Abstract

In this paper we are conceiving Action Research and the use of motivational strategies as two educational aspects which need to be considered as one single area of knowledge. Thus, we as teachers may enhance our students' motivation inside and outside the school context as well as empowering both teachers and students through an active research which generates a constant acquisition of new knowledge. An example of how to apply both issues at Highschool level is presented in our proposal in which teacher and student's research serves as the engine which moves and builds the dynamic, powerful and motivational tasks to be dealt with individually and in groups. This proposal also fosters students' autonomy, critical thinking and moral values which are seen in their daily self-reflective practice, peer communication and acquisition and presentation of specific information. Furthermore, the proposal also enhances teachers' motivation and helps them broaden their research fields and ways to reach new knowledge by analysing the students' creativity and ability when researching, and studying which strategies have a more positive impact on their motivation and autonomy.

Keywords

Action Research, Motivation, Education, Autonomy, Highschool

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1. Introduction

As the title of this paper exposes, we are going to focus on how as teachers we could and should motivate Highschool students. The motivational strategies, activities and diverse theories that are going to be presented in this article will be closely connected to the role of the teacher as researcher, claiming that the first motive to enhance students' motivation resides in the fact that teachers have to be in constant awareness and accountability of what they produce and students receive. Thus, in this section we will provide some definitions regarding motivation and the concept of Action Research which is seen as an academical and professional process carried out by the assertive teacher that studies and reflects upon the teaching and learning situation. Action Research should not be seen as a mere optional suggestion and application which will only be taken into account by few teachers or those who are more competent and hard-working professionals. Action Research is the key for teachers to succeed and improve their learning methodologies. Furthermore, in this paper we claim that Action Research has to be conceived as a teaching philosophy which motivates and inspires all kind of teachers.

1.1. The importance of researching with motivation

It is considered that choosing Action Research in order to engage our students and enhance their motivation is an appropriate combination to consider nowadays since there is little importance in seeing Action Research as the technique that all teachers are aware of. Some teachers may argue that there is not enough time to constantly research on one or several topics to achieve many goals and thus improve the educational community, not only students. As we said before, Action Research is available to all teachers and researchers, what we still need is to find solutions to engage teacher to be researchers. The importance of creating teachers as researchers is linked to the fact that motivation is the focus of all theories and practices which will be applied to our students. So far we have mentioned the importance of teacher researching but we should also focus on students' active research. We consider that without motivation, students, either inside and outside school, do not take into account

the paramount value of being educated and thus they do not show any effort to study and get good marks. Without motivation, students come to class and show they do not attend the lesson and do not participate whereas some others may do. Motivation in the educational context means the students come to class with the purpose of learning and having a good time with the teacher and friends. We would like to expand this last idea although it may seem idealistic. We, as teachers, cannot have any control on our students nor oppress them to enjoy the subject we are teaching. However, if the teacher researches and finds new ways and solutions to be applied to all students, she or he can have a great influence on the student's behaviour and motivation inside or outside class. We know that each student has her or his own psychological characteristics and we may not cope with all of them. We mean that what for one student may have a possitive impact regarding his or her motivation, for another it may not have any. Thus, we can argue that it is through experience and motivation where the success of Action Research lies.

The reasons of considering these two main concepts is that, as said above, we as teachers need to create a classroom atmosphere that is able to enhance students' motivation but also considering our students are motivated in other subjects and outside classroom. This aspect emphasizes the reality we are living in since most students may be more motivated inside classroom due to the teacher and/or mates' influence opposed to their behaviour when they are at home and their parents cannot help them with their homework.

1.2. The Spanish and Balearic context

We also claim that Action Research has to be studied in the Spanish case and analyse te influence of research used as a methodology to enhance students' motivation. Our Spanish schools and the academic context related to other educational institutions needs to build a larger and stronger corpus of research and educational tools in order to improve in our school practices and results. Moreover, Spain needs to cooperate with other reseachers at Highschool and University level from other European and non-European countries in order to obtain higher-quality educational results. Thus, we also consider that if Action Research has useful and optimate responses on Spanish students, this would

mean the Spanish educational system will be conceived as more successful and reliable.

Regarding the Balearic context, it is necessary to remark that the constant changes of governments with different political views upon the eductional system have contributed to the inestablisation of the academic program thus affecting to the possibility for teachers to continue in their learning, teaching and research. It is also studied that the Balearic educational community has obtained the lowest marks comparing it with the Spanish average. Thus, we understood that with these results, one essential aspect to put into practice was enhancing Balearic students' motivation.

However, we consider that the measures proposed in this article as well as the aspects we are going to tackle can be applied to any classroom. To achieve this, we are going to mention the local as well as universal traits regarding the educational context.

1.3. The purpose

The purpose of this paper is seen as another contribution to the academic world regarding Action Research adding the topic of motivation and understanding these two variables united. We consider that developing motivational strategies through Action Research is the key to success towards our students' quality of their work and marks but also as a measure to engage them to value education and build responsible future adults. Moreover, if we achieve to make them value the effort of teaching and motivation, our students will individually build strong moral opinions about their personal and professional lives.

2. Contextualising Action Research

2.1. Definitions applied to Action Research

Action Research can be conceived as self-reflective practice since it involves a constant reflection on the teacher's work thus promoting teachers as researchers. In this new section, we are going to provide some evidences to our

considerations through the mentioning of some authors who work, research and contribute to the literature regarding Action Research. One of these authors is Ferguson with which we start contextualising Action Research and its definitions and comparisons.

Ferguson compares Action Research with traditional research: “In traditional forms of research – empirical research – researchers do research on other people. In action research, researchers do research on themselves.” (2011: 8). Thus, it is remarkable this difference since the kind of research discussed in this paper has to do with own criticism and thus a sense of constant improvement of the self and competitiveness. Action Research is also seen as a process where the self-reflective practice helps you to understand your actions. Action Research “shows the process you have gone through in order to achieve a better understanding of yourself, so that you can continue developing yourself and your work” (Ferguson, 2011: 8). As Ferguson points out, this kind of research needs a reflective teacher. We no more reflect on others’ performance or what is empirical to the teacher’s eyes. The need of improvement and perfection with the self’s work and what the consequences are compose the understanding of Action Research.

2.2. The cyclicality of the Action Research processes

When talking of Action Research, some authors make reference to the cycle which is based on a series of steps the teacher has to do so that this practice is successfully achieved. Ferrance defines these steps as “A cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action” (2000: 2). As we can see, the first step requires asking questions in order to find which problems we have in order to improve the quality of our teaching. Then, a cycle of research accumulating new information followed by the step of reflection on this data is the key step. This step allows us as teachers to make sure we understand what we are reading and learning and reflect it on our new knowledge.

Action Research can also be described as this type of research which is: “Cyclical, involving a “non-linear pattern of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the changes in the social situations” (Noffke & Stevenson,

1995, p. 2 in Ferrance, 2000: 7). As we observe, the process of reflection and research itself is imagined as a circular travel from one stage to another as if the different stages were seen as countries and that at the end of this journey the tourist has learnt and seen many places and lived different experiences. What is more, some of the knowledge acquired in one travel can be applied to the following trip. This metaphor represents the reality and purpose of teacher Action Research. Moreover, the traveller will continue travelling since it is a fountain of motivation, inspiration and understanding of different cultures, languages and thoughts. This same learning can be applied to research including the kind of students and class the teacher has.

Pine also considers that the cycle is divided into two parts where in the first basic cycle he identifies the general idea (in which we are going to investigate about) we are engaged since we research and understand the given topic. After this, we make a general plan of how we are going to put it into practice, then we develop the plan called the “first action step”, we evaluate the results on students and we revise it and make the changes we consider are needed. Then, a second cycle complements the first one. The second cycle consists on building a second action step evaluating it and modifying what is needed. This process would be done constantly and would create many other cycles (2009: 40). Thus, the idea is that research allows the teacher to create as many cycles as she or he needs and wants to create. In this sense, research belongs to the teacher, the figure who is responsible of modifying, reducing, enlarging and eliminating the knowledge to be acquired.

2.3. Empowering teachers and students through Action Research

Another characteristic of Action Research is the fact that it empowers you as a teacher since teachers are in constant inquiry and create knowledge from their research. This view is also analysed by Pine: “Action research empowers teachers to own professional knowledge because teachers— through the process of action inquiry—conceptualize and create knowledge, interact around knowledge, transform knowledge, and apply knowledge” (2009: 13). Thus, Pine also reflects the cyclicality of Action Research through the perspective of the powerful teacher who acquires knowledge, power, every time research and the

cycle is totally completed: “Teachers are privileged through the action research process to produce knowledge and consequently experience that ‘knowledge is power’” (2009: 31). We could not mention Action Research without tackling the aspect that the author puts emphasis on the transformation research produces on teachers which are in constant generation of knowledge. However, we would also like to consider how this power affects to students and the results it has. Teachers have to find a way to empower students due to their knowledge. We consider that it is not only the quantity but also the quality which allows students empower themselves by listening to the teacher and making sure they have really understood and learnt new knowledge.

2.4. Improving our work through the reflective practice

In order to analyse ourselves as teachers and researchers, Ferguson argues that we have to ask ourselves the following question: “How do I improve my work?” (2011: 13). Thus, this question will allow the improvement of the teacher’s work as well as the effects it will have to the students. The sense of competitiveness we mentioned above has to be considered as a positive consequence since it will refer to the teacher’s will to succeed and care about the consequences. In this sense, Ferguson talks about accountability saying that this “is part of good professional practice” (2011: 13).

We consider that accountability, that is, the preoccupation for our outcomes, results taken from our teaching experience, is one of the several steps to make so that Action Research is useful to students. The teacher’s accountability is not only a sign of proper practice but also personality. We consider that accountability means to make sure our students understand and enjoy the lessons, ask for doubts, are confident and feel at ease, comfortable in our classes. We as teachers have to mingle with the class, have to adopt a dynamic role in which we are able to be the authority at the same time that students see us as someone they can rely on inside and outside class.

Action Research can also be developed in groups of few people. The sense of responsibility for the outcome can be seen not only individually but also in groups when Action Research is developed with the teachers of the same department or different departments from different schools, for instance.

This said, the previous question now transforms into “How do we improve our work?” (2011: 14). It is now the turn of a more standardised Action Research if it is done by small or larger groups of teachers. This remarks the idea previously exposed regarding that in Spain we need to familiarise Action Research in every school and, most importantly, the practice of seeing research as an activity which imrpoves in its quality if it is done by cooperating and sharing data and new findings with other teachers and researchers.

2.5. In how many ways can we practise Action Research?

Based on what we just mentioned about individual or collective self-relective practice and research, the two questions showed aboved can be studied in the following three ways. Thus, Action Research can be put into practice in at least three different ways we are explaining in this point. There is the type of research called “first-person research” and for which Pine provides some questions a researcher may ask: “In first-person research, the teacher-researcher attends to such questions as: Who am I? What is important and meaningful to me? What values, ideologies, worldviews, assumptions, and perspectives do I bring to the process of inquiry?” (2009: 48). Thus, we observe that other questions to improve one’s research and accountability can be made in many different ways to reach a professional investigation with useful responses. The simple question of asking ourselves who we are is essential to start the process of Action Research since it means what kind of teacher we are and want to be and which are our expectations. It is also important to know what we consider as meaningful or not, in which sense and to what extent we want to improve or empower us about a given issue. In addittion to this, our research has to be thought following a clear ethics and morals which could help our students in their daily lives and start thinking critically to also empower our students. Action Research not only consists in empoweing teachers but also it is about the need of making our students more competent in linguistic, cultural and moral issues.

If there is first-person research, we can also speak about “second-person reseach” which involves a sense of teamgroup and cooperation amongst the members conforming a small group. In this view, we can argue that “In cooperative inquiry, a small group of peers work together in cycles of action and

reflection to develop both understanding and practice in a matter of mutual concern" (Reason & McArdle, 2004, p. 1, in Pine, 2009: 48). This cooperative work could be done by the member of a given department at school or teachers of one specific course, for instance. We may emphasize that we consider this type of research as the most appropriate and useful. We argue that an individual could lead any personal research project although this research would be and show more powerful if it is made by at least two teachers. Moreover, teachers can help each other and expand their knowledge thanks to the fact that both would interchange their knowledge to one another and also different conceptions of teaching methodologies.

Finally, there is also the "third-person research", which is composed by larger groups and where members of different schools could be involved as well as an entire district or the local government: "Third-person research and practice includes a range of practices which draw together the views of large groups of people and create a wider community of inquiry involving persons who cannot always be known to each other face-to-face" (Pine, 2009: 48). Although in this kind of research projects more people are involved in one single or different works, it is true that issues regarding organisation and establishing common opinions are more difficult to achieve. However, we consider third-person research as a useful and more communicative way of discussing and knowing about different learning and teaching practices.

2.6. "No research without action, no action without research"

To conclude with this section involving Action Research, we would like to highlight Lewin's dictum, the foundator of the term and concept Action Research, said about it: "No research without action —no action without research" (as cited in Marrow, 1977, p. 10 in Pine, 2009: 31). Thus, Lewin's dictum puts emphasis on both words and that research means the teacher as researcher has to be active and constantly investigating to generate new knowledge. Action Research cannot be made occasionally, it is a process that should be intrinsic to the profession. For us, this means that research has to do with the personal vocation of the teacher. Without the sense of vocation, neither research nor motivation will take place in class. We would like to remark that the role of

teachers now should be seen as an essential part in the educational system and societies which is in constant improvement and works for the benefit of all people.

3. Contextualising Motivation

Motivation is the other keyword which serves as a link to understand that for Action Research to exist, we need to talk about the different motivational strategies, how these affect to teachers and students, and the actual situation of students' behaviour regarding motivation. In this section we will show some aspects about motivation in the school context, as we did it with Action Research. These two distinguised parts will be mingled and compared in the following section after having been explained the two concepts separately.

3.1. The motivatonal role of the teacher

In this article, we consider the role of the teacher as crucial since it is this figure who has to enhance students' motivation. This said, we may analyse the role of the teacher in the classroom, if it is a teacher-dominated or student-dominated classroom. We need the students to be the center, focus and main purpose of the classroom. However, some teachers may not know how to do it and may recur to investigate in order to obtain a proper answer. On the contrary, some others may consider the opinion of a critic more valuable than the opinion of a student to research. We need to say that knowing what our students want and how they want it is another way of researching. We may first investigate our students' needs and then research regarding what we have been told.

It is said that, in order to enhance motivation, the teacher should encourage students to participate in the classroom using thus the target language, in our case, English, and avoiding what is called TTT (teacher talking time) (Padial and Tapia, 2006: 137). Thus, the motivtional technique used by the teachers should be thought to follow the structure of a student-centred class. In order to achieve this, we need teachers who can be dynamic in their way of teaching and thus create lessons in which students are the protagonists and

where the teacher serves as a support. In this sense, we need to make our students more autonomous and let they think on their own.

The teacher should act like a student in some cases and as a teacher when providing feedback, for example. Thus, we need to create a planning where teachers propose a model which is a step further from allowing students to participate. What we need is students to guess meaning, learn in groups and even teaching part of the lessons themselves. Moreover, another essential aspect is the teacher's motivation which will lead to successful activities encouraging students' autonomy and motivation as well. For this, students will excell in their tasks if their teacher inspires them and successfully engages them to learn and do the different activities with joy:

> Students "also agree that the teacher's motivation is the basis for their own motivation and behaviour in the classroom. The teacher's enthusiasm and interest will be more influential than his/her knowledge of the subject" (Madrid, 2004: 86 in Padial and Tapia, 2006: 136).

We have already mentioned the role and importance of the teacher as a model for the students as well as the fact that we should avoid the teacher to be the centre of the lesson promoting participation and the protagonism of the students. However, it is also true that teachers should focus more on the classroom diversity in the sense that each student has a personal way of acquiring knowledge and understanding it. Thus, the teacher should also make emphasis on such differences which improve the quality of the learning and researching process.

3.2. The motivational role of students

Autonomy in students at lower level in Secondary education should be based on the teacher's orders and suggestions since students at these levels cannot cope with autonomous tasks. However, the older the students the better to let them learn autonomously. In order to achieve this, the teacher should avoid talking all the time and let students guess, understand and resolve problems on their own, either individually or in groups. Thus, we can also learn that it is not the quantity of knowledge or which kind of knowledge students admire from their teachers. It is the quality and how teachers use their knowledge to

influence students. It is the teacher's predisposition to help students in their learning process that students are aware of.

To make the students feel motivated, Bowman argues that teachers have to act as "instinctive pride builders" taking the concept from Katzenbach (2006) in which pride "is what ultimately motivates individuals both in the classroom and the workplace to excel at what they do" (Bowman, 2011: 266). Encouraging students making them proud of their efforts and the consequences is the key to students to keep studying, learning and improving in their linguistic competence both at home and in-class time. Pride means in this context students are satisfied with their efforts and results, and that due to this fact, they feel useful and mature.

Since the students are constantly learning and thus acquiring meaning and the teachers are also empowering themselves due to their continuous research, motivation has to be at the core of such findings: "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life" (Frank, 1956: 105 in Bowman, 2011: 269). Thus, we can connect Frank's idea with what is the main purpose of education in general: to empower students through knowledge by constantly learning and desiring to know. Following Frank's statement, teachers need to transmit this idea to students in a constant way, thus making them feel proud and able to achieve the goals they decide.

Other reasons that can increase students' motivation are tackled by McLaren and Madrid to explain the four points that enhance students' motivation. If we consider motivation in the EFL classroom, the first value students think of is that of the utility of the subject applied to their future lives. The second point makes reference to the opinions students have about the subject compared to the others. The third implies the students' wish to live in a country like the United States or Great Britain, and the last point refers to the opinion and influence students have about the teacher (Padial and Tapia, 2006: 136). Following these two authors, the last reason refers to the influence the teacher has in the classroom. However, we would like to remark our initial idea that the teacher is the first reason why students enjoy, in our case, learning English in the classroom. The teacher is the role, model, main figure of the classroom, which do not have to mean it is an authoritative figure or teacher-dominant class.

3.2.1. Students' autonomy

Going back to autonomy and motivation, Padial and Tapia say that autonomy refers to that fact that teachers "teach not only English but also ways to learn English by themselves" (Padial and Tapia, 2006: 149). This means that students need to start developing some habits which could be beneficial when they learn any other language, which, for instance, they decided to learn it individually by online courses. We need to make our students learn how to use different resources to learn English or other languages by themselves. This could be achieved at higher levels in Secondary education and Batxiller. However, teachers should start applying these measures at lower levels as well. These authors also argue that "if a student is motivated, he/she will use the language autonomously without restrictions" (2006: 136). Autonomy and motivation need to be understood not only inside the classroom but also outside it where several resources like watching series, films, listening to music, etc. will be used. In order to achieve this, students have to enjoy learning autonomously and outside school. In this sense, some authors like Spratt suggest (2002) and propose some ideas as the following:

> "helping students believe in the effectiveness of their own efforts, engaging in activities and working with materials and syllabuses which learners wish to engage in, adopting a learner-centred approach to teaching, recognising the diversity of learning styles, and of course, being a model of motivation" (Padial and Tapia, 2006: 136).

In these ideas, the author makes reference to the skills the students can develop if they practise activities that enhance motivation through autonomous tasks. As we mentioned before, students' motivation will be increased if the teacher's approach is based on the students' learning and language acquisition.

3.2.2. Motivation depending on the academic level

Furthermore, it is remarkable to mention that the level of motivation and autonomy will be more difficult to achieve in Secondary levels than in higher education (Batxiller) and that consequently there is a clear and important

difference between Primary school and Secondary Education. One reason is provided by Elliot et al. :

> "While secondary school students are taught by many teachers (thus making global judgements difficult), primary school children tend to be well known to a particular classteacher who works with them for a high proportion of their time. Levels of motivation decline in secondary education" (Elliot, Hufton, Illuhin and Luchlan, 2001: 39).

Making reference to these authors, we should also consider those students just having arrived to Highschool and that still work and think following the procedures done at Primary levels. It is true that the intimacy regarding the relation student-teacher was more private and comfortable in Primary school. Now, the Secondary school student can work on more motivational activities at this level, having adult figures from which to be inspired.

Apart from this difference, Padial and Tapia also mention the changes from Secondary education and Batxiller. These authors consider the age and the different educational levels to refer to motivation and claim that teachers should be aware of this situation and take profit from it:

> "It is important to remark that the opinion about English of students in Bachillerato is more positive than students in ESO. Teachers should take advantage of this growing interest in Bachillerato, change some methodological aspects, and raise the students' motivation with the purpose of making them develop learning autonomy to be able to use L2 and go on studying it in the future" (2006: 147).

These authors also refer to the University entrance exam as a factor by which students in Batxiller are more aware of the importance of education and their future university degree. It is true that teachers have to focus on Batxiller if they want to take the maximum profit from these students, but it is also crucial to start enhancing students' motivation in the first year of Secondary education: "it should also be remarked that this learning autonomy should be fostered at earlier stages so that when students reach Bachillerato it will be fully developed" (Padial and Tapia, 2006: 147).

3.3. Applying motivational strategies

Thus, what we need as teachers is the use of the motivational strategies (MSs), a term coined by Dörney and Guilloteaux in 2008. The authors define these kind of strategies as "(a) instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate students' motivation and (b) self-regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage the level of their own motivation" (in McEowna & Takeuchib, 2012: 21). The motivational strategies should be understood to operate as ways of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation since the first one relates to the teacher's planning to enhance student's motivation and the second one refers to the students' own efforts and likes as to increase their levels of motivation. These two aspects should be considered together since in order the students have intrinsic motivation, the role of the teacher is crucial to determine students' attitudes.

As Dörney argues, the utility of applying these strategies will not make the expected results if the teacher's skills are not the needed to achieve the motivational goals:

> "the best motivational intervention is simply to improve the quality of our teaching, and no matter how competent motivator a teacher is; if his/her teaching lacks instructional clarity and the learners simply cannot follow the intended program, then motivation to learn a particular subject is unlikely to occur" (in McEowna & Takeuchib, 2012: 34).

Thus, we see in this quote one of the issues when considering the teacher's role. In order to achieve competent teachers which excell in their quality and not quantity we need to make sure these teachers are in constant research. The teacher's will to improve is key to improve, not how much a teacher can demonstrate to her or his students and other work colleagues. If students perceive the high quality of what they are learning and who is teaching to them in this way, students will quicker learn to be autonomous.

3.4. Algorithmic and heuristic tasks

Apart from reaching autonomy, Bowman also considers the students' mastery and purpose, defining mastery as the "ability to learn and develop expertise" and purpose as the "quest for meaning in one's life" (Bowman, 2011: 264). These three variables (autonomy, mastery and purpose) can be connected with what Bower recognises as algorithmic and heuristic tasks. Algorithmic tasks are those which do not allow students' use of creativity and artistic freedom since they "follow an established instructional pathway leading a predetermined outcome or conclusion" whereas an heuristic task involves "artistic expression, invites students to experiment with possibilities and generate novel perspectives and solutions" (Pink 2009 in Bowman, 2011: 265-266). It is in heuristic tasks where teachers should base their teaching units on. The reason is that it is in heuristic tasks where intrinsic motivation comes to place since it enhances creativity as well as dynamism and allows students to be in command of the class at the same time that they learn and enjoy the lessons.

3.5. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

As Dewey said: "The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education and. . . the object and reward of learning is the continued capacity for growth" (Dewey, 1916: 117 in Bowman, 2011: 269). In this sense, we need and want our students to grow intellectually through both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In his article of 1994, Dörney compares intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. He defines extrinsic motivation as that one achieved by external factors as rewards or punishments (Dörney, 1994: 275). Meanwhile, instrinsic motivation refers to students' "natural curiosity and interest [which energises] their learning" (Deci and Ryan, 245 in Dörney, 1994: 275).

However, it is also said that extrinsic motivation should not be considered to be the opposite of intrinsic motivation. This is why Dörney also cites Deci and Ryan to describe four different types of extrinsic motivation which refer to the most external type of motivation to the least. These are integrated regulation, which "involves regulations that are fully assimilated with the individual's other values, needs, and identities", identified regulation which happens when "the

person has come to identify with and accept the regulatory process seeing its usefulness", introjected regulation which "involves externally imposed rules that the student accepts as norms that pressure him or her to behave" and finally external regulation that has to do with actions for which the locus of initiation is external to the person, such as rewards or threats" (Deci and Ryan, 24 in Dörney, 1994: 276).

Integrated regulation should be avoided in all contexts since it does not allow freedom of choice to students, being the teacher the figure which is controlling all the time the students' behaviour and motivation. Regarding identified regulation, the student feels more comfortable due to the value the students give to what she or he is learning. Introjected regulation is seen as a way of accepting the rules of the given class related to behavioural factors and finally, external regulation refers to those actions which do not depend on the individual but on external reasons.

After having shown some of the definitions and characteristics we have currently about the motivational theory, in the following part of this paper we are going to tackle different and specific issues regarding motivation and the educational context in order to be able to explain the proposal which will be discussed in the section afterwards.

4. Motivational theories and practices seen through Action Research

In this section we are dealing with diverse issues that link both concepts of motivation and Action Research after having introduced some concepts of those terms and contextualised them following the purposes and topics of this paper.

We should also talk about the teachers' self-concept and the strength teachers have to show in order to excell in their research process. Once a teacher has finished her or his degree and coursed different postgraduate studies, the best way to keep learning is through active investigations in group or individually. Taking into account that Action Research involves motivating teachers as researchers, it also implies personal criticism of one's work and critical thinking when researching and planning lessons that are motivational

and inspiring for students and the teacher. This said, it is intrinsic motivation that promotes and allows critical thinking in both teachers and students.

4.1. Dynamic research

As we mentioned previously, Action Research has to do with the teacher as researcher altogether with the cyclical process of self-reflective practice. This practice is needed since, as Bobbit argues, “without a spirit of inquiry, teachers may solidify in their principles and practice, become biased to certain ways of teaching and learning, and resist change” (2011, 426-427). Thus, we insist on the fact that research has to be constant and has to be adapted to different periods in which some theories might be modified and improved to be compromised with the current problems and needs of our students. We may provide some examples of third-person research and which results and opinions it has amongst teachers.

The first topic to tackle is how motivation and school-based research interact and serve to teachers in the understanding of their students. Third-person research will allow us to provide dynamic perspective of research that could be applied to different courses at the same time and even working with some schools altogether. Examples of Action Research involving a large group, in this case, school-based action research, may be working with other colleagues in the creation of questionnaires to know the students’ opinions, needs and likes. Teachers could also work in a project amongst students of different ages and practising the four main skills. Some of the issues used in a school-based research are provided by Bobbit: “What helps pupils learn and what do they find exciting in their learning?”, how pupils could help other classmates by working on a project, the research could also ask students about the classroom environment, etc. (2011: 430).

Thus, all these questions not only have to be individually thought but also in a group of teachers as researchers with motivation in order to give some answers. Regarding the experience to work in group, many teachers involved in school-based Action Research agree on the opportunity to work with other teachers and “discuss experiences and develop new ideas about classroom practice” (Bobbit, 2011: 431). This author puts emphasis on the fact that due to

that teachers appreciate working in groups for projects concerning Action Research, it is in this aspect that research can be justified and motivates "teachers to integrate research into their working lives" (2011: 436).

We would like to focus on the verb "to integrate" since it is essential to understand how research works. Teachers should be modifying and also integrating new ways of teaching and knowledge which can be acquired through not only academic journals and articles but also from students, other teachers, students' families, etc. Thus, in third-person research we would also include, integrate, all the educational parts that help in the research process. The constant and active way of working through Action Research is seen as an "active learning" where the teachers are aware of the different ways of thinking about learning and the comprehension of "teachers' learning through research – especially in relation to the implications of motivation, self-concept and the emotional aspects of examining one's own work" (cf. Edwards & Brunton, 1993 in Bobbit, 2011: 443).

With the integration and acceptance of third-person research at school, teachers will be able to enhance students' motivation if the quality of their teaching lessons and proper organisation work in order to students learn and enjoy their language acquisition.

4.2. Classroom environment

Another aspect that has been previously mentioned and that teachers should take into consideration when analysing students' motivation is the classroom environment. It is the teacher who has to be able to create a proper atmosphere in which students are comfortable and feel at ease with the teacher, peers and with the physical disposition of the given classroom. Students have to feel they belong to that class group and have confidence and respect amongst them apart from establishing their sense of identity in the class. To this view, Ryan and Patrick show that "A sense of relatedness or belonging at school is associated positively with students' expectancies for success and intrinsic value for school-both indicators of motivation (Goodenow, 1993; Skinner & Bel-mont, 1993 in 2001: 438). Thus, it is the educational community, the specific school and the teachers that have to promote students feel that their identity relates to

the school. We are not only refering to personal feelings of identity when talking about classroom environment.

The classmates are also another resource of motivation. Teachers should encourage students to notice the value of having classmates since they are the source from which they can learn, comment and compare results, and at the same time participation and interaction is promoted. Since students can support each other, all of them have to show respect, avoiding disruptive situations (Bolkan, Goodboy and Griffin, 2011:440). The same should happen with the teacher's relation to students: both parts must show mutual respect. In this sense, the authors argue that "a focus on respect should help create an environment where students communicate positively with one another, and feel efficacious about their social relationships" (2011; 442). This aspect is of paramount importance since we consider that without motivation there are more possibilities of disruptive behaviour in the class. Enhancing students' motivation would mean to promote other values an attitudes as mutual respect, friendship, collaborative work, critical thinking, freedom, etc. If the teacher fails to create a respectful environment, the applicable motivational techniques will not have any sense since they will not be fully developed.

This topic relates to motivation and Action Research in various senses. First of all, if the teacher is able to create a suitable classroom atmosphere, it is clear that this fact will allow students work more concentrated since communication will be achieved easily. Team or pairwork will take place in a calm and motivating space where organisation, cooperation, teacher's guidance and other material and visual elements function altogether with harmony. If we have a noisy and unorganised classroom, motivation will be decreased since the tasks cannot be completed with satisfaction. Values of mutual respect are at the same time at the core of the classroom environment filosophy since teamwork and mutual help and respect must be presented in the classroom.

This said, Action Research also needs to be considered when refering to classroom atmosphere. The teacher could guide students on the research of different ways of behaving with their classmates, paying various games in order to students investigate about classroom management, the disposition of tables and chairs, etc. and the practice on values inside the classroom.

Gardner provides a proper explanation regarding the educational context:

> "The educational context refers generally to the educational system in which the student is registered, and specifically to the immediate classroom situation. When considering the educational context, we focus on the expectations of the system, the quality of the program, the interest, enthusiasm, and skills of the teacher, the adequacy of the materials, the curriculum, the class atmosphere, etc. All of these can influence the student's level of motivation in any school subject" (Gardner, 2007: 14).

The teacher and also the students have to be aware of the atmosphere in class and what they can do to improve it. However, it is not only to the classroom environment but also in a larger level the educational system, what kind of educational laws the country has and where it is placed.

4.3. Teacher-student relations

We consider students as a "continuum of the teacher" since we need both parts in order to talk about research and motivation. Thus, students "who are intrinsically motivated persist in their tasks longer and are more deeply engaged with their studies than those who are not, and that students who use intrinsic regulation strategies are more likely to use critical thinking" (Wolters, 1998 in Bolkan, Goodboy and Griffin, 2011: 339). The reflective practice is not only done by teachers but also by students if they are motivated enough and know how to work hard. We have also been saying that the teacher acts as a model to the students, but students can also act as a model to other students and the teacher as well. This critical approach made by both teachers and students is guided by the teacher who is able to ask the students to compare and make sense of what they are learning and working on.

It is the duty of the teacher to know whether students use a deep or surface learning approach. In this sense, those students using a "deep approach" will succeed, whereas those others using a "surface approach" only memorise and make no use of critical thinking nor compare concepts and ideas they learn in the same degree that the deep approach requires (Bolkan, Goodboy and Griffin, 2011: 340). Teachers should motivate students and enhance them to get used to learn following a deep approach, thus corroborating they make sense of what they learn and enjoy the classes.

Students' motivation will be incremented if the teachers knows about the students' likes and prepares the English lessons following the students' advices and proposes an inclusive ad dynamic planning. Students are also able to communicate and contact with their teachers to discuss about the topics and methodology they are being taught so both parts enter in the cycle of research and provide different ideas and materials to deal with in this subject.

We should emphasize the role of the teacher as the first source which provides motivational activities and the one on which students' educational success will depend. The teacher's personality and the relation with the students tackling not only academic doubts but also personal problems is an important fact to consider when refering to enhancing students' motivtion. If students notice their teacher wants to help them and cares constantly about them, students' behaviour, motivation and interest about the subject will increase apart from the fact that students will have better academic results, confidence in themselves and avoid anxiety levels:

> "When students perceive their teacher as supportive they report higher levels of interest and enjoyment in their schoolwork […], a more positive academic self-concept […], and greater expectancies for success in the classroom" (Goodenow, 1993 in Bolkan, Goodboy and Griffin, 2011:440).

As Goodenow argued, we consider that an increase in motivation due to having a supportive teacher means an increase in the students' grades as well as confidence in themselves. Thus, students who show higher marks and willingness to work harder will show greater predispossition when dealing with tasks where research is the main aim or is completely needed to fulfil their works.

Another topic to mention in this section refers to scaffolds as a technique which motivates students. Scaffoldings need of the teacher's motivation to plan different ways to help students understand the lesson. In this sense, Belland, Kim and Hannafin, propose that students learn English through the solution of problems, which should be taken from real life in order to engage students. Thus, these authors argue that the first strategy is "prompting students to choose an aspect of the problem that connects to their interests" (2013: 249). This means the teacher has to adapt or create real problems in order to

students realise the activity is useful and that could happen to them. The problems not only have to be real but related with the experiences and ages of the students. One task would be knowing the students' interests and real problem situations at the beginning of the course.

An extra factor that promotes motivation and research relates to intrigue in problem-solutions tasks. These problems have to be of interest and have to require some investigation. The importance of problem-solution activities means that there is no one single answer or way of solving problems, providing autonomy in learning, respect towards other opinions, self-reflection, critical thinking, discussions in little groups, etc. (Belland, Kim and Hannafin; 2013: 245).

During these investigations and to sound real, the teacher has to bear in mind the register that students are using, in order to feel more comfortable and making the tasks easier to the students and understand what they are learning. This fact is called "cognitive congruence" which is defined as "the ability to express oneself in a language students can understand, using concepts they use and explaining concepts in ways easily grasped by students" (Belland, Kim and Hannafin; 2013: 252). The process of research by adapting the register, material and topics following the cognitive age of the students, either linguistically and morally, defines the teacher as researcher who cares for the students' language acquisition and learning quality apart from motivating them by using diverse techniques. Moreover, problem-solution activities need to be guided and the teacher has to provide different scaffolds to be taken into account by the students and focus on the task value: "Task value refers to students' perceptions of the intrinsic value, importance of doing well, usefulness, and cost of completing a learning task" (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000 in Belland, Kim and Hannafin; 2013: 245). Students value their learning process and are motivated due to their language improvement and inspired by the activities seen in class.

4.4. Students' assessment

As for an assessment that promotes motivation and allows students research, teachers have to insist on creating a new and proper way of evaluation, giving students more opportunities avoiding in this way anxiety and other preoccupations which are dangerous for their academic learning: "The idea that children should not be failed, but given many chances to succeed and that teachers show their belief that all pupils will eventually learn, are enpowering and motivating concepts (Glasser, 1985 in Burroughts, 1991: 256). Thus, giving more opportunities to students to excell in their marks should not be seen as a negative way of teaching. What is more, if students feel examinations and other assessive tasks are made to support students rather than controlling them in an oppressive attitude, assessment, and also feedback is well-received: "feedback has been shown to support motivation and achievement if it provides specific information about the work related" (Bobbit, 2011: 319).

With motivational assessment and feedback, students are able to meet with the level they should have and the real results. In this sense, Bobbit talks about "the gap between current and desired performance" (Bobbit, 2011: 320). Teachers as well as students should see in feedback the key to students' success and teacher's competence. This is seen when students are able to know about their mistakes and have direct feedback in class apart from having time to take notes and reflect on what they have learnt. Furthermore, the teacher shows her/his preoccupation for the students and dedication to them:

> "In addition to providing information useful to students in self-assessment, revision, or goal-setting, teachers are often concerned with affective and emotional issues of students' self-esteem, confidence, and motivation to learn "(Bobbit, 2012: 321).

This aspect has been tackled and remaked throughout this article. It is of crucial importance that students connect with their teachers and feel respected and special in any context: while providing feedack, doing exams, an oral presentation, etc.

Another aspect regarding feedback is the utility given to it. Students "can act on feedback" revising for example their exams and redoing them again to be

handed in to the teacher (Bobbit, 2012: 322). As Bobbit mentions, this feedback activity could be seen as a cycle task which is composed by the steps of “rough draft-feedback-revision” a kind of “process portfolio documenting stages in work with feedback” (Bobbit, 2012: 322). Thus, this process reminds us of the cyclicality of Action Research and once again we see that enhancing students’ motivation through research is one proper idea to be put into practice.

4.5. Students’ emotions

After considering these various issues regarding students’ motivation and Action Research, we may then proceed to discuss about some of the main problems students show. The first problem refers to combating the disaffection many students show at school since “the disaffected student either doesn't know what leads to success or does know but doesn't have the capacities to execute the strategies” (Burroughs, 1991: 253). One cause may be that students do not confide in themselves and thus their perception of the self, their self-worth, is decreased. To explain this reality, Covington created the self-worth theory in which he suggested that students who do not feel their worth in the subject and classroom tend to “adopt counter-productive, effort-avoidant strategies, so that failure, if it occurs, can be blamed on insufficient effort rather than on low competence” (Burroughts, 1991: 253). Thus, that a student has low grades does not imply that s/he is not competent in the subject. It is in these context where teachers should find ways to motivate them making them feel useful to the class and other classmates.

A factual consequence of having low levels of motivation may lead to explain Weiner’s (1984) attribution theory:

> “To what pupils attribute success or failure influences their future behavior. Whether they consider the outcome was due to the presence of or lack of ability, effort, difficulty of task or luck, influences perception of elements as being stable or under their control” (Burroughts, 1991: 253).

Thus, the perception students have of themselves not only regarding their self-worth but also to what reason do they attribute their failures also deters against their intrinsic motivation, first of all. When the student arrives up to this level, anxiety appears and other “related cognitive states, including worry about one's

negative characteristics, self-consciousness, self-doubt and self-deception (Kuhl, 1981 in Burroughts, 1991: 254). Anxiety and these other cognitive states lead to absenteeism or dropping out of school by the use of excusemaking and, in few cases, student suicide:

> "Sometimes children choose to be ill rather than face situations in which they fear they will lose control, rather than see themselves as powerless and they thereby control others who feel sorry for them. Suicide is an example of the strength of these cognitions when even a talented student may refuse to lower his expectations and adopt a more realistic picture and settle for good grades" (Burroughts, 1991: 254).

The decrease in motivation and self-worth can occur due to personal or external reasons (the students' personality, the possible problems happening in the family, the different relations with their peers, etc.) thus research on how to inspire, motivate students, developing activities which encourage them and their families should be tried to put into practice.

Motivation and expectations should also be seen as part of the same problem regarding those students who commit suicide or drop out o school. Teachers and parents should emphasize on students the value of knowledge through learning meaning that students become powerful.

4.6. Parental implications

We have been refering to the teacher as the figure responsible to enhance students' motivation in various ways. However, we should not forget mentioning the parental implications needed in order to engage students: "Keith and his associates (1993) also reported increased homework completion by students with more parental involvement, indicating that parental involvement is indeed an important influence on student achievement" (Hong and Lee, 2003: 231). We would like to mention that parental involvement should not only be based on helping students to do their homework, but also taking care about the school's norms and programs as well as meeting the tutors and other teachers during the whole school year. Parents should be more involved in the school activities and attend to their sons/daughters' needs in any aspect related to the school as peer relation, for example. When considering parental aid in the students'

homework tasks some of them may agree on the fact that parents do the opposite of helping. Due to the lack of knowledge related to what the students are learning and due to time reasons, most of parents cannot cooperate with students despite their willingness to help them. Some others may no want to interfere in their tasks or others may not worry about it:

> "Nonetheless, children expressed mixed perceptions about how much they enjoyed working with their parents, especially about the extent to which parents facilitated or confused students' understanding of homework concepts, and about the positive or negative affect associated with parent-child interactions" (Hong and Lee, 2003: 231).

However, in order to put a solution to these problems, Hong and Lee propose parents are aware of their child's homework behaviour and preferences so parents can accomodate "home environment to match it with their child's preferred way of doing homework and then observe whether the match effort has an effect on the child's homework completion" (2003: 233). We still consider that this issue has to be developed and seriously thought since we all know students at Secondary level show behaviours which are characterised by values of individualism and friendship rather than having a strong relation with the family and some may not need or want their parents interpose in their lives.

We may also promote parental research following the guidance of their sons and daughters as well as the teacher and school's help by providing several materials or meetings to discuss issues related to the students' learning process and ways of researching.

4.7. The Majorcan context

We would like to briefly comment that EFL classes, in our case, settled in Majorca, seem to serve the linguistic purpose only inside the classroom. It is due to the fact that English is not an oficial language in our context and this does not facilitate the interaction using the English language outside the classroom and if students do not have a serious and important reason to speak and interact with other people in English, there is no strategy to make students learn autonomously. This other factor will be discussed in our proposal and we will provide some possible activities in order to potentiate English outside school.

Related to this issue, some authors like Pinter (2006) and Paul (2003) argue that:

> "unlike many second language (L2) learners, young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) children whose native languages have little in common with English have limited opportunities to practice the language outside school and have no immediate need or strong motivation to use or learn English, thereby suggesting a potential lack of positive motivation for EFL learners" (in Chou, 2012: 284).

However, we may mention that tourism has positively engaged students and workers in the learning of, at least, English in order to have a job in this sector. This may be one of the motivational reasons students want and engage in their learning of this language. The touristic sector in Majorca needs more than ever qualified people with knowledge of not only English, but also German and Russian. Thus, since the learning of English and other languages is that important, teachers may encourage students with topics related to tourism as the job possibilities our students will have in a future. It is also the task of the teacher to promote the use of the English language outside school with activities, homework and projects that enhance this possibility. In our proposal we will comment on the opportunities the city of Palma offers to carry out several activities and practise English.

In this sense, the educational context is refered to the conceptions of language learning itself. We should pay attention to the diversity in the class since most of them in Majorca are described as multicultural and multilingual. Thus, the teacher should not take for granted that all students have the same attitudes towards education and the teacher, as well as different ways of comunication and relations with the other classmates. The same will happen with what opinions English has amongst all the students, regarding their mother tongues, culture, education, etc. Gardner then argues that:

> "With respect to language learning, therefore, the individual will have various attitudes that might apply to language learning, beliefs about its value, meaningfulness, and implications, expectations about what can and cannot be achieved" (2007: 13).

Thus, the teacher will have to reflect upon different activities which may motivate all the students and make all of them feel represented in such activities. This reflection means a process of active research that has to be carried out in first, second and third-person research since now we are dealing with cultural and social activities in the island that could be used to motivate students.

4.8. Multicultural and multilingual issues

To end with this section and before comenting on our proposal, we are going to deal with motivational issues applied to the multilingual and multicultural classroom that characterises our Majorcan schools and which research tasks and projects could be used in this context.

For many teachers it is either unnecessary or difficult to consider teaching English through not only this language. Our discussion here focuses on the main languages spoken in the multicultural and multilingual classroom, make them visible and that all students can learn from them. The main language exposures are Spanish (and its variants taking into account Spain and Latin America), Catalan (Majorcan Catalan), Arabic (mostly from Morocco) and Chinese. Other possible languages are English from Senegal or Hindi, Romanian and Russian.

In this sense, we can argue that if we have a multilingual classroom we also have different identities represented. It is true that the majority of foreign students are able to speak in at least three languages at school apart from their mother tongue to be spoken at home. Thus, there are many students who are multilingual and that develop more than one sense of linguistic identity. Students who are able to speak some languages develop “multiple bilingualism” (Haugen, 1956 in Aronin and Laoire, 2003: 12). In our multicultural classrooms there may be some students following this definition and as teachers we should develop and plan strategies to cope with all these realities and research on these different realities and identities to understand our students in a deepr way. By creating multilingual tasks, maybe for the whole class but also for individual students, motivation is enhanced. Some students may not understand Spanish or Catalan and this is the reason why we as teachers should develop our linguistic competence in being multilingual as well. Even if we cannot study and

understand some languages, we can make use of translators, dictionaries and other online resources in order to build our teaching units. The use of visual material is another way to make ourselves understood without the need of speaking or restricting it. We know that our goal is students learn and acquire a given level of English and it is true that most of the lessons should enhance students to use this language. We may need the use of other languages in external activities which may or may not be related to language, we may use these other languages to translate, to create a classroom multilingual dictionary, etc. in order to make all our students represented in the classroom. All students may also get involved in this multilinguistic and multicultural reality and work using different languages, teaching a given language to the class, etc. These issues will also be tackled in our proposal.

So far we have mentioned the quantity of languages a student can speak but it is also true that we should focus on the quality, the abilities the student show when dealing with languages based on the different skills a language needs to be studied. Thus, we do not want to confuse our students with more languages if English is difficult for them, what we want is students to notice we as teachers care about them in the sense that we want to know about their opinions, their personal lives regarding cultural and language issues, etc. Furthermore, we need students to participate in making all students know about each other's culture and languages and thus improve the class environment and mutual respect apart from motivating students with different realities. What we want is to have a multilingual classroom in which some languages are represented there but we also need to strive for multilinguality which "uses different languages and refers more to inner constructs of a single speaker" (Aronin and Laoire, 2003: 16). Multilinguality is also refered to as "individual multilingualism" by Cenoz and Genesee (1998: 17 in Aronin and Laoire, 2003: 17) and it is conceived as the acquisition and development of the multilingual competence. Thus, we are no longer speaking about linguistic competence but in the sense of a multiplication of languages which are more than two: "multilingual competence in individuals can be understood as the capacity to use several languages appropriately and effectively for communication in oral or written language" (1998: 17 in Aronin and Laoire, 2003: 17). Then, we should remark the fact that the multilingual competence has to be seen in the

understanding and proper performance of the active skills (speaking and writing) and the passive skills (listening and reading).

Cummins (2007) argues that speaking many languages means students have “dynamic cognitive systems that are qualitatively different from the cognitive systems of monolinguals” (233). Thus, this difference would mean that multilingual students will have less difficulties to resolve problems and would excell in other subjects apart from English. We insist in the idea of dynamism which clearly benefits the students’ learning process and leads to remind heuristic activities which allowed the freedom and thus creativity of students as well as motivating them in their task performance. Thus, we as teachers may understand that the English language is at the core of the lesson (the universal trait) but sometimes we should remember to include some activities introducing other languages (a local approach). This leads us to consider the “singularization of plurality” (García and Sylvian, 2011: 386) and make all students feel represented and comfortable in their English multicultural and multilingual classroom. When dealing with different languages in the EFL classroom, the behaviour of “translanguaging” (García 2009 in García and Sylvian, 2011: 389) takes place. This concept is defined as the way teachers and students communicate in different languages with the purpose of promoting multilingualism, learning, cognitive dynamism and a sense of complex linguistic and cultural awareness of our current societies. These connections will make our students feel the need and curiosity to extend their knowledge and will engage deeply in the activities proposed. Thus, Action Research will be emphatised by all students and the teacher in looking for new words or comparisons with other languages tackling different cultural international aspects.

5. An Action Research and Motivation Proposal

5.1. Contextualising our proposal

Taking into account all the theories and methodologies previously discussed, we are going to show our proposal which consists on projects. These projects will take place at home but also in-class time and where research is going to be the core of the activities in order to empower both students and teachers. We mentioned that Action Research is done by teachers but we should also introduce students to the world of research adapting it to their level of English. Motivation will be enhanced through the use of constant and active research which will be done in different ways. The teacher will monitor but she or he will also act like another student. It is true that in some cases students will need to research in larger groups like participating with students from different levels or even the local educational government. To this light, we will practice first, second and third-person Action Research.

In these projects, the teacher will work with the students and these students will also work in groups which will be changed during the course year. We insist on the fact that the teacher will evaluate the students' homework rather than their production in class since what we are putting emphasis on is the need for the students' autonomy. Thus, students will have the opportunity to work with all their classmates not only in class but also outside school as homework tasks. It will be compulsory for students to do homework tasks in little groups.

5.2. Topics

These projects will deal with different topics which will be presented by the teacher and students will choose and modify them according to their own experience and likes. All the topics will be conceived as following the idea of a journey in which students will have to investigate and resolve different problems.

The topics to be discussed and those which will conform the students' learning deal with the five continents having in this way an approach to the world's diversity and history; topics which can also be taught in other subjects

thus being the English classroom the centre of this interdisciplinariety. The five countries the teacher provides to students are the following: Australia, Canada, Ireland, South Africa and India. From these countries, students in their groups will have the oportunity to chose if their research will be made about the whole country or they will decide, through the first step of research, if they want to focus on a given city.

Some people may consider that dealing with only one country or city/cities in eight months would seem boring to the students. In fact, we may disagree on this point since students will clearly have dynamic classes in terms of the methodology (working in groups, individually and with the whole class following a timetable), they will also have the opportunity to take notes and add more information regarding the countries in their portfolios and other tasks. We will provide further and specific information about the tasks, portfolios and other activities in section 5.3.

The possible topics that the teacher may provide at the beginning of the course are the following: culture, religion, sports, history, geography, politics, arts, etc. Students will choose a topic per month and they will decide if they provide a general approach or a specific issue: it could be radio or tv news, etc. The teacher may guide students with the news she/he finds on the Internet or different sources to be the topic of the presentations. Recent and real information would be presented to students and from this point, students can present their chosen topic. At the end of the year, students will have acquired great knowledge about five countries belonging to the five different continents.

5.3. Activities

We made the differenciation between homework projects and the portfolios since in the portfolio students will have to reflect on their learning process and reflect on their research as well. The teacher will also guide students in this process at school. During the school year, the English classes will be divided into three blocks. One block will be given to work in groups in order to discus about their homework tasks and the contents of the portfolio. The other block will be given to the individual task of building their portfolios and the third block

will be devoted to make general comments and doubts with the whole class regarding grammar, vocabulary and other issues which students may encounter during the year. In this sense, students will work in groups, individually and with the whole class having all the time the help and guidance of the teacher and the different materials and steps provided by the teacher. If English is taught three times per week, we could easily divide these three hours int the three blocks. As our proposal shows, an important part of the work will be done at home: individually with the portfolio and homework tasks, and in groups dealing with the oral presentation and other homework tasks that have to be done in groups (these tasks will help students in their oral presentation and portfolios).

It is also remarkable how effective can the portfolio be since it implies students learn deeply, acquiring a deep approach for learning since they have in this document all they have learnt and their opinions raised during the year. The same happens with the oral presentation which main aim is to make students themselves realise what they have learnt throughout the months and be able to put it into practice at the end of the course, having developed a critical sense and knowledge about a given country and the similarities and differences with their own country.

As a parenthetical note, we may add that in the portfolio students can explain and reflect on the other oral presentations and draw similarities amongst them in the sense of cultural and social aspects but also sharing their opinions about their classmates' performance. Moreover, students could share these thoughts with the other classmates thus everyone learns from their performances from different people. It is not only the task of the teacher to provide feedback, students could also dedicate Mondays to do this if they want to comment on their opinions during class time. We know that students will evaluate their classmates on their final presentation. This is why during the course students are not going to evaluate them since we consider that students themselves should evaluate after having seen the learning process of their classmates.

5.4. Planning

The notions of time and space will be an aspect teachers and students will deal with since our idea is that with the different activities inside and outside school students will achieve the information they need to make their projects seem real.

We are not considering competitive games or tasks in our projects. The only winner will be those students who have learnt the most and this will be shown in an oral presentation which will need to consist on the production of a video and a proper explanation of their own topic altogether with a reflection of what they have learnt. The students will choose how to show their acquired knowledge to the rest of the class.

5.4.1. Arrangement

We are offering different possible activities which could be applied during one semestre or during the whole year. In this sense, we are showing five different activities which will be carried out by these five groups of students belonging to a same class. These activities based on Action Research which will be applied in class and at home will involve motivational techniques and activities being the individual student the centre of the learning process. Since we are dealing with active research, the teacher can extend the activities if the topic students are dealing with is rich in information and most importantly, motivates them. If teachers achieve to enhance students' motivation through individual and collective research, the tasks could and should be extended following the students' learning process, relatedness to the task, motivation, expectancies, etc. Thus, we are not showing fixed tasks with an specific time for each activity. We may consider the activities as dynamic in the sense that the teachers and students should adapt, modify, the tasks depending on the different issues we have just mentioned.

We have considered that these activities could be seen as tasks to deal with in particular moments from the course year or done as a whole in a given time of the year. We may also decide that each of the five groups will work on this project one by one, that is, we divide the course year in five parts and each will be given to one group. We consider that we should enhance our students'

motivation all the academic year and thus these activities should be carried out during all the course. In order to reflect this idea we have decided to explain and show in this paper how teachers could work with students' motivation at the same time. Thus, we imagine that these five groups are working at the same time and during the whole year.

The tasks proposed in class and that will have to be done in-class time and at home or in non-academic hours will have to enhance both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The tasks, topics, way of working, thei groupmates, etc. will affect their extrinsic motivation and their learning process, the result of their efforts will be connected with their intrinsic motivation. Moreover, the tasks should be conceived as heuristic thus allowing the students' creativity and critical thinking to be reflected in their tasks. Since the students will have the opportunity to choose the topics, how they want to express themselves, what they are showing in the oral presentation, the marks given to the other classmates, etc. they will learn autonomously and dynamically, with no restrictions, with open answers and different ways of approaching the tasks they are given. In their homework tasks they could work in groups using the social networks to communicate (Facebook, Gmail, Hotmail, Whatsapp, Skype, etc.) or they could make use of the school classrooms offered during the evenings in order to discuss and work.

The tasks may motivate students if they have to guess or solve different problems but also when meeting with people from these countries so they will get real input. They could contact with the local or national governments of the given country in class or outside it always with the agreement of the teacher. The student will have to specify why are they writing to those people, country and school they belong to, and teacher. Teachers should be aware of the dangers contacting with other people may have, thus this is why the teacher should know if their students are being in contact with anyone (individuals or organisation) and control their relation.

5.4.2. Timetable

The English classes are dynamic and useful since every day students will work on different tasks and in different ways. If we have three days of class per week, the first day (for example, a Monday) could be devoted to tackle grammar matters, vocabulary, etc. This class will serve to help students with their doubts regarding their learning process which is divided into the portolio, the final oral presentation, shorter presentations during the year and tasks to be handed in during each semester. This class will be given with the whole hour, paticipating all the students and thus being aware of the doubts, questions, news, etc. expressed by the class. Then, the teacher may try to resolve the doubts and take notes of this session in order to search for specific information and then pass it via e-mail to the rest of the class. As a homework task, students may look in different English learning websites to solve doubts or continue with the exercises and grammar dealt with in class and part of this acquisition of knowledge can be stated in the portfolio. On Mondays, the teacher could also devote the class to correct exercises. We may say that the shorter presentations will be given on Mondays with the same groups there are preparing their project/oral presentation. These presentations will serve students to prepare for their final oral presentation. The mark of these shorter presentations will be included in the semestre tasks.

The second session of the week (Wednesday) is devoted to the portfolio where the teacher supervises each student and provides information on the blackboard or stops the class to explain a given aspect. This could make reference to English grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, knowledge regarding cultural issues, geography, religion etc. During the planning and creation of the portfolio, students may discuss about what they are learning (vocabulary, topics, formal/informal expressions, geography, languages, websites, etc.) dividing the portfolio in at least two parts where in one the student devotes her or his refections on their individual tasks, research and language learning and the other is based on reflections regarding the group project, tasks, short presentations and the final presentation. The portfolio will be handed in to the teacher at the end of the academic year, one week after the final presentations. This portfolio will have four different parts regarding the four semestres. We

may remark that the teacher will not correct the portfolio until the end of the course. Since the English subject has been divided into three different parts, students may not have enough time to cope with the activities in class. This is why students need to know that during class time they need to agree on the ideas to show in the portfolio and other tasks. However, we consider that fifty minutes to elaborate the weekly portfolio is enough. Students will need to discuss about the common points in their portfolio as homework tasks although they could discuss it on Wednesdays as well.

On Fridays, students will work in their own groups on their different tasks the teacher prepares. These could refer to questions related to the city or country students have chosen, self-reflective questions regarding their project, indirectly providing feedback to students with rhetorical questions; stories from these countries, etc. which may guide students know about the country and prepare the oral presentations and portfolio. The teacher should provide various topics, videos, images, etc. in which students base their short oral presentations on. These short presentations will be given on Fridays once per month. Thus, if we have five groups of five people, each group will have 10 minutes maximum. This short presentation could be done the last Friday of each month thus the students will have three days to prepare it in class and at home. The final presentation will be done in June so students will have time to prepare it from the beginning of May, then not having a short oral presentation in May. If we do not count the month of September, students will have done seven short oral presentations and one longer in June. We remark that the final oral presentation will last thirty minutes per group and a whole week will be taken to see all the oral presentations. In this week, the teacher will be providing feedback as well and students will have to evaluate the groups. The week after the presentations, the students will have to evaluate the teacher, their other groupmates' attitude during the year and themselves. In this week, the students will have handed in their portfolios and the teacher will have corrected them.

We should take into account that, for instance, on Friday students from different classes meet since the groups have been mixed with others, students will only have to move to another class. In this way, students from a group A will attend to the class of group B and will receive feedback from the other English

teacher thus having different opinions. These groups may not be at the same level of English, being 3rd and 4th of ESO.

We may also say that these groups could only work together in the oral presentations, not in the portfolio since we need to see the difference in the level of English in them. However, Friday's research could also be done with groups of the same level without being in the same groups but participating as homework research. As we mentioned in this proposal, other teachers could also participate in this research project being with the students in class or contacting via e-mail. These teachers could improve and broaden the students' knowledge about this country.

5.5. Techniques that enhance autonomy and classroom motivation

During the homework and classwork tasks as well as general projects, students will be working on their own and in groups thus avoiding the teacher to be the centre of the lessons. In this sense, we are achieving students develop and excell in their autonomy and we will see this change if the exercises and tasks use motivational strategies which enhance teacher and student's motivation. The discussion of the general points to add in the portfolio, the daily research shared with the other groupmates, the creation of the project which is seen as an oral presentation of half an hour and the homework projects clearly reflect these tasks are thought to improve and develop the students' autonomous work inside and outside school. This autonomy has to serve to make students realise about their ability to work alone and in groups and that they will be able to work autonomously in other subjects and in their future lives. However, and as we mentioned previously, English teachers have to teach students to be autonomous also in their learning of this language. In order to achieve this goal, the teacher should provide different websites and research behaviours so students are able to find information which is suitable for their tasks. These resources have to be used in class so students realise about the utility of them and start thinking how, when and what for should they use a given resource in their tasks, project and portfolio.

Motivation is also achieved when students realise their knowledge is increasing but most importantly when they know what to do with this knowledge.

Through the different tasks, students will be able to put it into practice by the creation of the portifolio (including their thoughts about why they are learning in sense of linguistic competence and cultural comptence as well), the tasks to be fulfilled in groups will also serve as a way to introduce new knowledge to students and work on with this knowledge. There will be different ways of achieving this knowledge: given by the teacher, directly or indirectly, research on websites, going to different libraries, asking to different people inside and outside school, etc.

With these kind of tasks what we want is students to achieve higher autonomy levels after this course year due to the individual and in-group tasks which promote freedom of choice, teamwork, individual work, peer organisation, classwork and homework and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These tasks will also prepare the student to practise English outside school having gained both language and classroom motivation. Language motivation regarding English and other languages which are represented in the classroom and those students have used, studied or analysed during the course year will empower them in their present and future lives in terms of looking for a job which needs of the knowledge of the English language in specific. Students will learn about the utility of the English language as the *lingua franca* which serves not only to communicate but that also provides many opportunities for the understanding and tolerance of the world's diversity in all senses. If students achieve language motivation, this will encourage them to learn other languages and respect each speaker to use the language they choose. Enhancing students' motivation through the use of English and other languages will make students see the complexity of language learning and start acquiring language learning competencies. Apart from enhancing language motivation to students, classroom motivation is also crucial. This is why we have taken into account this aspect. In our proposal, classroom motivation is enhanced in the fact that students will work in three different ways (with the whole class, individually and in groups) which will make more dynamic the classes and the academic year. The students will be the centre and the teacher will guide and help them as well as acting as one of them. Classroom motivation will be seen when students are used to give oral presentations and thus comfortable with their spectators. Students will also have the possibility of working with other peers and teachers

involved in the same or similar project. With this we mean that students from other levels or courses could be working on topics related thus each one could bring different issues to the project. We need to remark that students are also the chosen to modify or not the classroom environment in order to be motivated. They can change of place or even room, they could also work on the library or playground. We need to provide our students can move, walk or even run before, during and after the lessons so their minds are more active and they are not bored of being with the same position the whole hour.

5.6. Evaluation criteria

In this course year we will be more demanding since we will evaluate our students about their linguistic competence in English and other languages apart from their original projects, quality and time dedicated to the work. Regarding evaluation criteria, students will have to decide a mark for the group exposing, another mark for the students of the same group and a personal mark following different assessment rubrics. These rubrics could be drawn and modified by students since it will be central the dialogue between students and the teacher and it will be a common task to make the activities as motivational as possible.
Since the students are given an entire country, they will have many topics to deal with and that the teacher will be guiding. Students may not only present their learning process by an oral presentation, but also they will have to hand in different written and oral tasks (essays, videos, news, etc.) and at the same time they will have to work on a portfolio which will be handed in at the end of the year. These portfolios will be carried out individually and with the groups as well. The students in groups will decide which aspects will be shared with the members of the group but then each student will have to elaborate their own portfolio with critical sense and creativity.

Thus, the students will be assessed by the teacher and the other classmates as follows: the teacher will assess their oral presentation with a mark for each student and one general group mark whereas the other students will evaluate them individually. The students will also be assessed by their portfolios and about their homework tasks/projects. A 50% of the mark will depend on the short presentations, homework, a 30 % for the portfolio and 20%

for the oral presentation. Thus, we observe that the students will not be given any mark for their participation and assessment since this will be evaluated within the 50% of their homework projects and short oral presentations.

In this sense, feedback can be transmitted in different ways thus enhancing the students' motivation. With the feedback given in class or outside it, students in groups can analyse this information and decide if they need to make some changes on their tasks and final presentation. Students will have the possibility of modifying or not their teacher's advices or learning from their feedback related to language mistakes, having more autonomy in their decisions. Working on the tasks, doing active research, taking account peer and teacher feedback and planning the portfolio are elements to be aware of all the academic year. It may seem that students may have important work to do but, following the class organisation discussed before, students will have enough time to deal with their tasks.

5.7. Materials

Students will use diverse social networks apart from email to be in contact. They could use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, etc. to gather information and produce content to the final oral presentation. The teacher will make available some websites regarding the topics students are given to deal with.

For example, and related to the tasks conforming our proposal, the teacher/s could create a blog in which students of different classes and schools should participate in, sharing opinions and discussing about a given topic. We could divide different entries in the blog divided into five and each one could relate to the five groups represented in class. In each entry or section, students from different groups may discuss about the country or city they have chosen and share diverse websites and other resource to the other students. They could also elaborate different entries regarding the same topic to see how each group has addressed the same issue. They could also share their presentations or part of their tasks and portfolios in the blog.

We consider that the existance of a blog apart from the different groups students could create in other networks in order to work at home as a group will

enhance their motivation since they will be working with computers and visit their favourite social networks in order to complete their tasks. The teacher and also the students may provide at the beginning of the year some websites, social networks and programmes in order to work with the computer and other devices to communicate, work individually, in pairs or in groups and facilitate and excell in their homework and classwork tasks. This will form part of their own research as well. The students' research guided by the teacher/s has to be seen as a way of learning actively, without pause, implying that one can improve the learning process, increase their knowledge and modify the ways they are learning or working together. Thus, research is seen as a dynamic activity which allows for changes and empowers students and teachers at the same time that influences the whole school/s and the educational system.

We may say that through the use of computers which may be provided by the school in each classroom, their own laptops or going to the computer classroom, students will have access to Internet since their research will need it. Moreover, Information and Communication Tecnology (ICT) not only is a requirement to complete the tasks but it also provides several ways for communicating as well as enhances students' creativity and autonomy when choosing the program in order to give the presentations, for example. In our proposal, since we are dealing with Action Research, we need to have in hand computers which will facilitate our research. However, it is true that we should promote other ways of researching which do not need of Internet as contacting with people from the school, our local government, with people on the streets, restaurants, our family and friends, etc.

5.8. Teacher-student relationship

The teacher should provide her/his e-mail if students need to write to the teacher at any other time. This fact will allow students and teacher get to know as well as having a private space where they could talk with the teacher individually or in groups. In this sense, we may cosider the relations between students and their teachers both in Secondary Education and Batxiller level. If this relation is optimal the students' motivation is increased and they feel more

comfortable in-class time creating a proper working environment and thus achieving better academic results.

When analysing our students' learning process and levels of motivation, which tasks they feel more comfortable with and free to do what they want, etc. we as teachers need to keep encouraging them making them feel proud of their work, efforts, new knowledge, motivation, etc. In this sense, students will keep making efforts when coping with their tasks and they will certainly excell in their final oral presentation and portfolio. It will be interesting to examine the quality of their portfolio from the beginning to the end of it showing the student's academic process as well as critical thinking and moral values.

The use of research in both students and teachers should motivate them intrinsically and extrinsically. The teacher should get some help from the students when planning the different activities and the blog, for example. The students should participate in class and work inside and outside school at the same time that they hand in a proper creative and personal portfolio and oral presentation. If students participate, create a comfortable classroom atmosphere in class and they do the required tasks, the teacher will feel motivated to continue with the project. The students will be motivated if the tasks can be modified and handed in to the teacher without pressure. The students will also feel comfortable if the teacher guides them and helps them in their tasks and research during all the course year. Intrinsic motivation will be seen in terms of the quality of the students' work and their participation with the whole class and in groups. Extrinsic motivation will refer to their findings and their marks they get as well as their relation with the teacher and other classmates. Students are also a crucial aspect for the teacher. If the students do not complete their tasks (written and oral tasks), the project and teacher's motivation will no longer persist.

Students need to feel they are learning and that a mark is not going to prevent them enjoying the English subject. Students are given many opportunities in the sense that during the course they will have to hand in specific and short tasks in group and they will constantly be advised and guided in the creation of their portfolio. If students do their daily tasks with a minimum of work and coherence, this subject will seem easy and funny to all students. Nevertheless, the figure of the teacher is also important since he or she has the

right to enjoy the classes as well. Teachers should encourage students to study and enjoy this learning process by having many marks thus having more possibilities of perceiving the process and more opportunities to pass the subject with high marks. If the individual tasks are not passed, the teacher should give second opportunities or even if the homework tasks done in groups need to be improved, the teacher will give extra opportunities. The aim is students realise the teacher really cares about them in emotional and academic terms. However, these conditions will be applied to those students attending the classes and participating with the other groupmates.

Moreover, the teacher will supervise and guide the students in order no to fall anyone during the semestres. Thus, inmediate feedback will be given to each student in class but, as we mentioned before, they could ask for any doubt via e-mail during the weekends or holidays. How e-mail contact is to be done (which hours the teacher will be available to answer, etc.) will be decided by the teacher/s. The teacher could also need their e-mails to pass them specific information about how to research, the given country or other issues seemed appropriate. If the project is done with other teachers or students from other classes, a new e-mail account created only for these projects will be a more comfortable and suitable option.

5.9. Parental aid

Another key aspect when dealing wit the homework tasks are their parents. The teacher/s should advise and even cooperate with the parents in order to optimize students' resources and enhance their motivation. Parents could also be involved in their children's research and contact with the teacher to provide or ask for further information. As we have been saying in this paper, knowledge empowers us, makes us stronger, and thus it is in Action Research where we can find this source of life. The teachers', students' and parents' information, knowledge, abilities, experiences, etc. will empower and motivate us. We may need parents help students in their tasks, portfolio or even oral presentations but we also seek students help their parents acquire their knowledge and thus work together in proper conditions. Parents could also come to class the week during the final oral presentations or see their children's efforts if they are

recorded. In order that in our proposal the parents participate with us, they should attend a monthly meeting with the other parents and teachers involved in this project. However, teachers should also programe meetings where students are presented thus we consider that it will be more useful and interesting. It is also true that these meetings could be done in the form of school parties, sport activities, etc. that will enhance students' motivation in the sense that they would want their parents to attend to school with them. We know that nowadays there are few families involved in their children's education and thus this goal will be difficult to achieve.

Despite this fact, we consider that if parents see their students show motivation and happiness, they will make an effort to get more involved in their learning process. We may tackle this issue with students when comparing the different conceptions of the family we can find amongst the students. This could be an important topic to deal with in their oral presentations and see the diverse opinions of all the groups. This aspect could also occupy a whole section in the students' portfolios and see if their opinions have changed throughout the course year. We do not pretend to infer our ideas into the students, we only need to enhance their motivation as well as critical thinking at the same time that they are able to express themselves using the English language.

5.10. Research

The tasks will be centred following the idea that if the teacher works as a researcher, students will also be conceived as researchers. During the entire course, students and the teacher will analyse their productions and results through self-reflective practice which will be done individually, in groups and with the whole class. Thus, the process of how to improve the work one does, needs to be discussed in class but also at home. The teacher should help students all the time as means of being the role of model and monitor of students in order to make sure this essential process of Action Research is fulfilled. This process of research reflects the need of responsibility for the results, marks and knowledge acquired.

In this sense, if self-reflective practice can be done individually and in groups, in our proposal, research is also seen to be applied as first, second and

third-person Action Research. In the tasks, research is done individually at home in order to be presented to the other group mates and class. This research can also be understood to be done in the same group of five students and cooperating in order to get knowledge. Second-person research means that two or more groups of the classroom help each other and investigate altogether in order to achieve a purpose which will be used in their homework tasks. In this sense, we see that research is done both at home and in-class time. In second-person research, the teacher can also be part of this research group. Finally, third-person research could envolve participating with a larger group of students-researchs, teachers, the city council, etc. In this level, the teacher/s should organise these relations and represent the students in their research.

These different types of research need of the cycle of self-reflection discussed previously in this paper. Students will meet in their own groups to discuss about their results and their research with the help of the teacher in order to begin with the second cycle of research and new tasks. Improvement and academic success is the aim of active research. In this paper, when refering to Action Research, we defined it as a circular travel in which the different steps and levels of research and task completion are seen as different arrivals to diferent countries and gaining more knowledge in order to improve their travel skills for the next stop.

5.10.1 Third-person Action Research

We have to take into account that the English teacher who puts into practice our proposal has to work with other colleagues belonging to the English department of the school in order to give to this project cohesion, strength and control of the tasks. We are saying this because it would be appropriate if some English courses from different academic levels were involved in this kind of activities and projects so teachers could programme tasks in which students may colaborate with other from different classes. Thus, research could be seen in terms of school-based research where the members of the Language Department and other teachers could get involved in this project.

At the same time, students from different levels and classes could research and work altogether. If this way of understanding the students'

learning process as well as teachers' acquisition of new knowledge really has improved results regarding their levels of motivation and marks, Action Research will serve as an example of study for the motivation of both teachers and students. Moreover, the next step to consider will be taking reearch at a higher level where some schools could participate in investigating forms of enhancing students' motivation and working on motivational projects in which students themselves research inside and outside school.

5.11. This proposal will empower our students

In their learning process, the creation of the portfolio and their final oral presentation, the students are able to tackle as many issues as they want to, putting more emphasis on general values and an ethic guide students will develop during the year. Morality and Ethics is one key aspect to transmit to our students and the educational community. Through the (post)colonial and Ethics theories the teacher knows and investigates about, he or she can pass on these ideas to the students and they can also work with this material. It is crucial that the teacher and students search for academic websites, teacher's blogs, educational videos, conferences, etc. to compilate all this knowledge and share it with the rest of the class. Action Reseach involves empowering through knowledge and solidarity amongst the researchers. These morals should tackle general and specific cultural aspects the students represent in the classroom.

In this sense, the portfolio will show more specific issues regarding the individual and the oral presentation and other homework tasks may have a more general approach. Thus, the whole course will be seen as following a universalist approach involving the individual as well as general characteristics. This could be seen when students are researching about a country or city they do not know much about but they may find similar and/or universalist aspects. Thus, motivation will be successfully achieved by all students that may achieve motivation when doing individual tasks or those who are motivated if they work in groups. These issues will be tackled following different strategies in order our students learn English, enjoy it and are motivated. The strategies should tackle not only rational issues but also more spiritual matters. Research will be seen as a way of empowering students and activating their critical thinking, their

moral code, their solidarity and their respect towards the diversity of traditions and cultures in the Earth apart from having a clear and general understanding of this world.

6. Conclusions

In this paper that we have entitled: *An Action Research Project : Enhancing Students' Motivation*, Action Research has been seen as a crucial philosophy if teachers search for educational quality which empowers students and teachers through the constant use and acquisition of diverse knowledge. Action Research also promotes critical thinking and self-reflective practice in which both students and teachers learn values of tolerance and mutual respect. This has been mixed with the need of enhancing students' motivation since if we learn how to be autonomous at the same time that we teach them how to look for, work and manage with information, students feel they are useful to others and to themselves. Apart from this, students also are inspired in what they do and learn, thus reflecting their approach to valuing their education and learning process. Moreover, we consider that our proposal shows to be dynamic and thus allows each teacher to adopt the proposal to their convenience. Students are able to research by their own and in groups achieving many teamwork competencies and autonomy. By dividing the classes into three differenciated parts, the students can put into practice diverse skills and know which ones they need to improve or not; either if working with their peers, individually or attending to the whole class. Students will also practise the four skills which are so demanded nowadays. Thus, speaking will be fostered every day in class but most importantly when delivering the oral presentations. With the creation of the portfolio, students will practise writing at least once per week in class. We have to remember that in their homework tasks, students will manage with these skills in groups or alone. The listening and reading skills are seen when listening to the other classmates apart from the videos, music, etc. they may use for their tasks and presentations and the articles, websites,etc. found in their research process. With this, we want to show that students will be in contact with the English language inside and outside school, thus having a

great improvement in their linguistic competence during the year. If students achieve to be autonomous and working autonomously, they would excell in their “learning how to learn” competence. They will be able to learn how to learn English, languages and work autonomously. Since students will be doing a constant use of ICT, students will show digital competence. We have been talking of moral values which will be enhanced in their material and learning methodologies. In this sense, students will also work with the social and citizen competence. Since they will be investigating about a given country, students will show knowledge about its culture and history thus dealing with the cultural and artistic competence. As we can observe, this proposal aims at enhancing students’ motivation considering several aspects, skills, competences, methodologies and examples and which show important to the students’ learning process.

To conclude with this paper, we would like to highlight that the main purpose has been to contribute to the literature regarding Action Research and school motivation and conceive these two issues as interconnected so that we as teachers can improve our teaching and our motivation. Understanding how research needs to be done in our educational context and how we have to enhance students’ motivation is essential when refering to our vocation as the one which pursues faith and happiness for our future generations.

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9. Annexes: Proposal

9.1. Assessment rubrics

The first rubric (R1) relates to the speaking assessment peers will use in order to evaluate the other group in the final oral presentation but it could also be used during the course year in the shorter presentations. Depending on the level of English coursed, the rubric could be more complex as the one we will show regarding teacher’s assessment (R2) afterwards. The samples for the two different types of rubric have been chosen from the following educational website: http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/02/4-great-rubrics-to-develop-students.html

After these rubrics, there is a model of a questionnaire (Q1) which could be used to evaluate the teacher’s attitude during the course year and a rubric to assess the students’ behaviour as well (R3). The questionnaire has been taken from the website of the University of Western Australia: http://www.planning.uwa.edu.au/research/studentteaching/alternative/questionnaires. The attitude assessment rubric has been taken from:

Moreover, we also include an example of a rubric (R4) where students would have to evaluate themselves regarding their works in research, either individually or in groups. Taken from “Teaching the teacher” : http://1brainsandwich.blogspot.com.es/2013_07_01_archive.html

Presentation Rubric

(for grades K-2)

I plan a beginning, middle, and end.

1. still learning 2. sometimes 3. almost always

I use pictures, drawings, and props.

1. still learning 2. sometimes 3. almost always

I look at my audience.

1. still learning 2. sometimes 3. almost always

I speak loudly and clearly.

1. still learning 2. sometimes 3. almost always

I answer questions from the audience.

1. still learning 2. sometimes 3. almost always

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R1: clear instructions with images to facilitate the answers

PRESENTATION RUBRIC for PBL

(for grades 9-12; Common Core ELA aligned)

	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Above Standard ✔
Explanation of Ideas & Information	▸ does not present information, arguments, ideas, or findings clearly, concisely, and logically; argument lacks supporting evidence; audience cannot follow the line of reasoning ▸ selects information, develops ideas and uses a style inappropriate to the purpose, task, and audience (may be too much or too little information, or the wrong approach) ▸ does not address alternative or opposing perspectives	▸ presents information, findings, arguments and supporting evidence in a way that is not always clear, concise, and logical; line of reasoning is sometimes hard to follow ▸ attempts to select information, develop ideas and use a style appropriate to the purpose, task, and audience but does not fully succeed ▸ attempts to address alternative or opposing perspectives, but not clearly or completely	▸ presents information, findings, arguments and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically; audience can easily follow the line of reasoning (CC 9-12.SL.4) ▸ selects information, develops ideas and uses a style appropriate to the purpose, task, and audience (CC 9-12.SL.4) ▸ clearly and completely addresses alternative or opposing perspectives (CC 11-12.SL.4)	
Organization	▸ does not meet requirements for what should be included in the presentation ▸ does not have an introduction and/or conclusion ▸ uses time poorly; the whole presentation, or a part of it, is too short or too long	▸ meets most requirements for what should be included in the presentation ▸ has an introduction and conclusion, but they are not clear or interesting ▸ generally times presentation well, but may spend too much or too little time on a topic, a/v aid, or idea	▸ meets all requirements for what should be included in the presentation ▸ has a clear and interesting introduction and conclusion ▸ organizes time well; no part of the presentation is too short or too long	
Eyes & Body	▸ does not look at audience; reads notes or slides ▸ does not use gestures or movements ▸ lacks poise and confidence (fidgets, slouches, appears nervous) ▸ wears clothing inappropriate for the occasion	▸ makes infrequent eye contact; reads notes or slides most of the time ▸ uses a few gestures or movements but they do not look natural ▸ shows some poise and confidence, (only a little fidgeting or nervous movement) ▸ makes some attempt to wear clothing appropriate for the occasion	▸ keeps eye contact with audience most of the time; only glances at notes or slides ▸ uses natural gestures and movements ▸ looks poised and confident ▸ wears clothing appropriate for the occasion	
Voice	▸ mumbles or speaks too quickly or slowly ▸ speaks too softly to be understood ▸ frequently uses "filler" words ("uh, um, so, and, like, etc.") ▸ does not adapt speech for the context and task	▸ speaks clearly most of the time ▸ speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear most of the time, but may speak in a monotone ▸ occasionally uses filler words ▸ attempts to adapt speech for the context and task but is unsuccessful or inconsistent	▸ speaks clearly; not too quickly or slowly ▸ speaks loudly enough for everyone to hear; changes tone and pace to maintain interest ▸ rarely uses filler words ▸ adapts speech for the context and task, demonstrating command of formal English when appropriate (CC 9-12.SL.6)	

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R2 shows more complexity and command of the diverse possibilities to choose, providing more extense definitions of the quailities to evaluate.

QUESTION	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT				NOT IMPORTANT
	1	2	3	4	5
The teacher explains important concepts/ideas in ways that I can understand	◉	○	○	○	○
The teacher stimulates my interest in the subject	○	○	◉	○	○
The teacher demonstrates enthusiasm in teaching the unit	○	○	○	○	◉
Appropriate teaching techniques are used by the teacher to enhance my learning	◉	○	○	○	○
The teacher is helpful if I encounter difficulties with the lecture/unit	◉	○	○	○	○
The teacher is available for consultation (eg. email, online, face-to-face or telephone)	○	○	○	◉	○
I receive feedback in time to help me improve	◉	○	○	○	○

Q1 shows no complexity but clarity in knowing the students' opinions about their teachers.

Sample Attitude & Participation Grading Criteria

POINTS: →	4	3	2	1	0
Attendance & Punctuality	Has perfect attendance. Is never tardy.	Has no more than 1 unexcused absence. Is never tardy	Has no more than the maximum allowed unexcused absences. Is seldom Tardy	Has more than 5 unexcused absences. Is frequently tardy	Has extremely poor attendance. Is frequently tardy.
Participation & Discussions	Frequently participates in class discussions, often asks thought provoking questions, and shows much effort towards going beyond the scope of the textbook.	Frequently participates in class discussions, and often asks thought provoking questions in class. Appears enthused about class activities.	Moderate participation in class discussions. Has the answer when called upon. Appears interested in class activities.	Seldom participates in class discussions.	Never participates in class discussions. Appears apathetic towards class activities.
Distracting Behaviors	Never engages in verbal/non-verbal behavior that is distracting to others or the Instructor	Seldom engagemes in activities other than those required for enhancing learning.	Infrequently distracts others from learning, or the Instructor from teaching the class.	Frequent verbal/non-verbal behaviors that distract others or the Instructor.	Frequently shows disrespect for other's learning, or frequently distracts the Instructor.
Teamwork	Works as part of a team, mentors others in the team, and assists others in understanding the material. Leads and follows eagerly and appropriately.	Works well as part of a group, sometimes takes a leadership role, shares group duties, and sometimes mentors others in the group.	Works well in a group, discusses issues, and assumes an equal share of the group "duties."	Often works independent of the group, and does other things when his/her part of the assignment is complete.	Lacks involvement in group activities, and shows complete apathy towards group activities.
Completion of Assignments	Always turns in assignments on time. Assignments are always concise, complete, and show critical thinking.	Usually turns in assignments on time: no more than 1 late assignment. Assignments are clear, concise, and complete.	Usually turns in assignments on time, however, assignments are only occasionally late. Assignments are clearly written.	Assignments are frequently late. Assignments show minimal effort towards completeness or clarity.	Assignments are usually late. Assignments usually show no thought. Student is going through the motions to get it done.
Use of Classroom Equipment & Technology for Learning.	Shows impeccable concern for care of equipment, and always uses computers for classroom related activities ONLY.	Usually focused on classroom activities and shows concern for careful and appropriate use of computers and class equipment.	Uses personal and classroom equipment (computers) for completing assignments efficiently and effectively.	Frequently uses computers for surfing the web, downloading unrelated files, or doing homework for other classes.	Constantly uses computers and classroom equipment in a negligent and careless manner.
Safety and Citizenship	Is a model of prudent safety practices, and often helps to train others in safety procedures. Models impeccable treatment of others	Does not cause harm to others or equipment and often helps to identify unsafe practices. Treats all people fairly.	Does not cause harm to others or equipment. Does not harass others or create a "hostile" environment."	Is often careless with equipment. Has an inconsiderate attitude towards treating others with respect and courtesy.	Commits safety violations on a frequent basis. Often shows little or no courtesy for others. Creates a hostile environment.
General Attitude Towards Learning	Exhibits an extremely conscientious and spirited desire to learn the material, and enhance the learning of others in the class.	Seems interested in learning, and makes an above average effort to gain the most out of the learning experience.	A willing participant in the classroom, and exhibits willingness to learn concepts and course material.	Shows little evidence of desiring to be in the class to learn the material. The motive for this individual being in this class is somewhat questionable.	Shows a complete lack of desire for learning. Contributes nothing to their own or other's learning.

1

R3 shows to serve as a complete attitude and participation assessment rubric to be used at any level. In this rubric, the students will be evaluated regarding their tasks work either individually and in teamgroups, in their participation and discussions in-class time, in their critical thinking, the use of ICT, etc.

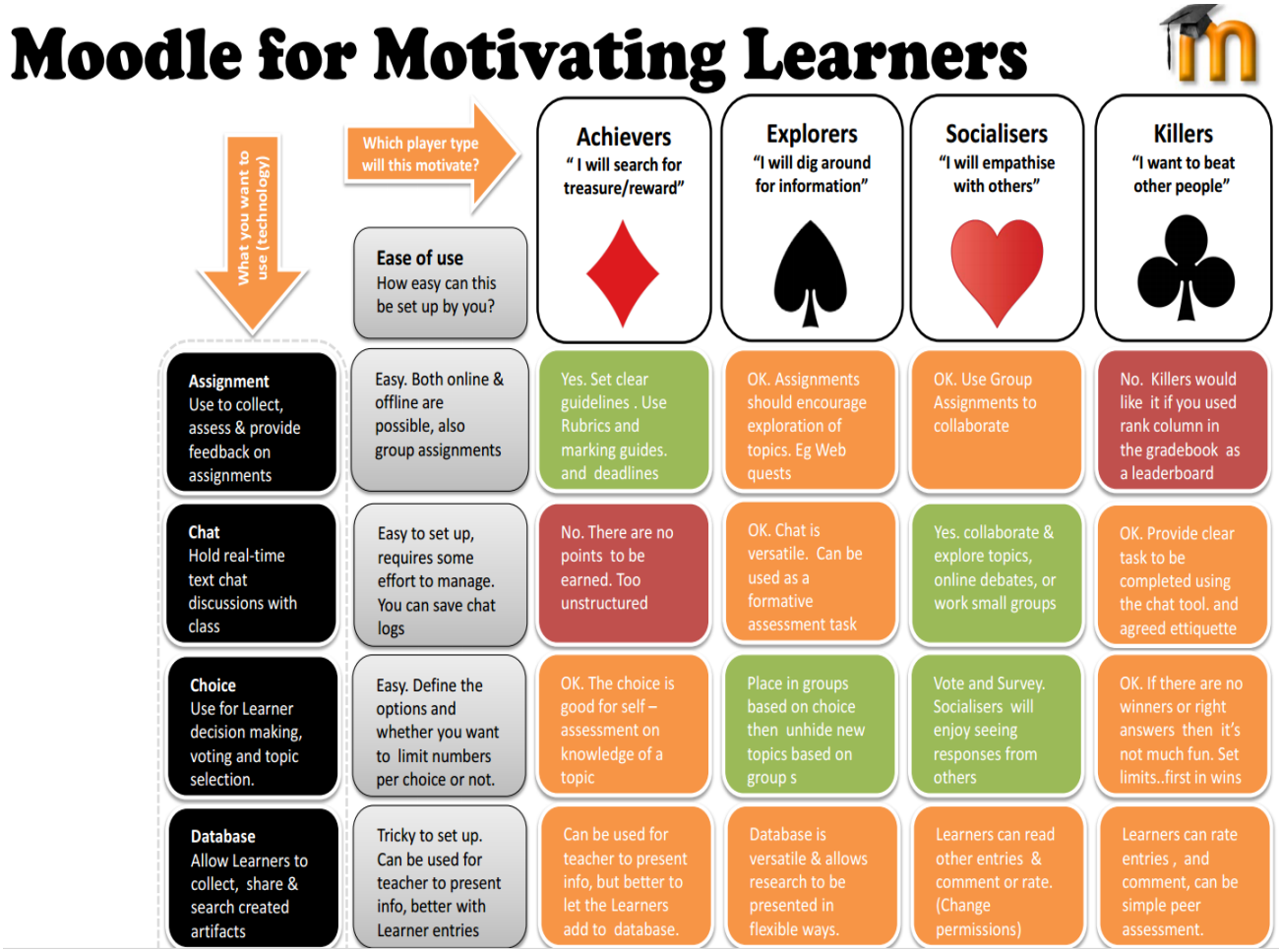
	Very Good	Good	Developing
Research and collecting information 6	I collected *lots of* information from various places, such as books, the internet etc. 6 - 5	I collected *some* information from a few places. 4 - 3	I only collected *a little* information from few places. 2 - 1
Sharing 8	I *always* shared my information or ideas with *all* my team members. 8 - 7	I *sometimes* shared information or ideas with my team members. 6 - 5 - 4	I shared *little* information or ideas with my team members. 3 - 2 - 1
Completing tasks 8	I met *all* deadlines and I was not late for meetings or to complete work. 8 - 7	I met *most* deadlines and was only late for *some* meetings and to complete work. 6 - 5 - 4	I missed *many* deadlines and was *often* late for meetings or to complete work. 3 - 2 - 1
Contribution 8	I *always* helped *every* team member with all tasks, such as gathering information, editing work. 8 - 7	I helped *some* of my team members, but not all to gather information and edit work. 6 - 5 - 4	I *didn't* help my team mates to gather information, edit work etc. 3 - 2 - 1
Listening to other group members 5	I *always* listened to the ideas and suggestions from my team. 5 - 4	I *sometimes* listened to ideas and suggestions from my team. 3 - 2	I *didn't* listen to my other team members. I often did it my own way. 1
Co-operating with my team 5	I *never* argued with my team members. I *always* talked about ideas and got everyone's opinion. 5 - 4	I *sometimes* argued with my team. I *sometimes* talked about ideas and thought about some opinions. 3 - 2	I *often* argued with my team mates. I *never* listened to their ideas and didn't think about their opinions. 1

Williams, S (2013) Project Rubrics Self-Assessment (V2).

R4: students evaluate themselves regarding their attitudes applied to research and teamwork.

9.2. Materials about the students' motivation and autonomy

This moodle offers different pathways to enhance students' motivation. It is taken from MoodleNews: http://www.moodlenews.com/2013/moodle-for-motivating-learners-poster-by-moodlemuse/ . The creation of guidelines, rubrics, stating deadlines, working in groups, engaging students or letting students choose are some of the tips presented in this moodle. The following image represents some tips parents and teacher should take into account in order to enhance students' autonomy. It is taken from the website : http://giroliminilu.blogspot.com.es/2010/06/joint-effort.html



This moodle is just one example of the different resources we can find for teachers. It is also recommended that the rubrics or other materials teachers use to evaluate or teach are visible to the pupils so they know how they will be evaluated and the issues the teacher has to cope with in the class.

PARENTS

LEARNER AUTONOMY

TEACHERS

Ten Ways to Help Your Child Become Self-Reliant

1

Encourage Public Speaking
Taking a speech class or joining the debate team can serve a number of purposes for teens. Developing the ability to stand up in front of a group and make themselves heard is key to boosting kids' self-esteem as well as their communication skills. Learning the appropriate way to speak to a variety of audiences is also important, as high school students need to know how to address peers, teachers, and employers

→ **Teachers can encourage debates with topics dealt in the class book or making presentations to the whole class.**

2

Practice Negotiation
High school students are looking for more freedom and independence. Rather than setting all the house rules, have a family planning session for rule setting. By involving kids in determining regulations, parents teach them the invaluable skills of fair compromise and negotiation with authority figures.

→ **Students can participate in the creation and application of class rules. Also teachers may let them have a voice in some decisions such as date of exams, kind of activities, topics, etc.**

3

Model Time Management and Organizational Skills
Children learn from what they see. If parents are late and disorganized, their kids generally follow suit. Post a calendar that highlights individual and group appointments and plans. Use a weekly planner, and make to-do lists. In short, model being organized for your child.

→ **Teach by doing what you preach! Using calendars and planning activities regularly in the classroom can encourage students to follow your example. This is a good way to teach organization skills. (metacognitive strategies)**

4

Teach Self-Sufficiency
The more kids do for themselves, the more confident they'll be when it comes to handling themselves in new situations. Show teens how to do laundry. Make them responsible for a family meal each week. Ultimately, this will make them more independent.

→ **Different ways to guide students towards autonomous learning can be: Listen to songs or TV series, using the library, keep a journal, use the Net, read the paper,etc. The teacher can make them reflect upon their strenghts and weaknesses, about their progress,about strategies,etc.**

5

Encourage Independence at School
Teens need to take responsibility for their academic careers. They should be keeping track of assignments and due dates, communicating independently with counselors and teachers, and participating in the extracurricular activities of their choice. Clearly, parental advice is appropriate at times. However, teens appreciate room to succeed, or to make mistakes, on their own.

→

6

Listen With an Open Mind
Of course, kids sometimes disagree with their parents. Those who fear disapproval or punishment often hide the truth or avoid discussing important topics. Teens who are confident that they can talk to their parents without a major blow-up are more likely to be forthcoming. In the end, young people who feel good about expressing themselves at home will be more prepared to express themselves in difficult situations.

7

Provide Structure
Although they may bemoan the regulations of life, teens actually function better when rules are in place. Authoritative parents who require adherence to an agreed-upon set of rules, but who also encourage communication and independence, produce happy and successful kids.

8

Remember That Every Story Has Two Sides
When our kids come home with tales of woe, we need to keep in mind that we are hearing only one perspective. Before forming an opinion, get all the facts. Did the teacher really give only one day's notice for a 10-page essay? Did the coach actually keep your child out of the game for no reason? When teens are frustrated or hurting, they may embellish the truth. Parents who know the facts can effectively help their children learn to respond to disappointing or difficult life scenarios.

9

Teach Self-Respect
When people feel good about themselves, they are able to stand up for themselves, and teenagers are no exception. Focus on helping your child develop good decision-making skills and solid self-esteem. Praise a job well done, and emphasize positive character traits. A confident child will not be afraid to speak up.

→ **Developing a teen´s high self esteem is very important for students to believe they are really capable of doing things by themselves without the constant guidance of the teacher. They should encourage risk-taking and praise learners even though the results are not exactly the expected ones.**

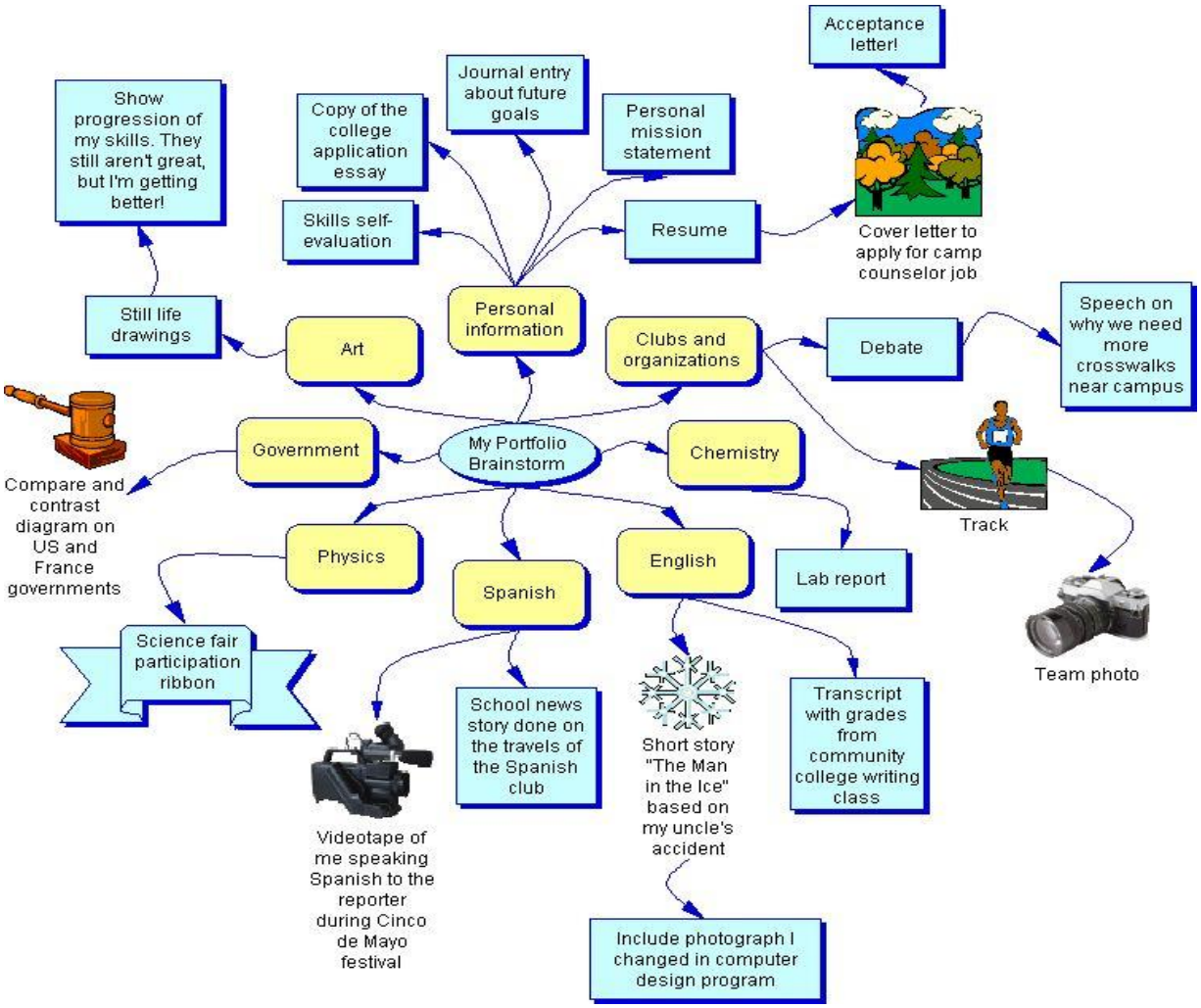
10

Teach Logical Conflict Resolution
High schoolers deal with many problems in the social and academic arenas. At a time in life when emotions run high, teens need some help figuring out how to resolve everyday dilemmas. Parents are a great resource for finding alternatives in problematic situations. Encourage and model thinking calmly and critically, so your kids learn to pick the solution that makes the most sense.

Adapted from: http://www.collegeboard.com/parents/apply/sending-kids-college/50006.html and Tricia Hedge.

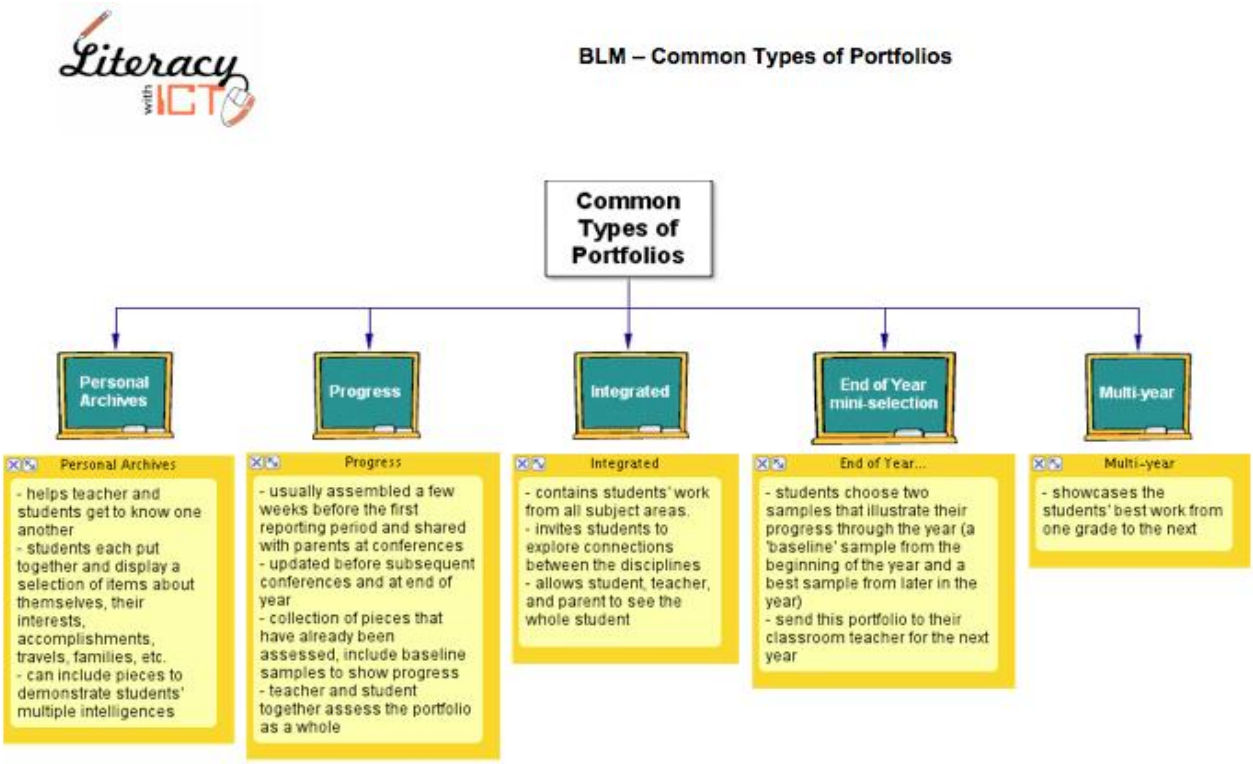
9.3. The creation and development of the students' portfolio

Some examples to show to our students at the beginning of the year in order to know how to elaborate a portfolio could be represented in the following tips and summaries.



This summary reflects all the subjects the student may have which we consider it is also important pupils have a general idea of what they are learning. It is taken from: http://foothilltech.org/rgeib/techlit1/assignments/assignment5.htm

In the following example, we can observe different types of portfolios:

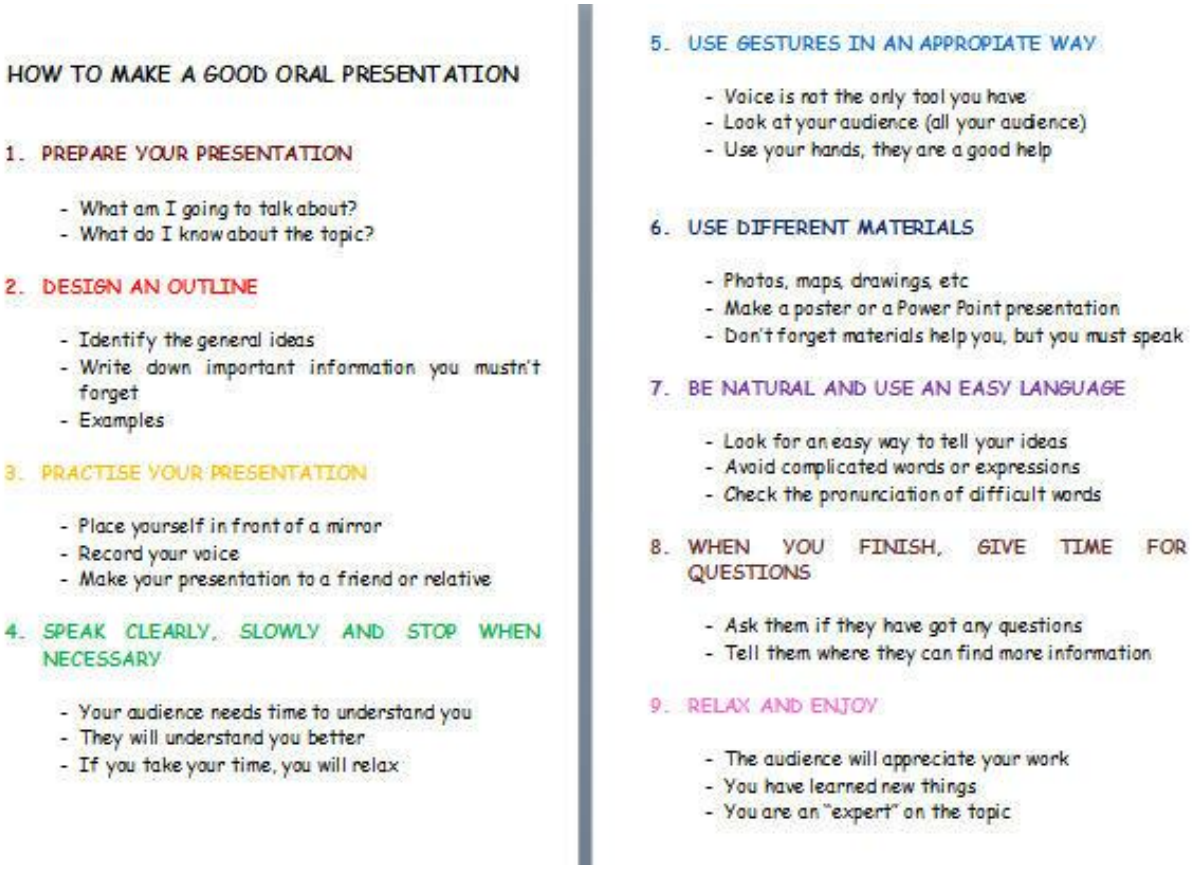


Adapted from: Manitoba Education and Training. ***Success for All Learners: A Handbook in Differentiating Instruction.*** "Types of Portfolios". 1996. P. 11.11.

This summary has been taken from the website Learning with Spirit: http://learningwithspirit.pbworks.com/w/page/40679871/Student%20Portfolios

9.4. Tips for oral presentations

We may also provide students with some tips regarding their oral presentations apart from showing them the speaking assessment rubric the students and teacher will be using to have an idea of what will be assessed. The following examples appears in: http://busyteacher.org/8254-how-to-make-a-good-oral-presentation.html



HOW TO MAKE A GOOD ORAL PRESENTATION

1. PREPARE YOUR PRESENTATION

- What am I going to talk about?
- What do I know about the topic?

2. DESIGN AN OUTLINE

- Identify the general ideas
- Write down important information you mustn't forget
- Examples

3. PRACTISE YOUR PRESENTATION

- Place yourself in front of a mirror
- Record your voice
- Make your presentation to a friend or relative

4. SPEAK CLEARLY, SLOWLY AND STOP WHEN NECESSARY

- Your audience needs time to understand you
- They will understand you better
- If you take your time, you will relax

5. USE GESTURES IN AN APPROPIATE WAY

- Voice is not the only tool you have
- Look at your audience (all your audience)
- Use your hands, they are a good help

6. USE DIFFERENT MATERIALS

- Photos, maps, drawings, etc
- Make a poster or a Power Point presentation
- Don't forget materials help you, but you must speak

7. BE NATURAL AND USE AN EASY LANGUAGE

- Look for an easy way to tell your ideas
- Avoid complicated words or expressions
- Check the pronunciation of difficult words

8. WHEN YOU FINISH, GIVE TIME FOR QUESTIONS

- Ask them if they have got any questions
- Tell them where they can find more information

9. RELAX AND ENJOY

- The audience will appreciate your work
- You have learned new things
- You are an "expert" on the topic

9.5. Teaching how to research

Finally, we should also provide students with some tips regarding the activity of research they will be working on throughout the academic year. It is taken from: http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/top-teaching/2011/12/taking-risks-21st-century-research-skills

America's Leading News Source For Kids
SCHOLASTIC News Online

Using the Web for Research

You can do a lot of your background research for an interview or story online.

1. Start with a reliable search engine, like **Google.com** or **Yahoo.com.**

2. Make a list of your best search terms. Search terms should include the main idea and key subjects.

3. The best way to find a person is to put quote marks around the person's name, then add words that describe the person's latest project. Be sure to spell the person's name right!

> **FOR EXAMPLE:**
> For Eileen Collins, who was captain on the Discovery space shuttle flight, try these search trems:
> **"Eileen Collins" Discovery "space shuttle"**

This will bring up a list of sites that include those terms. Putting quote marks around terms forces the search engine to give you exactly those words in that order. If you just typed in **Eileen Collins** without the quotes, you would get sites with **Eileen** and with **Collins**, but not necessarily the person you are looking for. To find bio information on Eileen Collins, type **"Eileen Collins" biography**. You might want to add the words **astronaut** or **NASA** to further narrow your search.

5. You will also be looking for news stories on your topics. The best place to find articles and quotes is on **Scholastic News Online, Google News**, **Yahoo News**, or **aol.com**.

6. Print out the stories that best suit your needs and read them over. Use a highlighter, pencil, or pen to mark information that is important to your story. This will make it easier to find when it's time to write.

7. You can use your research to compile questions for an upcoming interview, to write your story, or to conduct further research.

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www.scholastic.com/news