Universitat de les Illes Balears

# MASTER'S THESIS

# TREATING DIVERSITY THROUGH ICT TOOLS IN THE ENGLISH SUBJECT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION


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**Master's Degree in Teacher Training**

**(Specialisation/Pathway: English/German)**

**Centre for Postgraduate Studies**

**Academic Year 2019-20**

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Key words:

ICT, technology, ICT tools, special educational needs (SEN), learning difficulties, diversity, community, supportive environment, speaking, writing



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**Abstract**

ICT tools have become essential regarding the learning of a second language, specifically in the teaching of English as a foreign language. These tools offer teachers the possibility to adapt to 21st century students, who are digital natives. In fact, the Spanish curriculum puts special emphasis on the introduction of ICT tools into the classroom. Furthermore, the use of technology in the English classroom could result particularly beneficial for students with special educational needs (SEN). According to the *Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de noviembre para la mejora de la calidad educativa*, schools must ensure and provide special educational needs students with the appropriate resources during schooling. Even though there are a variety of studies which analyse the specific features of the most common cases of students with SEN or which analyse the benefits of ICT for ESL students, they lack a didactic proposal considering the reasons why these activities could help certain students. Therefore, the present work aims at serving as a guide for teachers whose interest is focused on ICT. Moreover, it focuses on examining in which ways Edublogs, Flipgrid, StoryJumper, Funny Movie Maker, VoiceThread, and Instagram help students with and without SEN, which include students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs), among others, to improve their writing and speaking skills.

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## 1. Introduction

The essentiality and usefulness of the English language has increased, especially these days. In the Spanish context, this interest is perceived in the educational policies, whose main objective, or one of the main ones, is to increase proficiency of English, as it has become the main foreign language of the curriculum (Muñoz, 2013). Together with this emphasis on the learning of English, the Spanish legislation has focused its attention on the notions of inclusion and attention to diversity. It is high time adaptation and attention to diversity, especially in Higher Education, be considered. This involved considering equal educational opportunities, adaptations, and available resources. Thus, in the English classroom all these aspects must be contemplated, as the number of SEN students is constantly increasing (Consejo Escolar del Estado, 2019). Besides, there is an urgent need to approach new methods which guarantee the maximisation of the students' potentialities.

To achieve these goals, the role of the teacher is vital (Sutherland, 2003; East & Evans, 2006; Starcic, 2010; Luján & Xhaferi, 2012; Soussi, 2016). One of the resources which has proved to help and improve students' educational outcomes is the use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) in the classroom (Luján, 2009; Tri & Nguyen, 2014). In fact, in the Spanish curriculum, there is a persistent stress on using ICT tools. Therefore, teachers must constantly take courses to update and improve their digital competence (Galván & López, 2017).

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) has had a crucial role in Spanish education since 1985 (INTEF, 2017). From this year onwards, ICTs are thought to play a crucial role in developing a methodological change, by improving the quality of education (Ley Orgánica 8/2013, p. 9-10). Due to this reason, a series of initiatives have been put into practice mainly by INTEF (*Instituto Nacional de Tecnologías Educativas y de Formación del Profesorado*). Moreover, technological skills provide not only opportunities to develop professionally, but also personally (Brinton 2001; Shukla, 2015). These initiatives have allowed to observe a wide range of advantages and benefits of using ICTs, specifically in the English subject (Luján, 2009; Shukla, 2015), which could be caused by the close relationship 21st century teenagers, digital natives, usually have with technology.

Using ICTs increases learners' participation, motivation, confidence, autonomy, and enthusiasm (Adams & Brindley, 2007; Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011; Susinos, Calvo, Rodríguez, & Saiz, 2019). What is more, ICT tools are not only beneficial to students, but also to teachers, as they overcome traditional roles (Morrison, 2014; Shukla, 2015). However, the current situation in Spain needs to improve in terms of inclusion and attention to diversity (Abellán, de Haro, & Frutos, 2010; Starcic, 2010; Verdugo, 2018), which directly affects the adequate use of ICTs in the classroom (Susinos et al., 2019; Sánchez, 2019). Therefore, the vulnerability of the students with SEN increases, as the potentialities of ICTs for these learners fail to be effectively developed (Starcic, 2010). These shortcomings could arise due to the lack of these resources or the lack of information and training from the teachers' part. They could still be anchored in an individualistic culture of teaching, especially those who have been teaching for decades (Abellán et al., 2010, p. 161-162). Nevertheless, these technologies result essential for students with learning difficulties (Luján & Xhaferi, 2012). Hence, teachers must cooperate to exploit and spread these new educational tools.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to prove that ICT tools are beneficial for all students, including those who have special educational needs, such as deaf or talented youth, which also include those with Specific Learning Difficulties, particularly ADHD, dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger Syndrome, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). These students have been selected, as far as they are usually reported as the most common learners with SEN in schools (Hudson, 2016). What is more, this paper intends to show in what ways a specific ICT tool could help students with special educational needs to improve an English language skill. In the case of this dissertation, it will focus mainly on the speaking and writing skill, as "nearly 60% of Spaniards say they can't (…) speak or write in English" (Montero, 2017). Nevertheless, ICTs usually have a multi-sensory character. Hence, they intend to improve as many skills as possible. Therefore, this essay has been organised in different sections concerning an ICT didactic proposal, including rubrics of evaluation for each designed activity. The first one will be devoted to explaining each ICT tool and presenting the activities which have been created with each of them. These learning tools are Edublogs, StoryJumper, VoiceThread, Funny

Movie Maker, Flipgrid, and Instagram. The next section will examine the benefits these tools have for all students and how they can increase students' writing and speaking proficiency. Furthermore, it will present the ways in which these tools are beneficial to the most common students with special educational needs, specifically to students with ADHD, high capacities, dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), or deafness. Therefore, in what ways could these ICTs be beneficial for students with and without special educational needs?

## 2. Previous Literature

### 2.1. Diversity and Inclusion; Review of the Past and Current Laws

Diversity and inclusion are two concepts whose interest have been renewed over the years, especially nowadays. This also applies to the educational background of the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). Its emphasis is caused by the urgent necessity to adapt to diversity. The Spanish law of education had not made any reference to diversity, more specifically to students with special needs, until the *Warnock Report* (Warnock, 1978) was published. This report constituted a new model to treat special educational needs (SEN) and served as a reference for the Spanish model of special education and needs. In this document, the concept 'special needs education' appeared for the first time and it proposed the suppression of the traditional categorisation of students with disabilities. Due to this, the concept 'special needs education' originated, which was established for the first time in the Spanish law by the *LOGSE* (Ley Orgánica 1/1990) and internationally by the *Declaración de Salamanca* (UNESCO, 1994).

The last Statement (UNESCO, 1994) takes the learning difficulties any student might suffer during school years into consideration. Therefore, the students' individual characteristics play an important role in education. This means that students with special educational needs are not only those who suffer from a specific disability, but anyone who, during schooling, may face difficulties to continue their learning process.

As far as attention to diversity in the Spanish educational system is concerned, the *Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación* was the first educational law to mention the necessity to ensure students with SEN equal

educational opportunities, when it comes to completely develop their personality through education, to inclusion, and to equal rights. More importantly, this law also exposed that the educational system had to adapt to these students' working pace (p. 25). Thus, by following the law, students who have SpLDs would have equal opportunities to achieve Secondary Education objectives and to graduate (p. 26), adapting the assessing methods if necessary (p. 31). In fact, this was the first law to consider students with Special Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) those who, although lacking intellectual, perceptive, motor, sensorial, or ethnic difficulties, present certain deficiencies in their learning process, set in the context of an ordinary classroom. Thus, this causes a knowledge gap between them and their peers, as they do not acquire the basic knowledge it is expected at their age, or, on the contrary, they outperform.

Moreover, the *Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de noviembre para la mejora de la calidad educativa* refers to students with special needs and the assurance of the resources they might need during their schooling. This law exposes the presence of "special educational needs for specific learning difficulties, ADHD, high capacities, for having joined the educational system late, or for personal or school history conditions" (p. 39), so that these students "can reach the maximum development of their personal abilities and, in any case, the objectives established for all students" (p. 39). It is crucial that these resources be taken into consideration in the languages that are included in the curriculum, as far as plurilingualism has become vital in this globalised world (Real Decreto 1105/2014) and all students must have access to develop their linguistic competence. In this paper, we will concentrate on the Balearic Islands' first foreign language of the curriculum, English.

To get the picture of the current Spanish educational system, the *Informe 2019 sobre el estado del sistema educativo*, written by the *Consejo Escolar del Estado* in 2019, must be taken into account. In the academic year 2017-2018, the number of students with special educational needs amounted to 222,540. The 83.6% of them studied in inclusive schools and the other 16.4% in Special Education centres (Consejo Escolar del Estado, 2019, p. 274). Taking this 83.6% into consideration, it is essential to mention that the number of students who were integrated into these schools was much superior to the number of

students who were not integrated. This applies to either state (61.9%), public (1.3%), and private schools (20.5%) (p. 274).

### 2.2. Teacher Training; Special Attention to ICT

According to the *LOE* (Ley Orgánica 2/2006), permanent training becomes not only a right, but also an obligation for all the teachers, Education Administrations, and school centres (p. 63). What is more, it establishes that these programmes "must contemplate the adequacy of knowledge and methods to the evolution of sciences and specific didactics, as well as those aspects of coordination, orientation, tutoring, attention to diversity, and organisation, aimed at improving the teaching quality and centres' functioning" (p. 63). In connection to this, teacher training is becoming internationally recognised as one of the main factors which influences the improvement of the educational quality (Consejo Escolar del Estado, 2019, p. 326).

The digital competence has become the focus of study in recent years. It "involves the safe and critical use of information society technologies for work, leisure and communication. It is based on basic ICT skills; the use of computers to obtain, evaluate, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks through the Internet" (Parlamento Europeo & Consejo de la Unión Europea, 2006, p. 15). According to the *LOMCE* (Ley Orgánica 8/2013), "the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports will prepare (…) a common frame of reference of teachers' digital competence that guides [their] permanent training (…) and facilitates the development of a digital culture in the classroom" (p. 67). What is more, the stress given to the development of this competence is reflected in the projects the Ministry of Education is constantly designing to improve it.

Inevitably, digitalisation has provoked some changes in society, concerning teaching, learning, relationship building, or working. Thus, it is important that this digitalisation process be considered by the educational system, which must promote teacher training, to introduce students into this technological world. By doing this, the need to integrate in a broad way Information and Communication Technologies into schools would be addressed. In addition, this technological era allows teachers to collaborate and cooperate between them, broadening and improving their teaching methods, and also

allows students to obtain quality education, based on equity, which transcends the traditional teaching and learning methods (Consejo Escolar del Estado, 2019, p. 329).

### 2.3. Benefits of ICT

From the 1970s onwards, the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has progressively increased. This fact prompted various scholars to explore the effects that integrating technology in the language classroom might have, specifically on the students' impetus for learning and their learning outcomes (Tri & Nguyen, 2016). Indeed, Fotos and Browne (2004) and Sheu (2011) proved that CALL is accessible for all students and allows them to proceed at their own pace, instigating learners' self-confidence and motivation. What is more, these CALL features provoke a significant improvement on students' language expertise, self-sufficiency, and communication skills. However, this success depends on several dimensions, such as the students' attitude, students' anxiety, teachers' attitude, course's technological quality and flexibility (time, methods, and participation), students' concern about the importance of using technology, students' perception of easiness when using e-tools, and diverse assessment methods (Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, & Yeh, 2008).

A move from CALL to TELL was stressed by experts, as Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) sees technology not as "assisting language learning, but as part of the environment in which language exists and is used" (Walker & White, 2013, p. 9). In addition, TELL differs from CALL in that it "includes a wider range of devices than 'computer', in particular, phones, game consoles, and tablets" (p. 10). Thus, there is a constant evolution of technological theories and methods. Besides, the term ICT is defined as "forms of technology used for creating, displaying, storing, manipulating, and exchanging information" (Nguyen, Williams & Nguyen, 2012, p. 3). More precisely, as "computer technologies such as desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, and software and internet-based technologies including email, websites, and social networking sites for the purpose of English teaching and learning" (Davies & Hewer, 2009, cited in Tri & Nguyen, 2014, p. 34). Hence, these definitions must be taken into consideration when reading this paper. In addition, there has been a constant emphasis on integrating technology into

task-based language learning (TBLL), as it is an “ideal approach for fully realizing the potential of technological advances to engage learners in a use of language that generates high-quality language learning with a sense of authenticity and relevance both inside and outside the language classroom” (González-Lloret, 2015, p. ix).

Nowadays, there is a constant emphasis on innovation in the field of education, as students from the 21st century have suffered a wide range of technological advances and, as a consequence, their learning methods have changed. Thus, introducing ICTs into the language classroom might stimulate students’ involvement in learning and ameliorate their learning outcomes, especially in the English subject (Tri & Nguyen, 2016). A great deal of studies have focused on the teaching of English in Secondary School with ICTs. Adams and Brindley (2007), for instance, centre their study on how ICT could be integrated during the school years, developing skills and content from the curriculum. Moreover, they focus on how computer-based activities encourage discussion and improve students’ talk and group work. One conclusion this dissertation has in common with the study covered by Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011) is the positive outcome ICTs have over students, by motivating them and sustaining their enthusiasm and confidence. What is more, they prove that, by using technology in class, children feel more autonomy and ownership. Additionally, Susinos et al. (2019) analyse, through students’ opinions, the usefulness of these tools to encourage participation and democracy in schools.

In relation to the English subject, especially in Higher Education, ICTs provide a series of advantages. They supply an unlimited source of information to which students can access in class or at home. Thus, they have the possibility to learn from home, at their own pace, and with more flexible schedules (Luján, 2009; Shukla 2015). In fact, teaching and learning at home using technological applications has today become a reality (McCarthy, 2020). Besides, ICT tools offer teachers the opportunity to adapt and revitalise their teaching methodology (Phelps, Graham, & Watts, 2011), to guide students, to discover educational practices that incite learning, and to attend diversity. This also includes taking heed of students’ different learning paces (Luján, 2009; Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011). In addition, these tools make the learning process attractive to learners, whose work is facilitated by them. Hence, it could be

asserted that ICT tools have a great potential to help students learn a foreign language and to increase their learning opportunities, as they are able to access a broad spectrum of authentic material, depending on their preferences, learning strategies, styles, needs, or aims (Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011).

Computer technology also allows learners to communicate, cooperate, and collaborate with other pupils. This teaching or learning method encourages group work, which involves sharing ideas, negotiating with others, readjusting one's knowledge, evaluating others' points of view and coming to a conclusion all together. By doing this, learners will assess their own understanding, will help others with certain difficulties to understand it, will increase their self-esteem and confidence, and will develop crucial communication and problem-solving skills which prepare them for the real world (Shukla, 2015, p. 87-88). Therefore, the use of ICT tools in the classroom encourages schools to take inclusive values into consideration, by creating spaces in which all students have equal opportunities to learn, especially those students who present learning difficulties (Susinos et al., 2019). What is more, they imply a change in assessment methods. They allow teachers to evaluate final tasks which enhance the entrepreneurship competence and allow pupils to be not only creative, but also critical. This permits taking aside the traditional assessment methods, based on reproducing knowledge through written tests (Shukla, 2015, p. 87-88; Susinos et al., 2019). In this way, the main focus is on the process, not on the result (Susinos et al., 2019). What is more, ICT tools enable students to interact not only with local, but also with global communities, with the purpose of achieving "creative and significant teaching and learning outcomes" (Phelps et al., 2011).

### 2.4. Teachers, Students, and ICT

The constant emergence of new generations of students means that, every year, teachers face an increasing number of digital natives. Indeed, making the most out of using ICTs in teaching languages depends on language teachers themselves. Nevertheless, this assertion has become not only an urgent need, but also a great challenge (Bijeikienė, Rašinskienė, & Zutkienė, 2011).

Sutherland (2003) highlights the crucial role of teachers in framing their students' cultural and social environment in the school. What is more, this is

reinforced by Sutherland, Armstrong, Barnes, Brawn, Breeze, Gall, Matthewman, Olivero, Taylor, Triggs, Wishart, and John (2004), who expose that ICTs, if properly embedded by teachers, who might consider the socio-cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1978), enhances learning. This environment needs to be contemplated, as human interaction is regulated by humans themselves and their environment, which includes tools. Moreover, Sutherland (2003) asserts that the responsibility for learning is not only attached to the use of ICT tools inside the classroom, but it is also connected to teachers (Phelps & Maddison, 2008; Starcic's, 2010). In addition, as Shukla (2015) exposed, ITCs are more than tools, as they provide structure to the teacher's methodology. Thus, ICT has changed the students' role, increasing their responsibility in the learning process, and the teachers' role, regulating the quality of the learning process (Ghasemi and Hashemi, 2011). Thereby, it is not ICT which enhances learning, but the way it is introduced in the activities by the teacher (Sutherland, 2003). Shukla (2015) also emphasises the effectiveness of blending constructivist theories and technology.

Thus, teachers assume the role of facilitators, who are responsible for collecting information and giving feedback to the students. They perform the function of motivators, monitors of participation and group discussion, time controllers, and guides. They monitor the selection and organisation of the information, presenting it to the students, constructing knowledge, creating the proper environment for learning, adjusting tasks, and evaluating the learners' outputs (Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011). Consequently, the teacher goes from "a sage on the stage" to "a guide by the side" (Morrison, 2014; Shukla, 2015), allowing students to be the true protagonists of education. Indeed, Ghasemi & Hashemi (2011) stress the cruciality culture has when learning a foreign language. As far as students learn a new language, which is linked to one or more cultures, ICTs allow students to broaden their knowledge about other societies, by searching for information worldwide. By doing this, they can compare and reflect on different cultures "entering the discursive practices of these new worlds" (Sutherland, 2003).

Besides, different scholars have focused on teachers' and students' attitudes towards introducing ICT in the English classroom. Whereas students emphasise their desire to increase the interactivity and dynamism of the English

subject thought ICTs (Hamzah, Embi, & Ismail, 2010; Luján, 2009; Tri & Nguyen, 2014; Luján & Xhaferi, 2012), teachers pinpoint their lack of confidence when using ICT tools in their lessons (Galván & López, 2017; Luján, 2009; Luján & Xhaferi, 2012). Thus, there is an urgent need to ameliorate this situation. Therefore, although the *Informe 2019 sobre el estado del sistema educativo* states that the number of teachers enrolling training courses related to ICT is growing every year, the reality seems to be that the majority of teachers do not feel comfortable using these technological tools and, thus, they should strengthen their training.

### 2.5. Adolescence of Students with SEN

Adolescence is a process of change, which has a strong impact on those who suffer this transformation. During the first period of formal operations, changes in the cognitive system occur, as they go through certain stages during which thoughts evolve from concrete to abstract logic. This allows adolescents to reflect differently (Piaget & Inhelder, 1997). In addition, as Vygotsky (1978) stated, thinking also depends on social and cultural activity. During adolescence, apart from the common changes that constitute this stage of life, there might be students who face stressful situations, caused by diverse obstacles that challenge their academic evolution. Thus, if adolescence can become a hard time, in the case of learners with special educational needs it could be even harder (Gómez et al., 2007). This includes the fact that students with SEN tend to have lower self-esteem than those without them.

Additionally, in cases in which Specific Learning Difficulties are involved, learners experience “a particular difficulty in one area of learning”, although performing satisfactorily in other areas (Worthington, 2003, p. 108). Furthermore, as far as disabilities are involved, learners present “disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical skills” (Spreen, 2001, p. 283). This undermines learners’ personal and academic life, as “depression, anxiety, relationship difficulties, lack of assertiveness, underachievement, eating disorders and substance abuse” (Fennell, 1999, cited in McCrea, 2009, p. 199) could arise. For this reason, “in recent years, increasing importance has been given to the issue of student mental health” (McCrea, 2009, p. 195), which is

defined as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (World Health Organization, 2007, cited in McCrea, 2009, p. 197). Consequently, teachers need to provide learners with SEN with the necessary resources and materials which promote equal opportunities, inclusion, participation, positivity, and reduce stress levels.

Scholars highlight SEN students' perception of their own academic education and development, which is considered to have its limitations. Therefore, although the law emphasises the importance of equal educational opportunities, as one of the main goals, the reality turns to be contradictory (Sutherland, 2003; Gómez et al., 2007). Taking the research carried out by Gómez et al. (2007) into consideration, it could be said that equality, inclusion, and attention to diversity, three basic objectives of education, have still not been completely achieved. Moreover, although this statement was made in 2007, to some extent, this situation persists because the introduction of ICTs in Spain has not been completed yet (Sánchez, 2019; Susinos et al., 2019).

Furthermore, in our current society, ICT tools are considered vital for the educational development and for SEN students' future prospects. What is more, Alonso and Aguilella (2012) highlight the fact that by strengthening students' self-esteem, they would significantly improve their relationship with their classmates and lose shame when it comes to ask questions in public (p. 465). Additionally, Susinos et al. (2019) analyse, through a case study, the connections between self-concept and life's quality in adolescents with and without SEN. The results showed that the percentages of physical well-being, personal development, academic and social self-concept, and self-determination in students with SEN was relatively inferior to that representing students without them. This could also be related to "the presence of students' (…) ladders and their devastating effect on teachers, classmates, and families' expectations" (Echeita & Verdugo, 2005, p. 10).

### 2.6. Most Common SEN Students and their Characteristics

The term 'Special Educational Needs' just seek to adapt the educational system, so that it is adequate for all students. The main aim of educators must be to

convert these ‘special’ necessities into just needs, equal to those other students might have (Luque, 2003, p. 9). Therefore, the term ‘educational need’ makes reference to those aspects students need in order to have access to knowledge, abilities, sociability, or autonomy to integrate in their social milieu. Moreover, the school, family, and friend context determine the amelioration or limitation of these needs (p. 8-9). Considering their commonness in the classroom diversity of mainstream education, this paper will focus on students who have ADHD, high capacities, dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and deafness.

Learners with ADHD are characterised by being inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsive (Hudson, 2016, p. 111). Moreover, they usually suffer from other learning difficulties or have other problems, such as anxiety (p. 112). “They are probably the ones who cannot sit still, call out in class and are constantly demanding your attention” (p. 114). What is more, although they want to succeed in what they are doing, they usually fail because of their lack of organisational skills (p. 114). However, they are also characterised by being creative, bright, innovative, sparky (p. 114), and they usually volunteer in class, especially if it is for an acting or role-play activity (p.117-118). In addition, there is another type of ADHD, which results more challenging, as it is more difficult to detect, the inattentive type. They “may appear to be rather dreamy and do not listen properly to what you talk to them” (p. 114). Therefore, the teacher’s task to enhance the motivation of students who suffer from a specific difficulty or necessity becomes even harder.

In addition, intellectually gifted students constitute a huge group of learners with different needs. Thus, there is diversity in giftedness. Apart from advanced academic abilities, there are also creatively gifted students, or who show advanced abilities in “all socially valued domains” (Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002, p. xiv). Moreover, this special educational need could be extended by the appearance of added learning difficulties or other background circumstances (Neihart et al., 2002). “They all share ability, in one or more domains, that is sufficiently advanced that it requires adaptation in the ordinary environment that serves the needs of average students their age” (p. xiii).

Moreover, regarding these students' social and emotional development, they tend to be integrated into the class environment. However, due to the distinctive learning pace that differentiates them from the rest of their classmates, they could face some obstacles concerning the establishment of compatible relationships with their peers. This arises because of gifted students' "creativity, energy, intensity, and high aspirations (…), as well as the internal unevenness in development that may exist in this group" (p. xiv). Nevertheless, for these students, as well as for all of them, peer support becomes essential during schooling. In their case, these pressures provoke them stress (p. xvi). However, technology enables them to be more autonomous, to overcome challenges, to cooperate and collaborate with their peers, to satisfy their curiosity, and to be recognised for their work (Housand & Housand, 2012, p. 706).

As far as students who suffer from ASD and Asperger Syndrome are concerned, they are featured by having social and communication difficulties, which could go from severe to mild (Hudson, 2016, p. 134). Although learners with ASD "who had normal intelligence and language development were identified as a separate diagnostic category called *Asperger Syndrome*" (p. 134), "the last thinking is that the boundary is not sufficiently clear between high-functioning ASD and Asperger Syndrome, so they are now grouped together again" (p. 135). Two of the most identifiable aspects of these learners are that they might have a strong interest in a particular topic, even to the point of excessively talking about it, and that the language they use to converse about it or about other interests is often distinguished for its complicated long words and pedantic tone. This makes them appear different from other students and may cause social isolation (p. 135). Moreover, their tendency to reject and oppose change and their unconsciousness when interrupting people or ignoring social rules make their social interactions complex and exhausting. These could be the main reasons why they find it difficult to work with their classmates and they "enjoy the chance to do a solo piece of work" (p. 149).

However, these students have several strengths from which other students could learn, which are creativeness, use of vast and good vocabulary, and their usual abilities with electronic or mechanical devices (p. 142). As far as

they are good at ICTs (p. 153), the activities of these proposal could be especially beneficial for them.

Additionally, learners with OCD suffer from an anxiety disorder, which can be controlled and treated with cognitive behavioural therapy (p. 155-156). Furthermore, it ranges from mild to severe and can occur simultaneously with other learning difficulties. Besides, the role of the adult mentor, the learning support teacher, and the main teacher becomes crucial (p. 174), as this psychological condition “can severely impact school life, academic achievement and relationships” (p. 156). These learners have a series of fears which provoke them anxiety, stress, and worry. What is more, this provokes obsessions and compulsions (p. 159). One of the common indicators of the presence of OCD is that students who suffer from it “may try not to touch (…) shared keyboards or equipment handled by others”. Thus, in this sense, by providing each student with a Chromebook would ease their anxiety. Moreover, using ICTs in the English classroom also enables them to soften their stress levels.

The teacher also needs to develop a supportive framework “to help them feel secure and safe” (p. 164). This includes giving them more time to develop a task or using technology for assignments (p. 164). What is more, it is essential to remind them that “the classroom is a safe place where [the teacher] expect[s] everyone to make mistakes as this is part of learning” (p. 164). In addition, in order to ease their stress, apart from giving them the instructions of the activities in a written format (p. 169), the teacher could give them a checklist for each activity, in order for them to tick the sections they have already finished. In this way, they are able to see and remember what remains to be done.

Students with dyslexia are featured by having difficulties interpreting written language. Hence, problems with spelling, reading, and writing arise. They tend to misread “words or missing out key words in the text” (p .29). Due to this, the teacher must attend their needs to maximise their learning capacities. These students tend to have “a short concentration span” (p. 32), as they “can get distracted easily” (p. 32) or go off topic, which directly affects their organisational skills (p. 33). Therefore, working in a team could encourage these students and increase their motivation for learning, as they tend to be “easily discouraged, leading to low self-esteem” and “self-confidence” (p. 34). In addition, these students are known to be “valuable and supportive team

member[s]" (p. 35) and to have "good interpersonal skills" (p. 35). Hence, working in pairs or small groups could really make a difference.

When it comes to the use of computers or tablets in the classroom, as these learners have difficulties distinguishing certain letters (p. 31), it could be encouraging for them to write on a computer. Furthermore, as students with dyslexia think "in pictures, which is quicker and more multidirectional than thinking in words" (p. 35), I have considered this to create the didactic proposal.

Finally, deafness is not considered a SpLD. However, students who suffer from it will need special attention (p. 22). Therefore, they are students with special educational needs. Although there are children who overcome deafness, they might have missed a developmental stage which allows them to fully acquire and understand letters or their combination within words (p. 22). What is more, hearing problems such as glue ear, especially if suffered in early childhood, can contribute to suffer from dyslexia (p. 28). In any case, these students should be rewarded by the teacher when showing a hard effort to overcome challenges and social fears. Moreover, using "IT to support teaching" (p. 37) becomes crucial for deaf students.

### 2.7. Teaching English to SEN Students; the Real Scenario

Globalisation provoked a radical change with regard to the context of education and language teaching. From this point on, the educational systems have made a series of adjustments to face the new reality, increasing the importance of learning foreign languages, especially English. This is the case of Spain, where learning English became an essential part of the curriculum from the 2008 Spanish financial crisis onwards (Muñoz, 2013). Hence, all students, without exception, must properly learn this language, so that all have the same opportunities to access the job market. However, a great deal is still to be done to achieve, not only an inclusive education, but also an inclusive society. In fact, in 2005, Echeita and Verdugo (2005) exposed the Spanish educational situation after 10 years of the application of the *Declaración de Salamanca*. They claimed that this Statement was listened to, but not actually applied. The most remarkable aspect they expose is that although students have different necessities and, thus, the type of support and resources required will be different, teachers do not usually take this in mind. Accordingly, technology

must be taken into consideration to achieve this change, as it offers uncountable learning opportunities for both students and teachers.

In addition, Alonso and Aguilella (2012) focused their attention on educational inclusion in Spain from the perspective of the students with disabilities, their families, and their teachers. All of them asserted that educational inclusive practices are scarce. The main difficulties stated by the students were their lack of academic motivation and their social difficulties, which were defined by them as frustrating (p. 460). Indeed, this frustration is the cause of a decrease in their school performance. However, the challenges could be overcome by the use of ICT tools, as they allow students to develop their knowledge taking their personal learning characteristics, "interpersonal relationships, emotional well-being, social inclusion, and other dimensions of the students' quality of life" (p. 467) into account.

Regarding the time in which these declarations were made, it could seem to be away from the current Spanish educational situation. However, this is certainly not the case. In accordance with Verdugo (2018), educational practices are not inclusive enough. Teachers face a challenge concerning the traditional role they play. In fact, he demands them to keep up with scientific theories which enhance new learning practices and which are proved to be positive for the students' learning process. Therefore, the emphasis on innovating and treating diversity must not cease, as "the current reality of the classrooms shows that new technologies have involved technological innovation (use of projectors, virtual platforms, resources and teaching materials, etc.), but it has not been accompanied by pedagogical innovation" (Sánchez, 2019).

### 2.8. Teaching English to SEN Students through ICT

ICT tools have originated new perspectives regarding language teaching and learning and its benefits when considering the cultural, social, linguistic, and technological diversity teachers could face in their classroom (Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011). This notion is crucial, as educators must ensure all students the possibility to access the curriculum and do their best, according to their own abilities. The integration of students with different needs into ordinary schools, with the adequate adaptations, has become a requirement (Starcic, 2010). To

reach this necessity, Starcic (2010) asserts that ICT is essential to create a versatile and efficient educational environment. Nevertheless, a new perspective on this matter must be achieved, because even though new applications have been created to integrate students with special needs, ICTs have not been adequately used when referring to these students so far (Starcic, 2010). In addition, Kalyanpur and Kirmani (2005) highlight the fact that, in the 21st century, ICT is a common and fundamental part of students' and teachers' daily lives. Thus, it is imperative to encourage teachers to use technology to help the most vulnerable students, among which those with SpLDs are found, and ensure them equal learning opportunities.

East and Evans (2006) provide an overall picture of different students with special needs, their main characteristics, and the measures teachers could apply to remove learning barriers. In the same way, some years earlier, Hasselbring and Williams (2000) had stated that computer-based technology provided a wider range of activities in order to meet diverse students' needs with both "mild learning disorders" and "severe disabilities", as the use of "adaptive technology" arose. This ensured the active participation of all learners in the classroom, as well as a learning environment which promoted learning opportunities for all. These authors and Walker and White (2013) also provided an explanation of a series of devices, systems, and software which could be used in a classroom that disposes of computers. Nevertheless, they lack a proposal on how to use them. Moreover, Hoppe, Lingnau, Tewissen, Machado, Paiva, and Prada (2007) make a proposal, but for early learning, using specific applications to enhance literacy-learning. What is more, Stanley (2013) presents different language learning tasks with technology, aimed at higher levels, but he fails to focus on the benefits these activities might have and to provide different adaptations for students with special educational needs.

Therefore, these theories and the research results provide a positive view towards the use of ICT tools into the English classroom and highlight the lack of teachers' proficiency in this area. Moreover, other studies pinpoint the importance of students with SEN and their opinions. These dissertations also show students' eagerness to use ICTs in the English classroom, to be more practical and enjoyable. However, despite the fact that using technology in the English classroom has been a deeply disputed subject within the field of

education, the approaches lack a didactic proposal that helps those teachers who have not received adequate training on the field to enrich their teaching. More importantly, a proposal that enhances the learning of students who have special educational needs, through technology. Thus, this dissertation aims at filling in this gap. Having said this, this paper will explain the ways in which specific ICT tools are beneficial and allow students with and without SEN to improve their writing and speaking skills.

## 3. Didactic Proposal

### 3.1. Introduction to the Proposal

As far as the assistance of students' learning of English is concerned, ICTs play an essential role. In fact, technology can support the development of the speaking and writing skills (Walker & White, 2013, p. 27; Mousazadeh, Hassaskhah, & Zafarghandi, 2018).

This didactic proposal is aimed at a High School which provides one Chromebook for each student and, obviously, has Internet connection. However, as collaborative and cooperative learning is put special emphasis, one Chromebook per two students would also be suitable for some activities. It would also depend on each student's case. The enhancement of using tablets in the classroom has recently increased. Simsek and Can's (2020) research "has shown that using tablets in classrooms provides a useful implementation tool for differentiation" (p. 1). Thus, "to ensure the differentiated curriculum and its implementation" (p. 1). Moreover, using computers into the English subject involves introducing learners into "new discourse communities" (Ghashemi & Hashemi, 2011, p. 3101-3102). Therefore, this technological tool "prepare[s] students for the kinds of international cross-cultural interactions which are increasingly required for success in academic, vocational, or personal life" (p. 3101-3102). What is more, the proposal will focus on the benefits of specific ICT tools for students with and without special educational needs. I will pay special attention to students with ADHD, high capacities, dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and deafness.

Furthermore, in relation to assessment, it "is an essential component of education systems (…). The main purposes of assessment include diagnostic

(…), placement (…), proficiency (…), achievement (…), formative (…), summative (…), and quality assurance" (Walker & White, 2013, p.123-124). Moreover, enhancing self and peer assessment becomes essential in order to get feedback and for students' progress, so that "explaining, criticizing, sharing, and motivating behaviours" (Soller, & Lesgold, 2007, p. 63) take place in the English classroom. In the case of these activities, informal and achievement assessment must be considered, as some of them could be developed as projects, final tasks, or homework. Therefore, they will be assessed by following a specific rubric or a checklist, and self and peer assessment.

### 3.2. Edublogs

Edublogs is a blogging network that has been evolving since 2005 (Edublogs.org, 2020). It is a medium of expression and information sharing. When it comes to a classroom blog, as it is the case of the proposed activity, it is a shared blog created by the teacher in which students can make their contributions either allowing them to publish posts in the class blog or commenting teachers' posts under their user name. Therefore, students need to log in and create an account in Edublogs, in order to participate and share their opinions about a specific theme. In the case of the designed activity, the piece of writing they need to create has some grammatical restrictions. However, as Edublogs is a network which could be used during the academic course, different types of activities which involve more spontaneous language could be concerned. Moreover, students could create their own blogs, which would be an excellent idea if the teacher intends to use the class blog in a daily basis.

In relation to Edublogs and the creation of class blogs, this network enables teachers to make it private or public. If the blog goes private, only students and the teacher could access its content. On the contrary, if the blog goes public, it can be accessed by audience from all around the world, who could leave comments or interact with students from other countries. In this activity, I have decided to go private, as for some students it could be more beneficial. Nonetheless, this option could be changed at any time. Hence, the teacher can restrict access to the class blog. One of the possible options, which I consider essential and beneficial, is that the teacher can allow parents to access the blog, by creating a password with which they could log in. What is

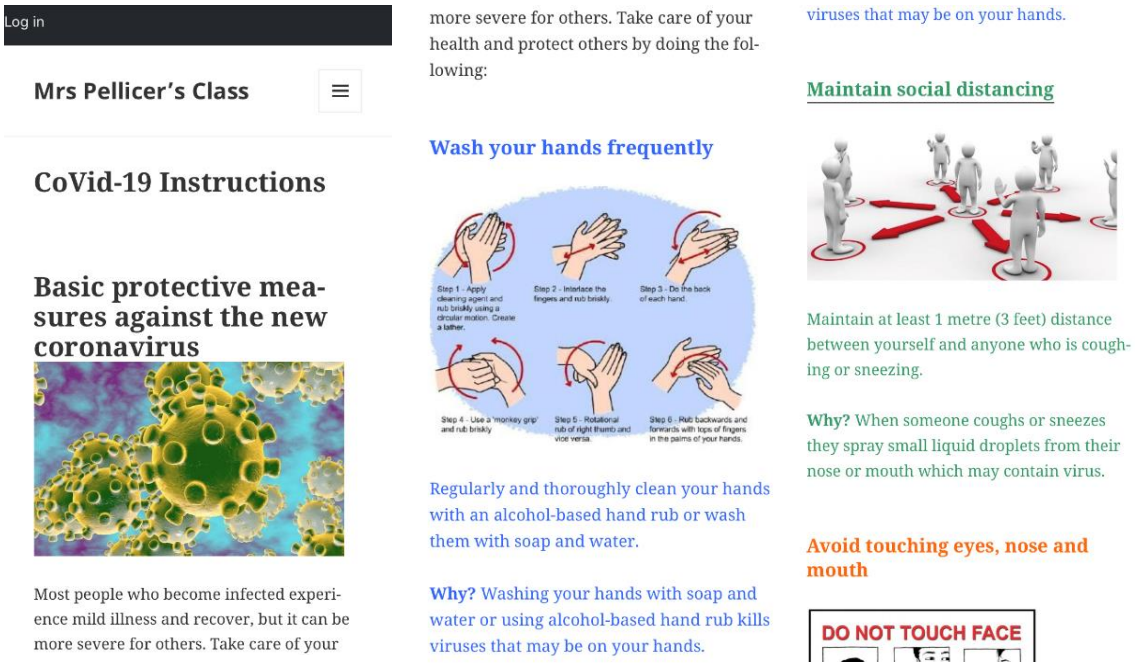
more, the teacher can activate the option of revising all posts and comments before they are published. By doing this, the teacher is given the opportunity to control the content that is published, which increases the security measures of this network. Lastly, there is also an option to lock down students' blogs for evaluation purposes.

### 3.2.1. The Activity

This Edublog (see Appendix 1) has been created for students of 4th of ESO. The post (Pellicer, 2020) is related to the most important event of this decade, the emergence of CoVid-19 and the recommended sanitary security measures. This activity is formed by three different sections. The first part consists in a post published by the teacher, explaining the protective measures everyone must take to prevent people from catching the virus. Hence, it is not only an activity which encourages students to write and talk about a specific theme, but it is up to date, to increment students' interest on the activity by making it significant and useful. In addition, Edublogs allows all students to establish social contact and become more active participants, in spite of the lack of face-to-face interaction with their mates. Thus, this Web 2.0 tool permits students to improve their writing and speaking skills.

The second part of the activity involves students and it consists in using conditionals. Students have to read the post published by the teacher (*Mrs Pellicer*), which is about some instructions to take into consideration during the age of Coronavirus. They have to write a piece of text, two paragraphs of five lines each, approximately, commenting on what they have just read. In the case of students participating in the blog under a username, this can be done as a comment in the teacher's post. In contrast, students could publish a post in the class blog if the teacher enables them, by selecting this option. Considering the information written on the post, students need to focus on what they could do to improve this state of affairs, using the first, second, and third conditional (E.g. *If we cover our mouth when coughing, we will prevent transmission*). Moreover, using adequate liking words and modal verbs to express advice, duty, or possibility would also be taken into consideration. This is possible since this grammatical content would have been explained in previous units. As the blog is a class blog, all the posts published would be seen by all students and the teacher.

Finally, after doing the writing activity, the teacher will prepare a debate about the effectiveness of these measures, considering the comments students have made about the post. In this debate there would be two or three students who participate in an indirect way. They will be the ones writing down all the different contributions the rest of the classmates do. This role could be essential for those students who have difficulties expressing themselves in English, which usually include students with SEN. In this way, the teacher will not oblige anyone to speak in public if they express their reluctance to do so. However, the participation of all students is encouraged.




### 3.2.2. Evaluation

Regarding assessment, this activity will be evaluated with an assessment rubric (see Appendix 2) that will be presented to the students, so that they know what the teacher expects from them. The rubric takes participation (commenting the post or posting in the class blog with the answer), coherence and cohesion of the text, length, and an adequate use of conditionals into account. Moreover, if students participate in the class discussion, after the due date of the writing activity, they could get an extra point. What is more, another extra point for commenting others' comments could also be added, but this would be specified on the rubric.

Feedback will be given from the teacher's, as well as from the classmates' side, since they will comment on others' posts. Therefore, in the same blog, comments can be added, which permits easily storing feedback and personalising it, depending on each learner and their necessities.

Moreover, the five competences will also be assessed. Hence, the teacher will follow a rubric to evaluate students. This rubric is solely for the teacher and will serve for all the activities designed in this didactic proposal (see Appendix 3).

### 3.2.3. Benefits

Edublogs provides teachers the possibility to remodel the students' learning experience. In addition, it allows teacher-student and student-student interaction. This Web 2.0 tool provides students with the incredible opportunity to broaden their minds and get to know about other countries and cultures. Hence, this activity benefits learners, particularly those with special educational needs, in that it enhances acceptability and communication between classmates who might have different cultural, family, or social backgrounds, and fights stereotypes and prejudice. Moreover, this gives meaning to the educational experience (O'Byrne & Murrell, 2014, cited in Susinos et al., 2019, p. 51-52), apart from enabling students to access and research information worldwide (Ghashemi & Hashemi, 2011, p. 3099). This increases their motivation to continue writing (Walker & White, 2013, p.76) and their enhancement to learn English (Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl, 2010).

Furthermore, using blogs in the classroom has proved to improve peer support "in online discussions between class members" (Hall & Davison, 2007, p. 163). Thus, blogs can be considered not only a tool to provide students with information, but also a learning tool as a such (Hall & Davison, 2007, p. 163), which enhances a supportive environment for learning, a crucial aspect for students with special educational needs.

As far as the most common students with SEN are concerned, this activity has concrete benefits for students with ADHD, ASD and Asperger Syndrome, OCD, and dyslexia. In the case of ADHD students, "working on computers can be very rewarding (…), [as] they often enjoy computer-based tasks" (Hudson, 2016, p. 124). Thus, this activity, as well as the one developed with StoryJumper (see *3.4. StoryJumper*), enables them to improve the

organisation of their writing, for instance, by moving paragraphs and maintaining a tidy presentation of their work (p. 124).

It is an excellent idea to use interactive teaching programmes, as they are usually fun and colourful and they give immediate, personal, and non-judgemental feedback, "which is excellent for students with ADHD" (p. 125). The activity developed with Edublogs is particularly beneficial for these students in the sense that they can do this activity with a classmate who help them organise the information and remember content from previous units, since students with ADHD have difficulties remembering things (p.116/122). I have also added the debate after having done the written activity to enhance these students' participation, as they usually love acting. This debate could encourage them to do a role-play, for instance, a group acting like health advisors and the other group acting like citizens who desperately desire to come back to normal life, without considering security measures.

Regarding the organisation of the text, learners with OCD also benefit from this Web 2.0 tool. They may perceive that their work is never good enough. For this reason, their "written work may be crossed out and redone several times; rubbing out or ripping up work can occur" (p. 160). As they seek perfection, using technology in the classroom could allow them to rewrite, remove and include information as many times as desired and without making the presentation untidy. All the above is certainly possible with Edublogs. Moreover, this could also be applied to StoryJumper (see *3.4. StoryJumper*) and Instagram (see *3.7. Instagram*). Therefore, activities in which these students can work with a word processor result to have its benefits (p. 164). Besides, the material is relevant for students because it concerns with real-life issues. However, it might be changed if the student has OCD caused by contamination fears. One possible alternative activity is explained in the following section (see *3.2.4. Alternative activity*).

In addition, the final debate in this activity is especially beneficial to students with ASD and Asperger Syndrome, as "some social skills can be learned by patient reminders and a consistent approach" (p. 147). This involves listening to others' ideas and respect them, which is of great importance for learners with ASD, who could unconsciously hurt classmates' feelings because of their usual lack of tact (p. 148).

Finally, for the creation of this activity I have taken students with dyslexia into account. I have used the Arial font type, I have added a picture which represents the main idea of each paragraph, and I have used “different colours for each row or block of writing so that students are less likely to jump rows” (p. 38). Additionally, I have also introduced bold headings and videos from YouTube which are hyperlinked to some of these headings. However, if there is any student with dyslexia in the classroom the space between the lines should be adapted, it should be double spaced. Thus, technology allows tasks’ format to be adjusted as necessary. Furthermore, these learners are usually more engaged with activities that concern speaking. Indeed, they especially enjoy debates, which constitutes to the third part of this activity.

#### 3.2.4. Alternative activity

This activity with Edublogs can also be developed for students of 4$^{th}$ of ESO, depending on the unit the teacher focuses on. For instance, if the main focus of the unit is the present perfect and the topic is sports, this activity could be transformed as follows. The teacher could post a text about a famous sportsman/woman who talks about his/her experience practicing a risk-taking sport. The text should be written in present perfect. However, if the original text is written in another verb tense, the teacher could adapt it. In this way, students would read a text full of verbs in present perfect and would notice how this tense is formed. The first part of the activity would consist in them searching for all the verbs in the present perfect tense there might be in the text. Then, they would have to comment on the post, by writing a text (two paragraphs of five lines each, approximately) in which they expose their experience practising a sport. Needless to say, it could be an invented experience to let their imagination flow. What is more, they need to use the present perfect tense to write their text.

### 3.3. VoiceThread

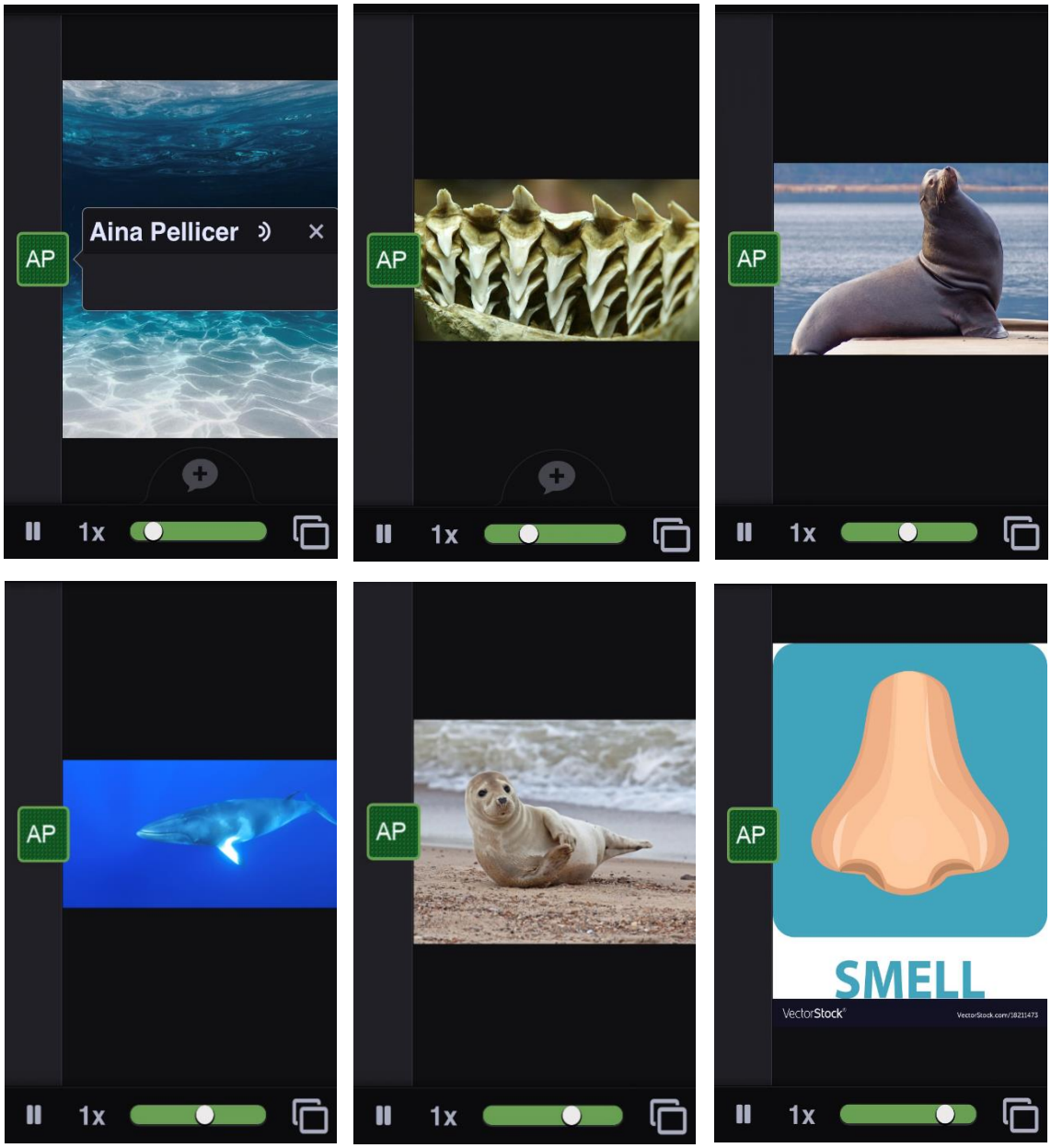
VoiceThread is a Web 2.0 tool which is available for iOS, Android, and the web (https://voicethread.com). As it focuses on educative purposes, it has a specific log in for educators or school centres. It enables users to add voice to a text, a picture, or a video, which can be uploaded from one’s computer, tablet, or mobile phone. It also allows users to add written or audio comments in the

created document, video, or presentation. For this reason, the activity focuses on recording a dynamic oral presentation with this tool.

### 3.3.1. The Activity

VoiceThread allows students to improve their speaking abilities. This activity is aimed at 1st of ESO students, as its simplicity introduces them into the technological world and permits them to familiarise with up to date presentations and speaking tasks. In this activity, they will practice the present simple tense in a communicative way. Thus, it focuses mainly on meaning rather than on form. The teacher will show them an example of a VoiceThread which is similar to what is expected from them (https://voicethread.com/share/14365632/ *own creation*). As students have studied several endangered species in the previous unit, which focused on environment, they will select one animal and search for information about it on the Internet. This research activity would be supervised by the teacher. Besides, he/she could give students several websites they can visit in order to get information about the chosen animal. The research includes searching for information about the main facts of the animal, responding to the questions *Where does it live?, What does it eat?, Is it a mammal?, Is it an endangered species?, Is it cute/dangerous?, Does it have hair, feathers, or scales?* Once they have gathered all this information, they will select the pictures which represent these facts, but without discovering their chosen animal either by mentioning it in the presentation or by introducing pictures of it. Thus, the main aim of the task is that the other students can guess the animal which is being discussed in the presentation. As this activity will be presented in front of the class, students will have the possibility to listen to their classmates' work and play a game with their own material. Moreover, this activity allows students to introduce the main grammar point of the unit in their speech, the present simple tense.

The activity could be done individually or in pairs, depending on what benefits more each student. Thus, it adapts to students' needs. Here are some pictures of my presentation made with VoiceThread. The animal they need to guess, in this case, is a white shark.




### 3.3.2. Evaluation

The VoiceThread will be assessed following an evaluation rubric (see Appendix 4), presented to students before doing the activity. Aspects regarding pronunciation, coherence and cohesion, format, and originality are assessed. Furthermore, when presenting the VoiceThread in front of the class and playing the guessing game, co-evaluation could take place. Additionally, when it comes to give students feedback, this tool "also allows users to add written or audio comments in the created document/video/presentation" (VoiceThread, 2011-2020). This allows them to ask for some advice to the teacher or to other classmates by commenting on it and pinpointing the possible errors. Thus,

learners can receive individualised teacher feedback or classmates' feedback on their oral performance.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that this rubric and the checklist from the activity done with Instagram (see Appendix 6) focus mainly on meaning. However, all the rubrics presented in this proposal concentrate on both academic content and an 'artistic' presentation/originality, as this is particularly positive for students with special educational needs (Hudson, 2016, p. 45).

### 3.3.3. Benefits

This activity becomes especially beneficial for students with special educational needs, since it focuses more on meaning than on form. This application offers learners the opportunity to practice their presentation and record it as many times as desired. By doing this, they can rehearse their speaking before actually recording the final result.

The fact that in VoiceThread students have to use a mixture of pictures and spoken language helps those students with difficulties to understand the meaning of the speech. This is connected to Luján's (2009) assertion that adiovisual aids result essential for students with special educational needs. However, this blend of visual aids and spoken language is also beneficial for all students, with and without SEN (Hokanson & Hooper, 2000, cited in Brunvand & Byrd, 2011, p. 33).

In addition, this computer tool enhances engagement, motivation, active participation, and collaboration between peers. Besides, it enables them to work at their own pace (Brunvand & Byrd, 2011, p. 28/30) and "develop as independent learners" (p. 30). Consequently, the greatest benefit of VoiceThread is its flexibility. It enables educators to use it in different educational settings, independently of using it "in general education, with students considered at risk, [or] with students with disabilities" (p. 31).

Concerning the students with SEN this dissertation focuses on, this activity presents several benefits for students with ADHD, dyslexia, and deafness. As students with ADHD love fun activities, like all students do, this ICT tool includes the guessing activity, which transforms an oral presentation into a game. Moreover, VoiceThread could be really enhancing for students with dyslexia and deafness, since the presentation consists of pictures which are related to the speech. Therefore, these visual cues would help them to perform

better. In their case, as these students “are very hesitant to perform verbally in front of others” (Peer, 2013, p. 37), this activity could be carried out in pairs. By doing this, they would increase their motivation to do the activity and would reduce embarrassment to speak in public. In addition, in these activities, language would be reduced for these students. Hence, the time of their speech would also be reduced.

However, if a student is reluctant to present his/her activity in front of the class, they could do the activity on their own and present it solely to the teacher. In the VoiceThread, deaf students could participate in the activity by searching for the information, formulating the questions, and choosing the pictures for the presentation with their partner, being the fellow classmate who records his/her voice for the presentation. Considering peers, the teacher should concern students about using a slow voice pace when recording themselves. In this way, the teacher enhances deaf students’ understanding of the presentations. The same applies to the activities done with Funny Movie Maker (see *3.5. Funny Movie Maker*) and Flipgrid (see *3.6. Flipgrid*).

#### 3.3.4. Alternative Activity

An alternative activity for 1st of ESO students with VoiceThread could be based on guessing an object. This allows students to feel free to choose an object they feel identified with or that they like. By doing this, their motivation would increase. As with the guessing game presented above, learners need to search for information and pictures which represent the description of that object. However, never revealing it. Then, they would record themselves and make a presentation about the object, to prepare a guessing game with their classmates.

### 3.4. StoryJumper

StoryJumper is a Web 2.0 tool aimed at improving students’ writing proficiency by fostering their creativity (Storyjumper.com, 2020). In fact, as it has become a prominent tool in the educational sphere, it enables teachers to create an Educational account. In this account, the teacher will control his/her students accounts.

In addition, with StoryJumper, students become the creators and writers of their stories, using their own characters, backgrounds, creative writing, voice

recording, pictures, sound effects, and background music. This web application provides users with a series of default images (props), backgrounds, or sound effects. Moreover, they can also create their characters. However, it also allows to upload pictures from one's own computer or tablet. Thus, students can search for pictures in the Internet and then add them to their Storybook.

In the case of doing this activity in groups, this tool offers students an extra aid. If all the members of the group want to edit their Storybook at the same time, "they can video chat inside the StoryJumper editor to discuss ideas and collaborate faster (…). To enable this video chat feature, students younger than 13 years old need parent approval" (Storyjumper.com, 2020). Having said all this, as far as this activity is aimed at students of 1st of ESO, the teacher will need the parents' consent either for creating the student account and for video chatting inside the application.

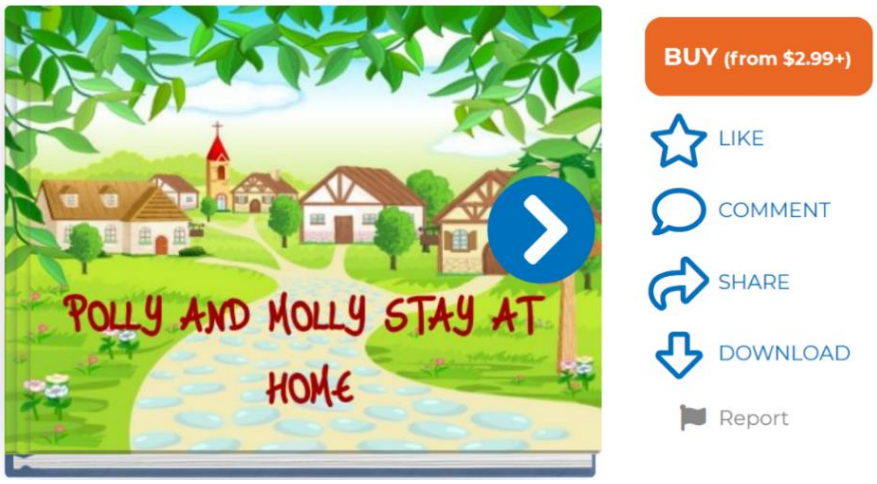
Once they have finished writing their story, they can share it. These Storybooks can go public or private, depending on what the teacher decides. However, they can be shared to a specific audience by sending them the link of the story.

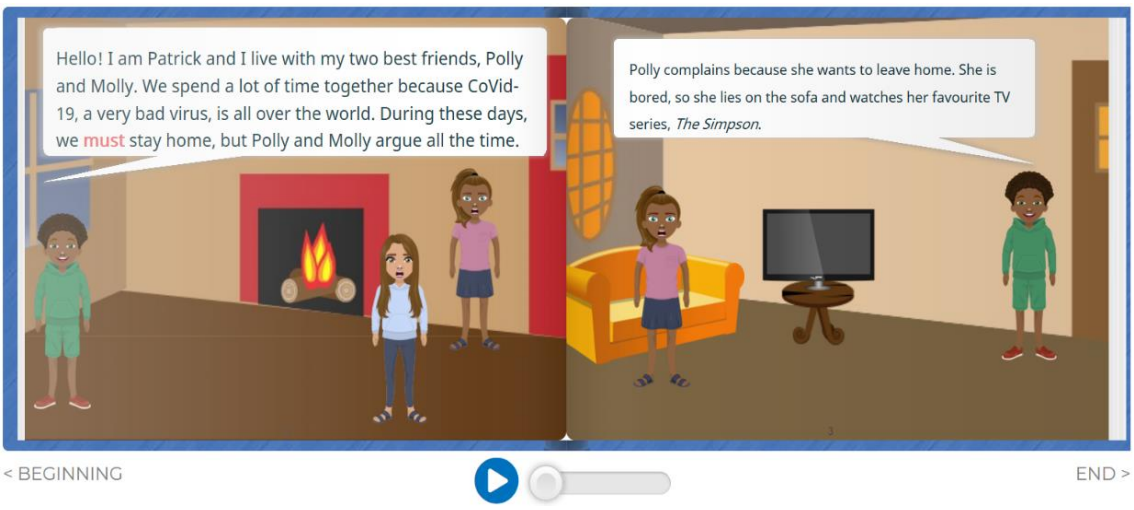
### 3.4.1. The Activity

The activity developed with StoryJumper might be the most complete activity, in the sense that all skills are practiced. This Storybook is aimed at students of 1st of ESO. I have created an example, so that they develop the activity with all the required items (https://www.storyjumper.com/book/read/82572845/5eac07ed8f290). The main aim of this Storybook is to enhance the writing skill and to practice the grammar point, modal verbs, and the vocabulary of the unit, healthy and junk food. Moreover, the story is written in the present simple tense, as students have previously studied this grammar point. The teacher's example is about three friends who are confined at home during quarantine and the different routines they follow. Patrick is the narrator and Molly and Polly his best friends. They show their habits and try to improve them to be of sound mind and body. This allows students to feel identified with these characters, as their story is more up to date than ever. Polly always lies on the sofa and watches TV, she does not do her homework or household chores, she eats junk food, and she does not socialise at all. Conversely, Molly exercises at home, she does her homework,

helps with household chores, and eats healthy food. In the story, Patrick and Molly encourage Polly to improve her daily routine and to have a healthier lifestyle.

In addition, this activity would have interdisciplinarity with other language subjects, as they would have already explained the structure of a narration. Furthermore, the Storybook could be done in pairs, or in groups of three, as far as diversity in the classroom is concerned. What is more, after the due date, students will present their own Storybook in groups in front of the class, so that all are able to listen, read, and grade their mates' Storybook. This would obviously depend on the class circumstances and diversity, as talking in public could give rise to negative effects on some students. Thus, it could be done on a voluntary basis.




### 3.4.2. Evaluation

This activity will be assessed taking an evaluation rubric (see Appendix 5) into consideration. It will be presented to students in advance. In this rubric, aspects related to grammar, structure of the narration, format, creativity, and originality are contemplated. By doing this, students become aware of the aspects they need to consider when creating their Storybook. In the case of those students who decide to make an oral presentation of their Storybook in front of the class, they will be added up to one extra point. In this way, although participation is encouraged, anyone is obliged to present it, which becomes crucial for students with special educational needs.

This presentation would also be assessed taking information and body language into account. Besides, this activity could be assessed as the final task of the unit.

### 3.4.3. Benefits

StoryJumper has been proved to improve both writing and speaking skills. Moreover, students seem to have a positive attitude towards this Web 2.0 tool when writing narrative stories (Mousazadeh et al., 2018, p. 64-65). What is more, digital storytelling is beneficial for students with SEN, especially when it comes to reaching deep comprehension in a short time lapse (Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Qarajeh, 2014, p. 256).

StoryJumper's "simple and engaging environment" (Mousazadeh et al., 2018, p. 65) enables students to cooperate and collaborate to share their creativity with their classmates, which increases their sense of community. Consequently, the fact that StoryJumper allows students to create their own

story, including their own backgrounds, characters, or narration, enhances writing and organisational skills (Athanasiadou, Andreou & Gana, 2020, p. 87).

Moreover, as far as students with SEN are concerned, this activity is particularly beneficial to those with ADHD, high capacities, ASD and Asperger Syndrome, OCD, and dyslexia. StoryJumper enables students with ADHD to dig up their originality and creativity. Pupils need to create a story in groups, which would be arranged by the teacher. Additionally, he/she would assign each member of the group a task, so that these learners can participate in the creation of the story, by contributing with their special imagination. This activity also emphasises students' originality while learning English grammar, in this case, the modal verbs, and acquiring new vocabulary. This task also includes a presentation section (voluntary), in which students with ADHD would become the centre of attention and they could get up and move around the area of the blackboard when presenting. This allows them to move, as they strongly need to do.

In addition, since students with high abilities also need educational adaptations, their Storybook can also be adapted, especially if they are technologically gifted or creatively talented. They could only use pictures, backgrounds, and characters of their own creation or they could also edit pictures from the Internet (not default images). Hence, depending on the type of giftedness, the teacher should decide which aspect of each activity should be modified to meet these students' needs. Thus, the flexibility of this tool provides a huge range of possibilities.

Furthermore, this activity benefits learners with ASD and Asperger Syndrome. They usually "feel a need for quiet time on their own" (Hudson, 2016, p. 141). Nevertheless, this should not be the case on a regular basis. Thus, it is a great opportunity for them to develop their social skills. To gain a positive outcome when working in groups, it is essential that the teacher creates the teams, assigns a specific role to each member, and observes carefully (p. 148). As it is obligatory to do this task in groups, the teacher could give students with ASD and Asperger Syndrome the role of choosing the topic of the story, as long as all the group's members agree. In this way, the motivation of students with this specific learning difficulty to collaborate and cooperate with their team would increase.

As with students with ASD and Asperger Syndrome, it is vital that the teams be carefully arranged by the teacher when a student suffers from OCD. They usually prefer to seat separately and to have their own space (p. 167). For this reason, they may prefer to work alone, which is occasionally good for them, especially if the teacher gives them the possibility to show their talent. However, this activity allows them to develop their communication skills. What is more, especially in the activities which focus on speaking, working with a classmate could ease their anxiety levels. It "is like a peer coach who sits next to the child and prompts him to keep up with note taking and staying on task. It can be great for the buddy, to foster a sense of confidence and pride and to be able to help someone in need, and great for fostering friendship" (Child Mind Institute, 2016). Thus, as "the student has a supportive partner, the jobs can be divided sensitively between them" (Hudson, 2016, p. 172).

Finally, for this activity, as well as for the one developed with Edublogs, it would be adequate that students with dyslexia go together with a partner. In fact, this activity is compulsorily done in groups. This partner would help them to concentrate and to highlight the parts of the text students with dyslexia could miss. Moreover, when it comes to read instructions of an activity, it could also be beneficial for them to have someone with whom they can cooperate. Besides, when creating the Storybook, students can choose the images they want to introduce, the sounds and voice recording pace, the background of the page and the colour of the speech bubbles, which vital for students with dyslexia.

### 3.4.4. Alternative Activity

An alternative activity students of 1st of ESO could do with StoryJumper could be focused on practicing prepositions of place and movement (*to the front, to the right, to the left, to the back, across, along, into, out of, over the corner, around the corner*). By doing this, students would practice this type of prepositions by encouraging their creativity to flourish. If students are lost at choosing a topic to create their story, the teacher could give them some examples, such as being lost at the train station, being a lost child in a department store and asking for directions, being lost in a country you don't know, being late for a job interview and being lost in the street, etc. Thus, this activity gives authenticity to learning, since they practice asking for directions, which is a real-world situation they could encounter at some point in their lives.

### 3.5. Funny Movie Maker

Funny Movie Maker is an application available for iOS and PC. In the case of having an Android tablet or mobile phone, the application is called Verbalizer Lite, which is also available for PC. It allows users to "instantly create hilarious movies to share" (Electric French Fries, 2020). In addition, it allows to choose a default picture or to upload one from the mobile phone, tablet, or PC. Users can bring back to life that picture, by giving voice to it. Moreover, they can replace the picture's mouth, or even the whole face, by their own. Users just need to "adjust the pitch of [their] voice and add music to complete [the] movie" (Electric French Fries, 2020).

#### 3.5.1. The Activity

This activity is designed for students of 2nd of ESO. They have to choose a historical character, of whom they will do a searching on the Internet. They need to focus on the main aspects of the person they have chosen and write them down on a paper or on a digital document, as they prefer. They should write down seven sentences approximately about their character and memorise them, if possible. If not, they can also read the text while they record themselves or are recorded by a partner.

The cruciality of this activity is highlighted by the fact that learners will do a role play, by acting out as if they were the historical character they have chosen. To do this, they need to introduce verbs in the past simple tense into their speech. They would introduce themselves in present simple and all the important events of the historical character will be narrated in the past simple tense. I have created an example of the activity with this mobile application, which can be accessed by clicking on this link https://youtu.be/GZcEo8qPElo. In this way, students can take the teacher's expectations into consideration before doing research and recording the video.

Then, students will search for a picture of the character on the internet. It is important to mention that the picture needs to be of the character's face. Then, they have to download the application. After selecting the portrait, they have to upload it in the app. Then, they need to cut down their character's mouth, so that they can introduce their own when speaking, as if it was the character himself/herself who is talking. Within the application, there are aids which help students to execute this action. Once they consider it is the proper

time to record the funny movie, and after having practiced several times, they have to press the red button and talk for about 30 seconds. This activity could be done individually or in pairs, in the case that there are some students with specific educational needs. This should be negotiated with the teacher.

As far as this activity is concerned, it could be posted in the class blog, which has been previously explained in section *3.2. Edublogs*, to encourage discussion between peers.

### 3.5.2. Evaluation

The assessment of this activity will be done considering a rubric (see Appendix 6) which would be previously presented to students. As in the other activities, they will know what to do before presenting their final outcome. This rubric considers pronunciation, coherence and cohesion, and grammar (use of past simple). Then, if they decide to share their movie with the class, the teacher could decide to do co-evaluation, being the students themselves who decide which movie is the best one. For instance, the teacher could pass around with a bag, in which students need to introduce a small piece of paper with their grade on it.

### 3.5.3. Benefits

One of the benefits of Funny Movie Maker is that the only part of the body that is seen in the movie is the students' mouth. Hence, the students who have more problems to speak in public, would have more possibilities to participate in this activity. Moreover, they can choose not to cut down the portrait's mouth and just make their speech behind the picture. Therefore, it can be said that technology, specifically this application, "provides exciting opportunities for students to

interact with spoken language in ways which allow them to replay, rehearse, and repeat oral language in non-threatening and supportive contexts. It also provides them with opportunities to create their own listening materials" (Walker & White, 2013, p. 42).

As far as some students, especially SEN students, tend to have more difficulties when it comes to gaining confidence, this activity is fantastic for them. This is possible since Funny Move Maker allows students to adopt another personality. They are required to act as if they were the person of the picture. This method of learning language is known as Suggestiopedia.

> "In Suggestopedia, students [take] on different names and identities, and this [is] felt to remove the stress from producing language, since it [is] another self who [is] making the errors. The pictures of the avatars act like masks and allow the students to express sides of their personality which are often hidden" (p. 41).

What is more, this application comes with a novelty. Students can cut down the mouth of the character and substitute it by theirs, which makes the activity funnier. This is obviously voluntary, as some students would prefer not to show their mouth and completely hide behind the picture.

Regarding the most common students with SEN and their characteristics, it would be adequate to do this activity when having students with ADHD, ASD and Asperger Syndrome, and dyslexia in the English classroom. This activity involves the 'fun factor' that students with ADHD love so much (Hudson, 2016, p. 127) and it also enhances acting. Furthermore, as Hudson (2016) suggests giving students with ASD and Asperger Syndrome an opportunity to develop a task about their special interest to make them shine (p. 146), this activity could be perfect for them. With Funny Movie Maker they can choose a character of their interest and talk as if they were him/her, highlighting the most important facts of his/her life. If they refuse to talk in public, they could just present the activity to the teacher. In any case, they might count with an adult mentor or a learning support teacher and the help of the school SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) (p. 152-153).

Finally, Funny Movie Maker fits with students with dyslexia, as it focuses on "record[ing] a short voice play or monologue" (p. 44), adding the multisensory aspect of the picture and the mouth moving. Ideally, for speaking activities, students who suffer from this SpLD could use a voice recognition

software which would help them to construct the text they will represent in an audio format, which also applies to deaf students.

### 3.5.4. Alternative Activity

The activity presented in this section can be transformed depending on the teacher's focus. It could also be used in a 2nd of ESO class to practice the future tense (*will* and *be going to*). The students would search for a picture of an object, person, or even an unreal or fantastic character, such as an alien, on the Internet. Then, they will explain why they have chosen this thing or person to the teacher and once they are given the teacher's agreement, they can continue with the task. Hence, there is a process of brainstorming with the educator. If learners decide to choose an object, they could focus on the time it will be invented, the use it will have in the future, and how it will ease humans' lives. On the contrary, if they choose a picture of a person or a fantastic character, they could talk about what the planet will be like, regarding environment, traditions, or quality of life. This would enhance their creativity and fanciful ideas.

## 3.6. Flipgrid

Flipgrid is an awesome tool to foster conversation between students. Thus, it pretends to "encourage and empower every voice in [the] classroom" (Flipgrid, Inc, 2020). It "is where social learning happens" (Flipgrid, Inc, 2020). Moreover, it is used by millions of users, including educators, families, and students from all around the globe. This Web 2.0 tool "helps learners of all ages find their voices, share [them] and respect the diverse voices of others" (Flipgrid, Inc, 2020).

Through this application, users can record and share short videos, although, in the last version, the recording time has been amplified, which constitutes an advantage for learners. Flipgrid is simple to use, as teachers launch debates on different topics to the classroom and the students discuss on them. Educators create the so-called "Grids" and, inside them, they create different "Topics". Subsequently, they are shared with students via Google Classroom, by visiting a link and introducing the "Flip Code", or by scanning a QR code, among other possible options. Once the teacher shares it, the students will press the green button with a white cross which says "Tap to Record". By doing this, their camera will be brought up and they will be able to

record the answer to their prompt. The main characteristic of Flipgrid is that students can add stickies to tap in what they want to say and remember it while they are recording. When they are ready, they must click the red button, which says “Record”. Then, they can review it and, if they are sure of their final result, they can submit it by selecting a cover, importing an image, selecting a frame, or taking a selfie, which students can modify and decorate as they wish.

Thus, they record a video and upload it, they view their classmates’ videos, and they can respond to them with another short video. Therefore, Flipgrid enhances social practice and enables students to engage with the task and have fun at the same time. What is more, it “empowers student voice and builds global empathy through shared learning processes, stories and perspectives” (Flipgrid, Inc, 2020). However, the videos have the option to be or not to be shared with the classroom or being watched by the teacher before being uploaded and accessible for all the students.

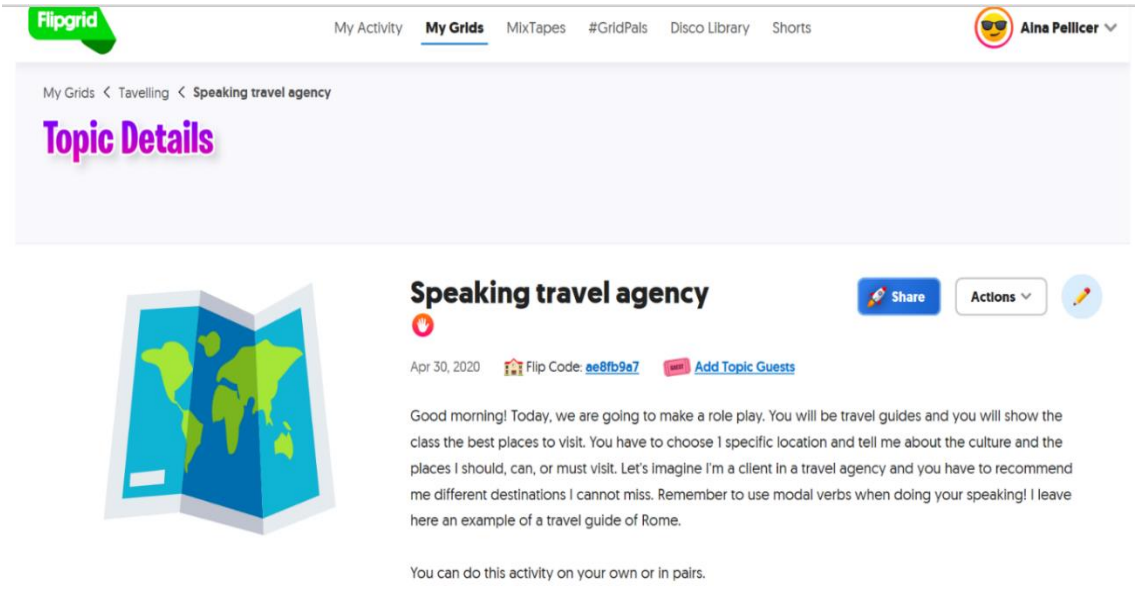
### 3.6.1. The Activity

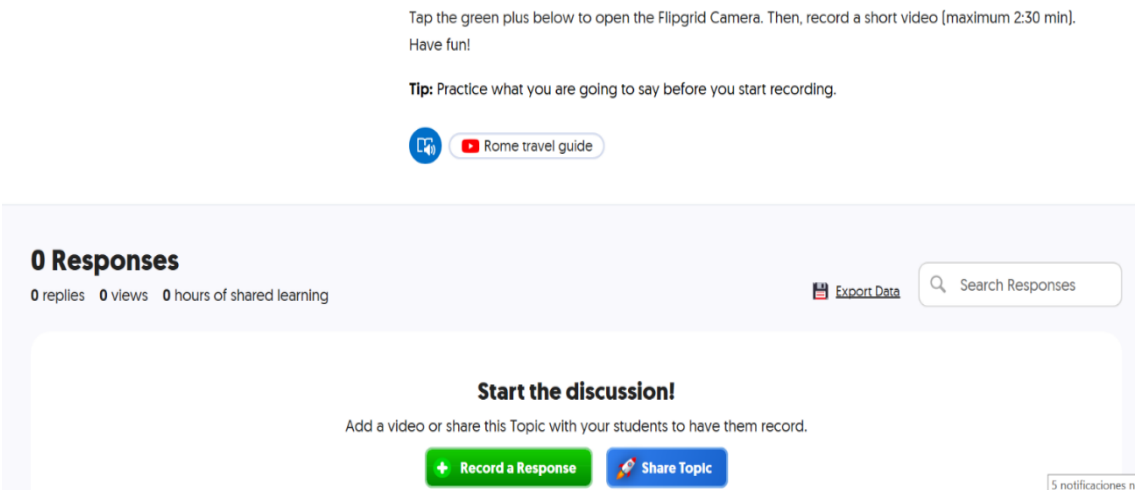
The activity created with Flipgrid is aimed at students of 3rd of ESO, in order to practice the grammar point of the unit, modal verbs, and to integrate it into the students’ speech. Considering that this tool is used to record videos, with unusual aids, students will have to record themselves for at least 2 minutes. The activity I propose focuses on the topic of travelling (https://flipgrid.com/ae8fb9a7). Students need to imagine that they are working in a travel agency and they need to recommend their clients the destinations they should visit, or the ones students think are worthier. This would depend on the place or destination they decide to focus on. This means that the location will be of their choice, so that they feel more comfortable talking about it. They must include modal verbs, stating what their clients should, ought to, might, may, can, could, or must visit. Therefore, they must do research beforehand, about the culture, history, and the most significant locations of the destination they have selected. Thus, as Tri and Nguyen (2014) express, “intelligent Searching (…) enables learners to search, organize and retrieve data in a more effective way” (p.34).

As far as the teacher needs to guide the students, he/she should give them an example of a travel guide. Hence, I have added a video from YouTube on the instructions of the Flipgrid. The narrator of this video talks about ten

different locations in Rome. However, the students only have to talk for about 2-3 minutes, as they will not focus on so many places. One of the most important aims of this activity, apart from integrating new grammar on the students' speech, is that adolescents acquire knowledge about other cultures without having to travel there physically. This becomes essential in the current world's situation, after the emergence of CoVid-19, in which obstacles are found to travel for pleasure. Moreover, since the videos can be shared with the class, all students can learn a lot from different cultures. However, depending on the diversity of the class, the videos will not be shared between students, but presented in class voluntarily. Thus, only those students who desire to present their Flipgrid will do it in front of the class. What is more, it is worth mentioning that this tool allows students to insert emojis into their videos. Hence, if there are students who prefer not to show their face, they can edit the video by introducing them. Moreover, they can also select the pixel mode or upload a picture.

This activity can be done individually or in pairs. Depending on the students' preferences. If they decide to do it in pairs, one could acquire the role of the client and the other of the travel agency worker. As far as time is concerned, if they do this activity in pairs, the video should last, at least, 4 minutes. Regarding time, the application called Pro Metronome helps students to practice their speeches, suggesting the use of various filler words and searching the perfect pace of the speech. It is a way for students to learn how to organise their ideas.






### 3.6.2. Evaluation

This activity will be assessed by following an evaluation rubric (see Appendix 7), in which aspects related to the use of modal verbs, pronunciation, fluency, coherence and cohesion, time, and interaction and communication skills between peers (in the case of doing it in pairs) are contemplated. This rubric can also be included on the instructions, inside Flipgrid.

For this activity, 'audio feedback' will be borne in mind. "Digital technologies make audio feedback easier to create, deliver, and store" (Walker & White, 2013, p. 134). Considering that students will upload a video using Flipgrid, it would be an excellent idea to give them feedback also recording a video. In this way, if they see that the teacher does this, they could feel more comfortable when receiving feedback and the interaction would become more personal, as "[teachers] are likely to find [themselves] entering into a conversation with the student" (p. 134). The advantages of this type of feedback are that, for a teacher who is familiarised with it, it would "be quicker to produce than written feedback" (p. 134). Additionally, the teacher "address[es] the student directly and give[s] more detailed explanations than in written feedback" (p. 134).

In the case of sharing the videos with the class, as Flipgrid allows the teacher to activate this option, students will receive feedback from both the teacher and the classmates. They can answer to each other by recording videos. Hence, audio feedback is still enhanced.

### 3.6.3. Benefits

The use of technology in the English classroom, specifically using this video-based tool, provides students the opportunity to develop the speaking skill “by repetition, by practicing speaking in smaller groups (…), and by making sure that everybody in the class takes part” (p. 39). This is possible, as “video is increasingly becoming more popular in social sciences as a tool for increasing the participation of young people in civil life and in education, especially for those who show a higher degree of disaffection towards social institutions” (Susinos et al., 2019, p. 52). Thus, it could be affirmed that Flipgrid increases youngsters’ engagement for learning (Chaka & Nkhobo, 2019, p. 19). Moreover, it is easy to use, it enhances students’ creativity, and it adapts to the learners’ necessities (Hammer, 2018).

With Flipgrid students can make an oral presentation through a video while guiding themselves with interactive notes which help them to remember what to say and then delete them from the screen. Besides, learners practice speaking while also writing, reading, and, finally, listening, when they listen to their own and their classmates’ videos. Furthermore, as students can comment on their classmates’ videos, if the teacher selects this option, this tool promotes discussion and individual reflection. It “can be used to prompt students to articulate their thoughts and ideas in a more natural, perhaps spontaneous way” (Mahmoudi & Gronseth, 2019, p. 147). Thus, Flipgrid enables classmates to know each other better, which enhances a class trusting environment (Koivula, 2015, p. 85).

Considering concrete benefits, this activity is particularly beneficial for students with ADHD, as Flipgrid motivates acting. It enables students with difficulties to focus their attention for a relatively long period of time and to be guided by sticky notes. This helps them concentrate and complete the hazardous task of making an oral presentation. Moreover, since this activity includes the possibility to present it in class, these learners are able to find their opportunity to get absolute attention. Besides, Flipgrid enables learners to prepare a dramatic presentation, which has shown to have positive effects over students with dyslexia (Hudson, 2016, p. 44), and to reinforce grammar and vocabulary. What is more, with this ICT tool students can share opinions by sending videos to their classmates. Therefore, they reinforce their communicative skills. This is essential for all students, but especially for those

with special educational needs, in particular, talented students, learners with OCD and learners with ASD and Asperger Syndrome.

#### 3.6.4. Alternative Activity

One alternative activity developed with Flipgrid and aimed at 3rd of ESO students could be centred on the topic of environment. To do the activity, students should act as if they were environmentalists who want to improve the world. Moreover, they need to contribute with feasible measures to take action against pollution. To do this, they need to introduce the conditionals into their speech, in order to practice the grammatical point of the unit. Thus, by doing a role-play, students increase their concern about a sever real-life problem, the pollution of our planet, and learn how to soften its effects.

### 3.7. Instagram

Finally, the last ICT tool allows students to be concerned about the uses of social media, specifically the social network called Instagram. In recent years, Instagram has become one of the most popular social networks from around the world. Moreover, IGTV videos are up to date, as they allow users to express themselves without any time limit. Although Instagram is used for leisure and entertainment, I suggest using it as an educational tool.

#### 3.7.1. The Activity

This activity would raise students' awareness about an appropriate use of social networks by creating an English profile, posting photos with descriptions, and following one's classmates and the English teacher. Hence, learners would practice all skills by writing the descriptions, reading the others' publications, listening to others' videos and speaking when recording their own videos. This activity has been designed for a 4th of ESO class. Since this application can be used by adolescents over 14 years old, students from this course meet the regulatory age to register. Moreover, owing to their age, they tend to be more aware of the appropriate use of social networks than younger students. However, there are some exceptions to this statement. Thus, this activity will help them understand that this application is not only a social network in which people interact for fun, enjoyment, and distraction, but it is also a source of knowledge. What is more, the task is aimed at reinforcing class cohesion.

For this activity, the teacher needs to create an Instagram account for himself/herself and for the students. All the accounts would be registered with the domain teachingenglish_name/surname of the teacher/students. By doing this, the teacher will create all the accounts and will give each student an account with a specific password. These accounts will be private, so that the students and the teacher follow each other, but anyone else is allowed to see and comment on what is posted on these accounts.

More than a specific activity that could be done during some days, it could be a project since the beginning to the end of the academic year or during one specific semester of the course. It consists in the teacher and the students posting pictures, videos, or boomerangs together with a description, which would be linked to each post. It is worth mentioning that the teacher's participation could trigger students' motivation to post content. This will be made once a week, if possible, at the beginning of it. It can be a photograph which inspires students something special or a picture that reflects the learners' feelings. In the description, they will have to specify the reason why they post that particular content. In addition, they can also upload videos narrating experiences. For instance, if they have gone on an excursion with the school, they can describe their experiences and adventures. This activity could be done individually, in pairs, and even combining both options during the course. In the case of doing this activity in pairs, the students involved need to report it to the teacher, so that he/she has it into consideration and to make sure that they have been recorded together with the consent of all students.

They can interact with each other, leaving comments on the posts. It is important that the teacher supervises the interaction between classmates, checking the accounts and assuring that everything is under control. At the end of the week, the most outstanding aspects of the publications could be shared and discussed in class.

### 3.7.2. Evaluation

This activity or project will be evaluated following a teacher's observation checklist (see Appendix 8). The teacher will focus on aspects, such as participation posting pictures and describing them, interaction with other classmates (commenting on their publications), and originality. Form is not so important as meaning in an activity that focuses on emotions and that enables

students to express their feelings. In this type of activity, interrupting them or correcting them all the time could make them regress to non-participation. Consequently, the teacher will not focus on the grammatical errors, but on the interaction between peers. In the case of completing positively the aspects mentioned in the checklist, their progress will be reflected by using from 1 to 5 stars, being 5 stars the maximum punctuation. “We might speculate that, as a result, students are now getting much more feedback about the content of their writing as well as language” (Walker & White, 2013, p. 77), as learners get feedback from both classmates and the teacher, in the form of a comment, video, picture, or audio post.

The creation of this checklist is essential for all students, but especially for those with dyslexia. As far as evaluation of these pupils is concerned, owing to their inability to concentrate on both content and form (Hudson, 2016, p. 31), their assessment should focus more on meaning. The main aim of this activity/project is to encourage learners to socialise and strengthen the class bond.

In addition, all the evaluation rubrics from the designed activities in this didactic proposal are crucial, in particular, for the students with ASD and Asperger Syndrome and OCD. The fact that I have included rubrics of assessment or a checklist for each activity, meets their necessity of the teacher being very direct and clear giving the instructions of the task and stipulating the way they will be assessed. In this way, they know exactly what is expected from them. Furthermore, the constant need of students with OCD for certainty and clarification might provoke continuous interruptions (p. 161). Therefore, the teacher must make them reduce their worries as much as possible, by giving clear instructions. The rubrics and the checklist in each designed activity would provide them this desired calming effect. By doing this, their obsession with perfection could become a virtue, as their hard work could result in an excellent outcome. Moreover, they can stress their great strength, organisation (p. 163).

### 3.7.3. Benefits

As far as knowledge acquisition is concerned, in this activity, the different verb tenses are worked on; the present simple and continuous when talking about current feelings, the past simple, present perfect, or past continuous when talking about past experiences, the conditionals to talk about what they would

like to do or what they have done, the future tense to express their future prospects, etc. Using Instagram encourages the improvement of the students' speaking and writing skills (Shazali, Shamsudin & Yunus, 2019, p. 88). More importantly, learners increase language proficiency while being creative and strengthening social bonds. Thus, it is a very complete activity or project which allows students who are about to graduate to review all the verb tenses and to use them properly by creating authentic outputs. In fact, Instagram turns to be "an effective tool for developing learners' vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy" (Shazali et al., 2019, p. 88).

Additionally, extended learning permits students to develop critical thinking, by discussing and exchanging opinions with their classmates (Tri & Nguyen, 2014, p. 34). This type of social networks, which involve instant messaging, usually influence students' confidence. This might be because they are familiarised with them, as social media "are (…) part of our everyday communication tools" (Walker & White, 2013, p. 126). Hence, they "may well be useful for practicing the conceptualization and formulation stages of spoken language" (p. 28). This could trigger students' participation, especially of those who have more difficulties expressing themselves. They can do it in a less direct way, although they know that the rest of the class is observing. Therefore, Instagram could enhance emotional education, a relevant aspect in the life of students with SEN. This can produce very positive effects, since it gives all students the opportunity to socialize, comment, discuss, share, and express perceptions or sensations in front of the class, without feeling intimidated by speaking in public. Indeed, previous works indicate students' positive attitude towards the use of this mobile application to improve their English writing (Handayani, 2017; Akhiar, 2017; Shazali, Shamsudin & Yunus, 2019) and their motivation for learning (Anggraeni, 2017, p. 68).

As it is the case of Edublogs, Instagram can also be understood as a community. These learning tools allow students to strengthen their social bonds and to enhance a good class environment (Akhiar, 2017, p. 65-66). Moreover, through them, learners can update their personal news.

Therefore, Instagram "offers [users] a learning experience that they enjoy" (Handayani, 2017) and it is specifically beneficial in EFL conductive learning environments, in which this tool "is used by students and teacher for

educational aims appropriately" (p. 28). Thus, it could be said that this activity/project is beneficial for all students, without exception, because it can be engaging and motivating for all of them. It can be adapted to the students' pace and level of development, "using high-interest content (…) to create high engagement and creativity" (Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002, p. xvi). Indeed, Instagram allows all these aspects to be applied in education, as a real-world and a remarkably familiar application for students is used.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, although there is a constant progress regarding attention to diversity in education, there is still a long path to be covered to accomplish an inclusive classroom which adapts to all students, especially in Spain. In this process, the teachers' role is vital, as their education conceptions and beliefs would influence their methodology. This is the main reason why the effectiveness of using technology in the classroom will depend on them. An adequate use of ICT tools and the teachers' motivation and enhancement to learn new methodologies are the key to achieve change. Thus, this didactic proposal is aimed at educators who desire to continue developing professionally and to focus on the needs of all learners. As it can be observed, the ICT tools presented in this dissertation have a high multisensory character and try to please all learning styles. The activities focus on improving all students' learning outcomes, more specifically, on their writing and speaking skills in the subject of English. Moreover, they also centre on social, cultural, and emotional aspects which result crucial for all students, but, more specifically, for students with special educational needs.

Therefore, this proposal has highlighted the benefits the activities designed with Edublogs, StoryJumper, VoiceThread, Funny Movie Maker, Flipgrid, and Instagram have for students. Moreover, it has specifically pinpointed in which ways each activity could present positive effects over specific students with SEN, which include learners with ADHD, high capacities, dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and deafness. However, further research must be conducted on the results obtained from the application of this didactic proposal. What is more, due to the relevance of technology nowadays and the upgradable

character of this type of study, further investigation should be supervised on inclusive methods which approach to all 21st century students.

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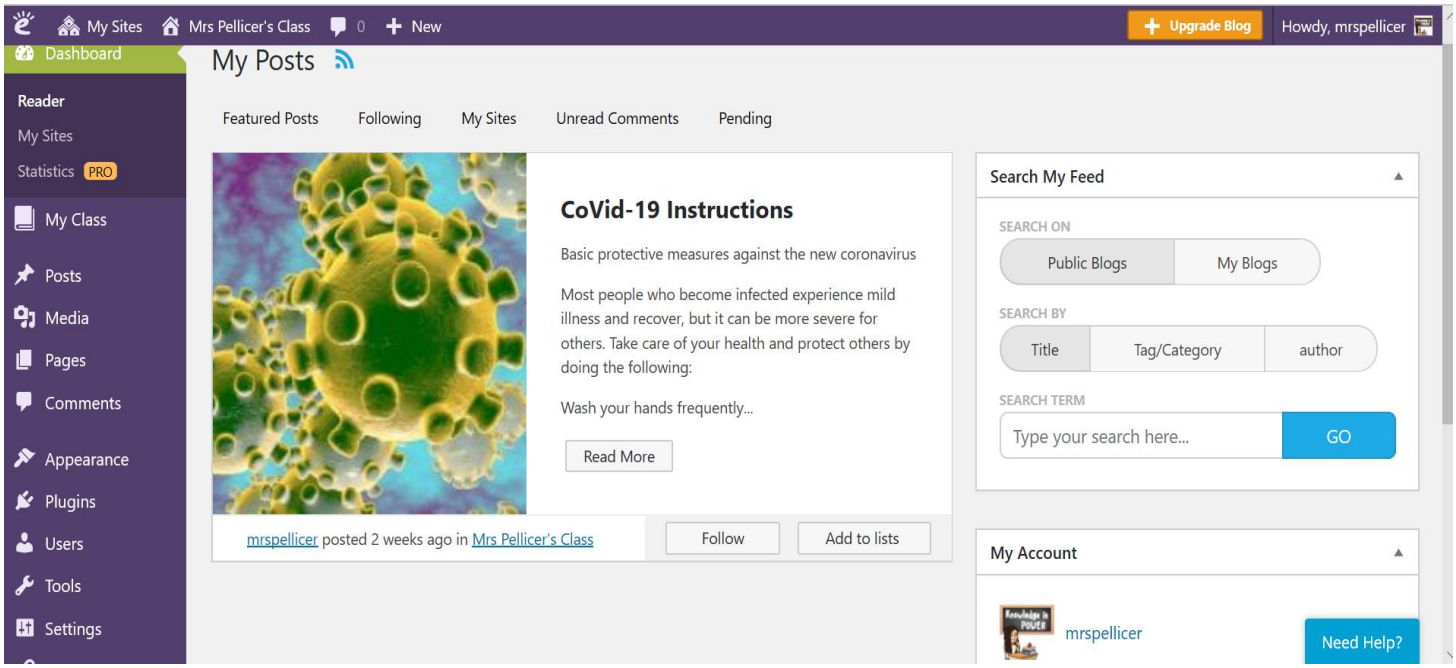
## 6. Appendixes

### Appendix 1

What the teacher sees from his/her account, in this case, mine:




(Pellicer, 2020).

### Appendix 2. Evaluation Rubric Edublogs

| | EXCELLENT (9-10) | GOOD (6-8) | NEEDS TO IMPROVE (5 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Participation** | The student comments on the teacher's post or posts in the class blog and comments on others' publications<br>+1 point for participating in the debate | The student comments on the post or posts in the class blog<br>+1 point for participating in the debate | The student does not comment on the teacher's post or does not post in the class blog<br>+1 point for participating in the debate |
| **Coherence and cohesion** | Correct use of connectors along the text | - Overuse of connectors, but correctly used (the meaning)<br>- Little use of connectors | Bad connection between paragraphs or non-sense |
| **Length** | 2 paragraphs (5-6 lines each) | 2 paragraphs (3-4 lines each) | 2 paragraphs (2-3 lines each) |
| **Grammar** | Use of correct grammar structures and verb tenses, in this case, using both modal verbs and the three types of conditionals | Use of correct grammar structures and verb tenses, in this case, using the three types of conditionals | Poor grammar structures, frequent basic errors, or no use of conditionals and modal verbs. |

### Appendix 3. Rubric to Evaluate Students' Competences (it applies to all the proposed activities)

| COMPETENCE | EXCELLENT | GOOD | NEEDS TO IMPROVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Linguistic and communicative** | - The student is highly fluent in English<br>- The student pronounces correctly<br>-The student makes a perfect use of grammar both in written and oral production<br>- The student uses a wide range of vocabulary both in written and oral production | - The student is fluent in English<br>- The student pronounces correctly. However, he/she constantly shows hesitation<br>- The student makes a good use of grammar, but he/she makes several but not severe errors | - The student continuously makes grammar errors<br>- The student struggles a lot with pronunciation and/or coherence and cohesion<br>- The student does not use the English language to talk to their classmates |
| **Learning to learn** | - At the end of the activity, the student demonstrates a high level of acquisition of the content seen.<br>- The student is concerned about the treated topics in each activity | - The student demonstrates an average level of acquisition of the content seen<br>- The student is aware of the importance the chosen topics of the activities have | - The student does not seem to have acquired any knowledge<br>-The student does not show any kind of concern about any chosen topic |
| **Autonomy and own initiative** | - The student presents feasible solutions to solve real-life problems<br>- The student shows a high level of critical thinking | - The student presents solutions to solve real-life problems, but they are unrealistic. However, he/she participates in the activity and tries to do his/her best<br>- The student does not seem to seriously reflect on the chosen topic | - The student does not participate in the activity at all<br>- The student refuses to give his/her opinion on the matter |
| **Social and civic** | - The student shows a high degree of participation both in the written and oral tasks<br>- The student is able to work as part of a team<br>- The student respects others' opinions | - The student participates in the activities. However, he/she does not seem to share ideas, but respects others' opinions<br>- The student contributes briefly to the class debates and discussions | - The student rejects to work in groups or does not participate in taking group decisions<br>-The student is reluctant to talk with the classmates |
| **Digital** | - The student has a high capability to follow the instructions and develop the tasks with each ICT tool<br>- The student follows some strategies (previously explained by the teacher) to look for the adequate information on the Internet | - The student finds it hard to use the ICT tools. However, he/she finds a solution to the problem (by seeking for the teacher's or a partner's help) and is able to develop the activities with some aids | - The student is not able to develop the activities with the ICT tools and he/she does not do anything to tackle the problem |

## Appendix 4. Evaluation Rubric VoiceThread

| | EXCELLENT (9-10) | GOOD (6-8) | NEEDS TO IMPROVE (5 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Coherence, cohesion, and pronunciation** | The student pronounces correctly and clearly all the words without pausing and with an adequate voice pitch | The student pronounces correctly and clearly almost all the time, with a correct voice pitch, but pauses several times | The student does not pronounce words correctly, the speech is barely understandable or unclear, and he/she continuously pauses |
| **Format and originality** | The student chooses 5 pictures which represent 5 different facts about the animal | The student chooses 3 pictures which represent 3 different facts about the animal | The student chooses 2 or less pictures which represent 2 (or less) facts about the animal |

## Appendix 5. Evaluation Rubrics StoryJumper

### Storybook

| | EXCELLENT (9-10) | GOOD (6-8) | NEEDS TO IMPROVE (5 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grammar** | - No grammar mistakes<br>- Correct use of modal verbs and vocabulary of healthy and unhealthy food | - Barely any or several grammar mistakes<br>- Correct use of modal verbs and little vocabulary of healthy and unhealthy food | - Great amount of grammar mistakes<br>- Truly little use of modal verbs and vocabulary related to the unit (healthy and junk food) |
| **Structure** | -The story is clearly organised:<br>*Introduction<br>*Body<br>*Conclusion<br>- Coherence and cohesion | - The story follows a structure<br>- Coherence and cohesion | -The story itself does not show a clear structure<br>-Lack of coherence and cohesion in some of the parts |
| **Format, originality, and creativity** | It does meet all the requirements:<br>-Book cover, dedicatory page, ten pages and the back cover<br>-Maximum of two speech bubbles per page<br>-Props and scenes of their own search plus default ones<br>-Addition of their own recording | It does meet almost all the requirements:<br>-Ten pages<br>-Maximum of two speech bubbles per page<br>-Props and scenes of their own search plus default ones<br>-Addition of their own recording | It does meet most of the requirements:<br>-Less than seven pages<br>-More than two speech bubbles per page or no bubbles in one page<br>-Only default props and scenes<br>-No voice recording |

### Storybook's oral presentation (extra points)

| | EXCELLENT (9-10) | GOOD (6-8) | NEEDS TO IMPROVE (5) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Body language** | Eye contact with the public | Little eye contact with the public | No eye contact with the public |
| **Information** | The student says what the Storybook is about before showing it to the class, without making grammar errors | The student says what the Storybook is about before showing it to the class, making some grammar errors | The student presents the Storybook without presenting it, but shows it to the class |

(Presenting the activity involves a great effort for some students. This is the reason why the minimum grade is a 5)

## Appendix 6. Evaluation Rubric Funny Movie Maker

| | EXCELLENT (9-10) | GOOD (6-8) | NEEDS TO IMPROVE (5 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pronunciation, coherence, and cohesion** | The student pronounces correctly and clearly all the words without pausing and with an adequate voice pitch | The student pronounces correctly and clearly almost all the time, with an adequate voice pitch, but pauses several times | The student does not pronounce words correctly or the speech is barely understandable, and pauses all the time |
| **Grammar** | Use of correct grammar structures and verb tenses, in this case, the past simple tense | Use of correct grammar structures and verb tenses, in this case, the past simple tense. But there are some mistakes | Poor grammar structures, frequent basic errors, or no use of past simple |

## Appendix 7. Evaluation Rubric Flipgrid

| | EXCELLENT (9-10) | GOOD (6-8) | NEEDS TO IMPROVE (5 or less) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grammar** | Use of correct grammar structures and verb tenses, in this case, modal verbs | Use of correct grammar structures and verb tenses, in this case, modal verbs. But there are some mistakes | Poor grammar structures, frequent basic errors, or no use of modal verbs |
| **Pronunciation and fluency** | The student pronounces correctly all the words without pausing and with an adequate voice pitch | The student pronounces correctly almost all the time, with a correct voice pitch, but pauses several times | The student does not pronounce words correctly or the speech is barely understandable, and pauses all the time |
| **Coherence and cohesion** | Correct use of discourse markers along the speech | - Overuse of connectors, but correctly used (the meaning)<br>- Little use of discourse markers | Bad connection between paragraphs or non-sense |
| **Time** | - The video lasts 2-3 minutes (if it is done individually)<br>- The video lasts 4-5 minutes (if it is done in pairs) | - The video lasts 1-1:30 minutes (if it is done individually)<br>- The video lasts 2-3 minutes (if it is done in pairs) | - The video lasts less than 1 minute (if it is done individually)<br>- The video lasts 2 or less minutes (if it is done in pairs) |
| **Managing interaction (if the activity is done in pairs)** | - The students are coordinated<br>- They respect their turn to speak and do not overlap<br>- Both speak the same amount of time<br>- They help each other if needed | - They respect their turn to speak and do not overlap<br>- They help each other if needed | - The students are not coordinated<br>- They do not respect their turn to speak; thus, they overlap<br>- One speaks more time than the other<br>- They stay quiet if one of them needs help |

## Appendix 8. Checklist Instagram

### Checklist

| | NO/ ☆☆☆☆☆ |
|---|---|
| **Participation** | - Posting pictures →<br>- Describing pictures → |
| **Interaction with other classmates** | - Commenting on others' publications → |
| **Originality** | |