repeat more in the text. A, she</li> <li>✓ Do you know what do they mean?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Figure 22. Planning of an English class implemented with 9th graders  
**Virtual training**

After the covid-19 outbreak, the way in which pre-service teachers would complete their practicum absolutely changed. Bearing in mind that the school community holidays came ahead of time, the practicum committee asked trainees to start planning classes and academic activities with the supervisors during this period. Later on, when the virtual modality begun, such lessons plans were modified, corrected and there were even more to design. Generally, these last virtual workshops consisted of a maximum of four pages, and were adapted to be completed also in photocopies. In this sense, the students who did not have access to internet nor any technological device, would get the material physically. In the case of the researcher, she had to take around two or three grades per workshop and correct them with the students through Whatsapp groups or videoconferences.

In the following table, you will find all the lesson plans that were virtually designed:

Type of material	Brief description of the material	Topic	Grades in which the material	Was the material revised by the mentor	Was the material delivered to and developed

			<b>was/will be implemented</b>	<b>and/or supervisor?</b>	<b>by the students?</b>
Planning	Diagnosis	Basic vocabulary (Colors, animals, fruits, personal pronouns and verb to be)	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Planning (Evaluation)	Crossword in which the students have to write down 25 regular verbs out of a list of 242 regular verbs (from 126 to 150).	Regular verbs	9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grades	Yes, by the supervisor	No
Planning (Evaluation)	Worksheet in which the students have to match 25 more regular verbs with their translation (from 151 to 175).	Regular verbs	9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grades	Yes, by the supervisor	No
Planning (Evaluation)	Worksheet in which the students have to arrange some letters to form 25 more regular verbs (from 176 to 200).	Regular verbs	9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grades	Yes, by the supervisor	No
Planning	Workshop	Verb to be in affirmative form	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	No
Planning	Workshop	Verb to be in negative form	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	No
Planning	Workshop	Verb to be in interrogative form	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	No
Planning	Workshop	Basic vocabulary	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	No
Planning (Photocopies)	Adaptation of a virtual lesson planning made by the supervisor to photocopies.	Verb to be in it affirmative, negative and interrogative form along with WH questions	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Planning	Workshop	Basic vocabulary workshop (Colors, fruits and animals)	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Rubric	Self-evaluation rubric	Diagnosis	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Rubric	Self-evaluation rubric	Verb To be in affirmative, negative and interrogative form along with WH questions	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Planning	Workshop	Verb "To be" in past and future	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes

Planning	Workshop	Basic vocabulary (Jobs/occupations and places)	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Planning	Workshop	WH questions with verb to be, and answers	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Planning	Workshop	Descriptions with verb to be in present, past and future	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes
Planning	Workshop	ICFES questions	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Yes, by the supervisor	Yes

Table 1. Lessons planned virtually and to be printed from March 16<sup>th</sup> to May 29<sup>th</sup>.  
Lessons available in the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10472Yrv-ENs9ej2lRXHWvvnO5BjH3qB?usp=sharing>

Apart from the above mentioned tasks, the researcher also designed a series of videos to be shared with the students. She based such videos on feedback about the workshops that the students had to complete. In this sense, she treated aspects related to pronunciation and language structures. Additionally, two virtual conferences were carried out with 9<sup>th</sup> graders as an attempt to correct a workshops together, through the platform Zoom.

The videos as well as the conferences are found in the following link:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kB8e\\_Qs\\_WEHswetJD3TICrqDf-AMzEot?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kB8e_Qs_WEHswetJD3TICrqDf-AMzEot?usp=sharing)

## **Chapter II: Research component**

### **Reflective spirit training in pre-service teachers from the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree, training tool to qualify the practicum stage**

#### **Introduction**

In the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree context of training, pre-service teachers' practicum is defined as one of the focal points of interest and updating to study, and document for the improvement of the teaching-learning processes, for the qualification of education.

Besides the clear interest in the need to understand and transform the teaching practice, many local studies also focus especially on the learning issue rather than teaching.

It has been considered relevant to carry out a project that establishes a reflexive approach to the practicum as a way to objectify knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes that guide the teaching process. Likewise, this reflective approach is also regarded as a conscious internalization, immersion, and exploration exercise of teachers' subjectivity itself, through the formulation of questions and search for information for problem solving and self-recognition.

#### **Statement of the problem**

Schools assume core aspects of individuals' training and institutional life without questioning that are seen as imprints, stable, and invariable traits that are part of the school identity and culture. When events are developed without major disruption, the teacher takes the risk of performing in a way that hinders the pedagogical development and the renewal of school culture. A non-reflective practicum does not encourage the emergence of problematic situations; those realities are ignored or invisible. Viewed this way, the practicum is assumed



from reproductive codes that make teachers perform traditionally, such as cultural reproduction, becoming a barrier to the arising of emerging practices aimed at generating transformations of thought and knowledge to attend social needs.

Due to this situation, which affects teachers to a greater or lesser extent, it is necessary for the process of teacher training to encourage a critical and reflective spirit in future teachers that contributes to the improvement of their pedagogical practices so as to become essential elements that influence and transform their work and future professional performance.

In the case of the Bachelors of Arts in Foreign Languages degree at the University of Pamplona, reflection is conceived as a fundamental exercise for students who carry out their practicum, in order for them to self-evaluate and look critically and constructively at their work in the teaching role.

To initiate this study, the following guiding questions are asked:

How does the implementation of reflection contribute to transform the pedagogical processes inherent to the development of the practicum stage?

How does the exercise of reflection influence the development of critical spirit of pre-service teachers in the analysis of their pedagogical work?

## **Justification**

The proposal of this project in the context of Foreign Languages students' practicum is part of the professionalizing concept of the practicum as a "spearhead" to improve the educational processes in the institutions where the teaching practice is carried out.

It is considered that giving the importance to the role of the reflection in the teaching process is the first step to understand professional issues, own actions, and to be interested in

knowledge of models and approaches to address a problematic situation and establish an analytical look at the fact.

According to the philosopher of education Jhon Dewey, a pioneer in the field of reflexive thought applied to teaching, the need for this project is to provide students with analysis and self-observation tools that let them distinguish a routine from a reflexive action. It is considered that a reflective approach protects the actors from the traditional context of inertia, and authority that permeates the school.

## **Objectives**

### **General objective**

- To implement the reflection practice as a transformative tool of the pedagogical processes proper to integral practice.
- To promote the critical spirit development in pre-service teachers in order for them to analyze their pedagogical work.

### **Specific objectives**

- To consolidate a group of pre-service teachers with a critical spirit that reflects and presents proposals and alternatives for solving problems that are present in their practicum.
- To exchange criteria, ideas and guidelines to take into consideration in the practicum and integrate them effectively into the institution.
- To identify and analyze strategies used by students in their pedagogical practice.
- To implement reflective workshops and the development of didactic units that guide pre-service teachers' reflections.

- To analyze one's own beliefs about teachers' work and students.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theory about the teaching profession, reflection, reflective practice and pedagogical practice, constitutes the framework of this study. In order to clarify the concepts addressed, all in close relation to this project, they will be thoroughly defined.

### **Teaching profession**

One of the fundamental members of every education institution is the teacher, who is in charge of providing knowledge framed in a certain science or art, and who also trains integrally students as part of his responsibilities.

The teaching profession demands a series of competences, which currently constitute a conceptualization and a way of operating in planning and management of human resources aimed at facilitating the relation between management, work and education. This is how every teacher must reach some competences in the discipline that allow him to have mastery of a set of knowledge and skills in the specific area, since the first intellectual requirement of a professional is the level at which he develops his activity. Likewise, every teacher must have competences related to the organization of the contents, which means that the pedagogical practice does not only require ordering its components to be learned by the students, but also foresee for teaching conditions in and out the educational context. The most immediate function that teachers must develop is to design or anticipate the practice of teaching.

### **Reflection**

Reflection implies addressing different conceptions of such notion. For this reason, as an attempt to deepen its definition, two aspects will be taken into account: reflection as a process, and reflection as thematic, both proposed by Correa Molina et al. (2010).

### ***Reflection as a process***

Reflection is made from a series of stages that cyclically result in a process. According to Schön, reflecting on experience implies “a type of reflective dialogue with the situation, in which language would favor access to the experiences of the individual, which would allow extracting a new structure of the situation” (1983, as cited by Correa Molina et al., 2010).

The stages of reflection as a process are evidenced in the following figure:



Figure 23. Steps to successfully accomplish reflection

### ***Reflection as thematic***

The conception of reflection is based on a theme that is related to that concept. For this, and taking as reference to Grimmet et al. (1999), as cited by Correa Molina et al. (2010), the reflection is based on three perspectives: Reflection as an instrumental mediation of action, reflection as deliberation and reflection as reconstruction of experience.

The first two perspectives are considered as external aspects, sources of knowledge that allow reflection; and contextual aspects, which allows to carry out an exercise of reflection in the third perspective. In turn, these perspectives have mediators for this process to be executed. Firstly, the action, the context, the colleagues and the same person who reflects are taken into account.

### **Reflective practice**

Updating and qualifying academic proposals at the University and orienting students towards new ways of interacting with the world, it is necessary for teachers to question their own practice and the impact it has generated. Likewise, teachers must be able to objectify their behaviors, and to assume different roles in the pedagogical relationship.

The teacher takes on a central role in the current educational world. He acts in a complex space under constant change determined by the interaction of various factors and conditions. The teaching profession requires that: “teachers develop their professional knowledge in relation to changing circumstances” (Ebutt and Elliot, 1986). In this context, the problem of the practicum and class space requires a particular treatment oriented towards social interaction and understanding.

The need for assembling the changing social reality to our pedagogical work, is evidenced by the existence of numerous attempts to explain school phenomena and in the search for ways to address these phenomena, to make effective work at school.

This study will serve the participating teachers to reflect on their methodological processes in the light of reflection as the only rational and ethical mode of intervention (Sacristán, 1999).

According to Van Manen (1997) there are different levels of reflexivity. In the first place, the effective application of skills and technical knowledge is carried out in a classroom. The reflection is applied to the appropriate selection and use of the teaching strategies that the teacher will use.

On a second level, reflection is found in the implicit budgets of the specific classroom practices. Therefore, the consequences of the adopted strategies, curricula, and practices are analyzed. It is then necessary to apply educational criteria to the practice of teaching in order to make pedagogical decisions adapted to institutional reality and to contexts.

As a third, Van Manen (1997) establishes an exercise of critical reflection; at this level, the author stated that a more elaborated reflection, a questioning of ethical, normative and moral criteria directly or indirectly related to the classroom are presented.

### **The pedagogical practice**

For the analysis and reflection on the practice, it is considered appropriate to methodologically use a conceptual operation of classification of the practice; to this end, the proposal of Zeichner is assumed. The author established some modalities of practice, as follows:

#### ***Academic practice***

It is focused on the training of teachers who are able to reflect on the courses they work in so that they transform them into understandable structures for the students.

#### ***Social efficiency practice***

It is about a way to achieve an effective teaching through the application of didactic techniques that are deduced from general principles that pedagogical research has reached. In

this case, reflection consists of a strategic decision: “To select among a range of available techniques, the one which is considered the most effective”.

This is the way of proceeding from the technical rationality:

*Developmental*

Teaching is based on the interests and the development of students and, at the same time, it considers the development of the teacher as a teacher and as a person.

*Social reconstruction*

The object of reflection is social, economic, and political context so as to promote real democratic relations in the classroom, and egalitarian and fair in the social field.

*Generic*

The programs refer to reflection in a generic way, but without specifying the claims of the programs or the contents on which to reflect, nor the strategies to encourage reflexive learning.

*Reflection activators*

According to Schulman (1997), these activators are the cognitive foundations of the teacher about the life of the classroom; they are essential because they constitute the element of reflective thinking that contributes in the process of own knowledge that a good teacher needs in order to make decisions in the classroom.

*Critical element of reflective thinking*

This element of reflective thinking relates to “moral and ethical aspects of compassion and social justice” as proposed by Sparks-Lander & Colton (1991, p. 39). The interest of aspects related to social justice and ethics in education.

This authors established some classification categories of knowledge:

1. Knowledge of content.
2. General pedagogical knowledge.
3. Curriculum knowledge (programs, material, etc.).
4. Teaching knowledge and own professional configuration.
5. Knowledge of students and their characteristics.
6. Knowledge of educational contexts.
7. Knowledge of fundamentals: philosophical, historical, and axiological.

According to Georgea Spark-Lander & Amy Colton, the narrative element is another element of reflective thinking included in this study as an instrument. This one is related to the teacher's narrative in order to encourage the stories of their experiences in the classroom they go through in many forms and fulfill various functions in subjectivity, and, in the constitution of subjectivity. In this component, it is found the teaching journals in which the writing triggers the elaboration of the teacher's reflective thought, about objective and subjective or inter subjective practice experiences.

## **Methodology**

The central axis of the methodology proposed is a process of constant reflection while it also includes the carrying out of meeting that allow the strengthening of the practicum stage as an initial point to address the labor and educational phenomena. The methodology organization's principles are: autonomy, planning and self-observation.

In order to review the importance of this proposal on reflection for the practicum process, a set of "socialization" and systematization of the process itself will be done.



This study falls within the qualitative research approach, taking as starting point the perspective of reflecting as a professional space that will contribute greatly to the description, identification and analysis of the teachers' own pedagogical practicum.

### **Instruments**

In the process of gathering data for this research, the following instruments are used:

#### ***The pedagogical practice***

The main purpose of the reflection workshops is to guide the process of reflection carried out by the practitioner teachers. In addition, it is also about sharing and communicating experiences that are an intrinsic part of their professional activities. The idea behind this is that they get to enrich their process and to implement new tools that will allow them to transform their pedagogical practicum.

#### ***Objectives***

- To strengthen the organization of teachers and practitioner teachers to as a group of individuals endowed with a critical spirit, able to reflect and to present alternative solution proposals when facing an educational issue in their pedagogical practice.
- To communicate the criteria, to share ideas and guidelines for students to take over their pedagogical practicum.
- To qualify students for them to effectively join the educational establishment.

#### ***Self-observation sheets***

Self-observation sheets main aim is to guide the practitioner teachers towards developing a perspective of their practicum as teachers and their role in the classroom and the educational community in which they have been included.

### *Narrative journal*

The reflection exercise will allow the student to express themselves about their professional activity through a narrative of their experience as a way of providing some meaning to the teacher every day's life.

### *Class recording*

Evidence of the practitioner teacher's actions inside the classroom allows to reflect on different aspects, related to the foreign language teaching-learning process. These aspects may have been noticed or overlooked by the teachers, therefore, such recordings are useful to obtain an outside, constructive view of their pedagogical practicum.

### **Instruments implemented**

The researcher only participated in one single instrument, which consisted of narratives. Considering that the researcher started with the practicum a week later in comparison with the other trainee teachers, she only wrote down four narratives out of the five ones proposed by the practicum committee.

In the second narrative, the researcher reflected upon her first week of classes by taking into consideration her first impressions about the school, the teacher, the students, and the different duties she was asked to do during the week.

Differently, in the third narrative, the researcher reflected on the online learning environment everybody experienced since the pandemic outbreak. In this sense, she treated aspects such as face-to-face classes turning into online classes, technological platforms use, lessons and evaluation planning, and teachers and students' roles.

Lastly, in the fourth and fifth narratives, the researcher described the ongoing process of such online learning environment by emphasizing on the tasks she had to complete during this time.

#### First week of English classes

From Monday 9<sup>th</sup> to Friday 13<sup>th</sup> of March, I went through my first week of English classes at the Provincial San José School, specifically at José Rafael Baria Bermúdez seat in Pamplona.

During these days, I mostly graded 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> students' notebooks and finished with the planning of some tests that students took during the week. Such tests were based on wordsearch in which they had to look for a number of regular verbs and write them down in infinitive, simple present for third persons and past forms. Moreover, I planned two English lessons for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders although the teacher then informed me that I would work with 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

In terms of English classes, I missed around two of them in view of the mandatory attendance to San José novena which was carried out at the main seat of the school. Coupled with that, two more classes were only used to implement the aforementioned regular verbs tests for both courses of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Therefore, in these two last sessions, I was only in charge of praying "Our father" prayer with the students and well arranging them for taking the tests. However, on three more occasions, I succeeded at carrying out two English classes with 8<sup>th</sup> graders and one with 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

In the first class with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, we read the "Pacto de aula", a list of rules, proposed by my supervisor, to satisfactorily develop each lesson, and then, I taught them the correct pronunciation of "Our father" prayer. Later on, in the second class, they learnt the date in English. On the other hand, throughout 9<sup>th</sup> grade class, I taught the students the definite and indefinite articles with the support of slides.

Figure 24. First narrative entitled "First week of English classes"

Narratives available in the following link:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ap7b9gPJNOKjcpAVcpqw5jY4ivWgG\\_S4?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ap7b9gPJNOKjcpAVcpqw5jY4ivWgG_S4?usp=sharing)

Participating in reflective workshops was also required by the practicum committee. Having that in mind, on March 24<sup>th</sup>, the practicum coordinators executed the first and unique reflective workshop with the pre-service teachers. Although such workshop had been planned to be carried out in a face-to-face formal meeting, it was finally developed virtually by using Zoom platform in view of the actual health crisis. This workshop similarly treated some aspects related to trainees' first week of classes just as the first narrative that was mentioned before. During this meeting, pre-service teachers as well as the researcher expressed their notions about school communities and the challenges they dealt with during the week. This

workshop was useful for the researcher in terms of realizing about the possible situations she would encounter until finishing the practicum.

With regards class recordings, neither the researcher nor the rest of trainee teachers could implement this instrument. As explained above, the current health crisis inhibited the execution of face-to-face English classes and class recordings, which needed a classroom, could not be carried out.

### **Timeline**

Generally, the research instruments introduced in the methodology section were implemented according to the following timetable:

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Date</b>
Reflection workshop	February 6 <sup>th</sup>
First narrative	March 9 <sup>th</sup>
Self-evaluation	March 12 <sup>th</sup>
Second narrative	March 16 <sup>th</sup>
Third narrative	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
Fourth narrative	May 25 <sup>th</sup>
Fifth narrative	June 1 <sup>st</sup>

Table 2. Timeline in which the research instruments were implemented.

### **Conclusions**

As established in the objectives of this component, reflection empowered trainee teachers to self-assess their pedagogical work, think critically about the practicum and emerging challenges that somehow tried to obstruct this process; overcome the hindrances

that virtual education brought with the health crisis; and to better perform as pre-service teachers inside and out the schools.

Generally speaking, this component shed some light on pre-service teachers' practicum stage since it allowed them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and subsequently improve as future professionals every day. These reflective practices encouraged trainee teachers to self-evaluate their role, lessons, techniques and materials that were virtually implemented with the students as an effort to attend their needs. Simultaneously, reflection let practitioners realize about their progress during the practicum. Taking into account that the pandemic was such unexpected shift in teaching methodologies, participating in most of this component positively influenced on pre-service teachers' decisions to identify suitable ways to design lessons, evaluations and workshops related to the project and the school. Furthermore, this also enabled them to reflect upon the challenges that emerged with the virus outbreak and subsequently, to be aware about how to overcome them and any type of situation that may have hindered the practicum process.

## **Chapter III: Community outreach component**

### **Verb-based online competition with secondary students, by using Kahoot**

#### **Introduction**

Nowadays, competitions have become a useful and essential tool in education environments in view of its positive effects on students' learning processes. As demonstrated by Burguillo (2010), this sort of competitive-based learning contributes to learners' motivation and performance. Moreover, students often support the implementation of competitive activities given that they reduce anxiety and vary the common atmosphere of the classroom.

Considering the context of this study which is Provincial San José School, specifically José Rafael Faría seat, the English teacher in charge of secondary learners, for instance, carries out verb-based competitions among students from each course as an attempt to encourage the students to well master regular and irregular verbs before finishing the year. Nevertheless, bearing in mind teacher's overwhelmed schedules and the current pandemic situation, such competitions has to be virtually adapted, mandatorily.

Hence, from the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree field, this community outreach component aims at providing the students with verb-based adaptively online competitions through the use of Kahoot as suitable tool.

#### **Justification**

Due to the lack of face-to-face EFL classes as in Provincial San José School as worldwide, there is an evident need to continue with school activities, virtually. As two verb-based competitions have been developed annually since last years, the focus of this component is to offer the teacher and secondary students an appropriately interactive platform

to carry out the competitions and subsequently, fulfilling this academic goal. Thus, the reason why Kahoot was selected as the intermediary tool, is basically because it enable a huge number of students to join freely and allows the teacher to set up specific schedules for the platform to start and end with the activities.

## **Objectives**

### **General objective**

- To provide secondary students with verb-based adaptively online competitions through the use of Kahoot as suitable tool.

### **Specific objectives**

- To review prior knowledge about regular verbs in English through online competitions.
- To make students to become familiar with Kahoot online platform and the advantages it has.
- To prompt students with an amusing online learning environment in which they are the protagonists of the activity.

## **Methodology**

Participating students in the verb-based competitions belong to 9<sup>th</sup> grade from Provincial San José School, specifically from José Rafael Faría Bermudez seat, located in Pamplona.

In spite of the two verb-base competitions proposed by the EFL teacher of secondary students, this component only presents one single virtual contest grounded on a list of 125 regular verbs with their infinitive form. The other competition, unfortunately, could not be

planned because the participating students have not become familiar with irregular verbs so far.

This regular verb online contest was uploaded on the same blog mentioned above in the pedagogical component as a guide for the teacher. Therefore, in this platform, the teacher will find the specific instructions to implement the game along with the user and password to enter Kahoot.



Figure 25. Teacher's blog presenting the instructions to carry out the regular verb contest. Found at <https://communicativegames.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2020-06-10T21:30:00-07:00&max-results=7>

Additionally, the researcher created a document containing some specific instructions for the students to participate in the contest. This document was uploaded to the same Edmodo account which is also presented in the pedagogical component.



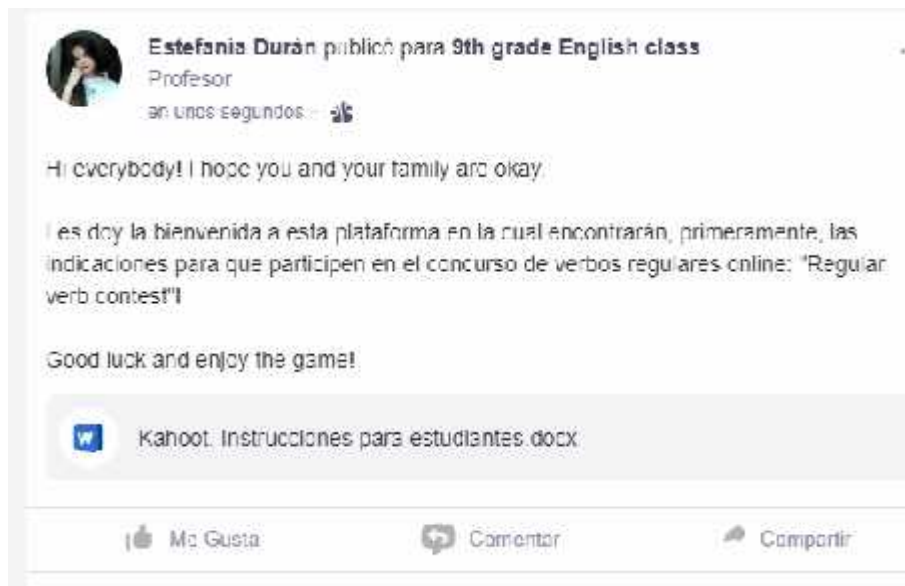


Figure 26. Indications for the students to become engaged in the regular verb contest, uploaded on Edmodo

### **Timeline**

There is not a timeline established for executing the verb-based online competitions until the present. In regard to the actual circumstances of education facing the pandemic outbreak, EFL teachers have been mostly focusing on prompting students with workshops to achieve the topics proposed on the syllabus of the school. Therefore, extra-school activities are not being prioritized by now. This means that the teacher in charge of participating secondary students would implement the verb-based online competition as soon as she considers to do it.

### **Conclusions**

Planning this verb-based online competition encouraged the researcher to fulfill the need of executing this contest in spite of the actual pandemic conditions. Therefore, having succeeded at this, not only contributed to the pre-service teacher practicum in the sense of going further with virtual modality, but also to students' learning processes since they will be the ones who will benefit from the contest.

Although this planning was time consuming and sort of complicated in view of the amount of regular verbs, the researcher accomplished the main goal of this component which was basically to provide secondary teacher with the competition. This evidences that there is no bounds when deciding to continue with any type of academic activity.

## **Chapter IV: Administrative component**

### **Introduction**

When entering and becoming part of an educational institution, teachers' role not only focused on teaching but also in getting engaged in distinct situations. Extra-curricular activities, for instance, require that teachers' actively participation in order to well execute such tasks and simultaneously support other teachers with the development of the activity. Besides, an exemplary model for their students. Besides, taking part of this sort of institutional events allow teachers to strengthen interpersonal relationships and sense of belonging.

That is why, pre-service teachers, in this case, need to be involved with the education institutions activities by all means, as a crucial part of the practicum stage. Therefore, from the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages degree field, trainee teachers will be required to enthusiastically participate and perform in all type of extra-curricular events proposed by the school in which they will be executing their practicum. In this instance, this proposal will be carried out in Provincial San José School seat "José Rafael Faría Bermudez".

### **Objectives**

#### **General objective**

- To participate in Provincial San José School extra-curricular activities during the first semester of 2020.

#### **Specific objectives**

- To support other teachers with the planning and execution of different extra-curricular events.

- To encourage Provincial San José School students, those who belong to José Rafael Faría Bermudez seat, to participate and perform in extra-curricular events.

## Methodology

It was planned that pre-service teachers would be engaged in all sort of extra-curricular activities at Pamplona Provincial San José School, specifically at José Rafael Faría Bermudez seat, during the first semester of 2020. In doing so, they would participate in meetings with school authorities, ceremonial flag risings, masses, school “inter-classes” and parades, etc., as an attempt to help teachers to over watch students, control discipline and guarantee a suitable development of the activities.

However, in regard to the current health crisis, this component was not carried out.

## Timeline

Bearing in mind the absence of an official institutional calendar of Provincial San José School for the development of the lessons along with extra-curricular activities, only a few events had been proposed during the course of March.

Week	Extra-curricular activity
1 <sup>st</sup> week	Flag raising ceremony. First Friday mass.
2 <sup>nd</sup> week	Different management fields. Saber Pro test training.
3 <sup>rd</sup> week	School interclasses parade. San José’s day.
4 <sup>th</sup> week	Accountability day.

Table 3. March extra-curricular activities planned to be implemented.

However, during face-to-face classes, the researcher only got involved in a series of masses related to San José's day since the school did not accomplish the timeline as it was supposed to. Additionally, she also participated in a flag-raising ceremony that 6<sup>th</sup> grade students carried out to celebrate women's day on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

On the other hand, the rest of the activities proposed in March calendar were cancelled in view of the covid-19 emergence.

## **Conclusions**

Unfortunately, succeeding at the goals of this component was not possible because of the following reasons. In first place, there was a lack of an official school calendar with regard to both extra-curricular and academic activities. In second place, with the virus outbreak, the researcher was limited to only stay in contact with the supervisor and the students since she did not let the researcher to get engaged in virtual meetings nor Whatsapp groups with the school community. This clearly obstructed the completion of her duties in this component.

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