MASTER'S THESIS

AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence is said to predict the communicative performance of students of a foreign language. For this reason, social and emotional learning (SEL) is a field of study that is increasingly being applied in schools around the world. In Spain, emotional skills have not been paid much attention to teaching English. This is evidenced by the lack of studies on SEL practices in the academic environment. Nevertheless, the current society demands more attention to social and emotional skills among young learners, which could be applied to a high school setting. On the one hand, the theoretical part of this research paper is aimed at explaining the benefits of addressing emotional intelligence in high school through a social and emotional learning approach. On the other hand, the objective of the second part is to present some activities to illustrate how SEL could be applied in secondary education to enhance the student's speaking abilities in the English language while boosting their emotional state.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

Teenagers are a group of risk that is very vulnerable to emotions. It is known that during adolescence students start to become emotionally independent, yet in the process they have to deal with emotional distress and anxiety that can lead to identity conflicts (Trentacosta & Izard, 2020). Indeed, the emotional state affects deeply how students behave and perform in the academic environment.

Many scientific studies have demonstrated that students who are low in emotional intelligence (EI) have more difficulties communicating in a foreign language (Adams & Richie, 2017; Martín, 2016). In the academic setting in our country, students struggle to communicate in the foreign language because they have a lack of confidence and self-esteem (Zafra, 2019). Therefore, it seems evident that teenagers need emotional support to improve their communication abilities, not only in the academic setting but also in real life.

Education in Spain has omitted EI up until very recently when key competencies were included in the Curriculum for Foreign Languages (Spanish Organic Law, 8/2013). However, there is still very scarce research on the effectiveness of applying emotional education in our country because it has barely been applied. Nevertheless, at this moment in time, it is more necessary than ever to provide students with the best tools to improve their emotional state, which could be done through applying social emotional learning (SEL).

1.1 Justification

The outbreak of Covid-19 has had a great impact on the emotional state of high school students, yet school subjects continue to be taught the same way, focusing on memorising contents and doing exams. This should make people reconsider some changes that must occur in the educational system to meet the emotional demands of high school students.

Social emotional learning has been said to improve the emotional and social skills of high school students through studies, reports and surveys (CASEL, 2017; CASEL, 2018; CASEL, 2019). Some short-term benefits include a better attitude of students and a positive classroom climate. As for the long-term benefits, a higher civic engagement and healthier relationships must be highlighted (CASEL, 2020). Indeed, in the field of English language learning, this approach has been demonstrated to improve the communicative performance of students (Adams and Richie, 2017; Crisafully, 2020; Niehaus & Adelson, 2013).

In addition, social emotional learning deals with five core competencies of emotional intelligence, which are self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, social skills, and empathy. Developing these essential skills can help students not only to improve their general well-being, but also perform better in the English classroom because they feel safer and more comfortable. (Crisafully, 2020). Therefore, the didactic proposal presented in this paper will focus on the different competencies of SEL because they could heighten the emotional intelligence of students and improve their communication performance in English.

1.2 Objectives

Having said that, the main objective of this paper is to create a didactic proposal that could help students improve their communication skills in English based on the theory of emotional intelligence, which is going to be exposed in the second part of the paper. With this purpose in mind, the fulfillment of some specific objectives is necessary to successfully achieve the main goal of the paper and to understand the choice of the activities in this didactic proposal. These objectives cover part one of the paper and are the ones that follow:
- Understanding emotional intelligence and its five competencies
- Providing evidence on the effectiveness of social emotional learning in real-life and the school context.

- Demonstrating the necessity of incorporating social emotional learning in the English language classroom.
- Analysing the role of the teacher when dealing with social emotional learning.

2. Theoretical background

This section is going to deal with the theory of emotional intelligence and social and emotional learning. It has been divided in five different sections. To begin, the first two sections will focus on emotional intelligence and the five competencies that compose the discipline. Then, the paper will dive into the applications of emotional intelligence in the school context while referring to the studies that have corroborated its usefulness. The next sections of the paper will focus on the theory of social emotional learning in the school setting and the reasons why incorporating SEL in the foreign language learning context. Finally, the role of teachers and the educational community will be emphasized as predictors of success in a social emotional learning program.

2.1 Introduction to emotional intelligence and its components

Emotional intelligence has never been as important as it is in the current society. Emotions influence people's perceptions and responses in their daily life (Diaz & Osorio, 2017). People strive to be happy, to find peace and joy, and avoid situations that may trigger negative emotions. Feelings drive people towards having better relationships and a greater sense of fulfilment with themselves. It encourages them to work towards their goals and become better human beings. Moreover, emotional appealing encourages customers to buy a new product, increases the satisfaction of employees in a business, their commitment, and sense of belonging. Therefore, it seems that emotional intelligence is crucial in people's lives.

There have been several attempts to provide a definition for emotional intelligence (Jung, 1921; Steiner, 1984; Payne, 1986; Gardner, 1993; Goleman

1995). The first accurate definition was understood from an individualistic perspective as the ability of dealing with emotions effectively to make one's daily life pleasurable (Bar-On, 1988). Salovey and Mayer (1990) completed the definition since they thought that it was not only the ability to manage the individual's emotions but also being able to cope with other people's feelings. In 1997, Bar-One (1997) defined it as "an array of non-cognitive abilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p.14).

The most recent and complete definition is the one provided by Alshebami and Alamri (2020) who defined it as "the ability of individuals to recognize their emotions and those of others, distinguish between different feelings and tag them suitably, use emotional information to direct behaviour and thinking, adjust and manage emotions to familiarize themselves with environments or achieve objectives" (p.2275).

Many studies have demonstrated the positive effects of a high level of emotional intelligence. One of them states that people who are emotionally intelligent know how to define their objectives, possess a better level of self-discipline, manage stress, motivate themselves, work better with other people, learn more, and achieve higher academic results (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). Besides, Zoltan (2001) claimed that an emotionally competent person has more abilities to prioritize the things they want to accomplish in life. Another piece of research states that EI is a key aspect in the school environment, since students who show a positive attitude have stronger relations with their classmates and have higher academic ambition (Díaz & Osorio, 2017).

Daniel Goleman (1995) is one of the most renowned authors that have investigated emotional intelligence. According to this author, emotional intelligence begins in early childhood, but it is shaped continuously by the experiences later in life. This author stated that students who perform poorly at school lack some social and emotional abilities. His theory's validity is supported

by studies that confirm that students who fail at school and in social tasks have a low self-esteem and self-efficacy (Nobles, 2004). Therefore, taking Goleman's theory as a starting point, it can be said that dealing with emotional intelligence from a very young age could be a way of ensuring success of students not only academically but also personally.

The representation and measurement of emotional intelligence is done through the Emotional Quotient (EQ). The most reliable way to measure a person's emotional intelligence is through standardized tests or questionnaires (Langley Group, 2015). One of them is the Bar-On Model (2006), which is the most widely used source to measure EI.

According to Goleman there are five competencies that define one's emotional intelligence and relate to personal experience, psychological responses, social interaction, among others (Diaz & Osorio, 2017). These competencies are self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills, which will be described in detail in the following pages of this paper.

2.1.1 Self-awareness

Self-awareness refers to the ability of being aware of one's own feelings and emotions in the present moment. It also means knowing the impact that emotions may have on others and to have a mindset of personal growth. Self-awareness is learning how to notice feelings, mood, and energy levels at a specific moment in order to avoid disruptive conducts. Moreover, being self-aware shows that people know how someone feels in different situations, so that they avoid the actions that trigger negative emotions. Having self-awareness can help to know the way in which a specific action or behaviour can affect other people. This ability is crucial to manage oneself and know the strengths and weaknesses to reach an individual's full potential. It is said that people who are high in this skill know how to slow down when they feel a negative emotion and explore the reasons

why they might be feeling it. Therefore, they are usually able to control themselves and avoid impulsive behaviours (Adams & Richie, 2017).

In the school context, self-awareness is crucial, so students can take full advantage of their learning. For this reason, dealing with self-awareness in class can help them to connect the tasks they perform at school with their interests, reflect on the goals they want to achieve, and get to know themselves better. (CASEL, 2017).

2.1.2 Self-management

If self-awareness means recognizing one's emotions, self-regulation is how a person manages them. People with high self-regulation skills know how to deal with stressful and difficult situations because they find the right strategies to cope with them. They are normally good at controlling impulsivity, and they do not permit their thoughts to control themselves. Self-regulation means not attacking other people with negative comments and regulate behaviour.

It is alleged that teenagers often act without paying attention to the consequences because they lack emotional management. This can lead to serious problems in and outside school, such as family conflicts, teacher-student arguments, peer fights, etc. In addition, they are said to prefer instant reward instead of delaying gratification. In other words, it is the first reaction that drives their behaviour instead of thinking carefully (Leuker & Van den Boss, 2016).

On the contrary, a self-regulated person is flexible with people and adapts to the circumstances of life with a resilient attitude. They have clear values that define personality and act according to them. Therefore, when it comes to decision-making, they usually focus on their values to make the choice that seems correct or right for them (Neba, 2019). They do not blame other people very often and admit mistakes while facing the consequences.

In the school environment, having self-regulation skills helps pupils to calm themselves when they have exams and assignments. In addition, when it comes to organizing for the study period, they cope well with anxiety and fear. For this reason, it is paramount that students work on developing regulation skills in order to focus their attention on important duties. Indeed, he school can be a place in which students can learn how to manage stress and anxiety, so they can succeed academically, participate in the classroom confidently, and create a positive and healthy school environment (Adams & Richie, 2017; CASEL, 2017).

2.1.3 Motivation

Self-motivation is one of the most studied areas of emotional intelligence. According to Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) it is the "process that arouses, energizes, directs and sustains behaviour and performance" (p.2). A motivated teenager is driven to set goals and achieve them with a high commitment to what interest them. Once they have set them, they will be able to break them down into smaller actions and account for their achievements. In the long run, accomplishments will drive students towards setting larger purposes and new goals (CASEL, 2020). However, to keep motivation high, students should write down the obstacles they could find and the actions to overcome them. This strategy, known as mental contrasting, strengthens mental associations, increases energy and in turn leads to better performance so that students become more motivationally intelligent (Woop, 2021).

Highly motivated people usually have initiative and see the future optimistically contrary to passive people. They are continuously finding new opportunities, and they do not wait for the perfect moment to happen since they actively find new ambitions. It is common that self-motivated people manage their time well because they strive to be productive. Nevertheless, they know how to prioritize and be assertive when they believe a specific action will not help them achieve their goals (Adams & Richie, 2017).

Some scientific studies have demonstrated that positive thoughts of motivated people lead to positive feelings, which trigger positive actions and results. Since language influences feelings, changing negative feelings to positive ones could ultimately increase self-esteem and motivation (Lifeworks, 2018).

This skill is key in the school environment to ensure the students' willingness to perform successfully. Therefore, it is crucial to create a positive environment in which students could demonstrate competencies and do challenging tasks that stimulate them and that are easy enough to complete. As it will be mentioned further on in this paper, the teacher has a crucial role when it comes to increasing the students' motivation (MindTools, 2021).

2.1.4 Empathy

Empathy is defined as "the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). This skill includes an unconscious dimension, which is the recognition of other people's feelings, but also a conscious part that involves being able to predict other people's behaviour. (Gerdes, Lietz & Segal, 2011).

A person who does not have empathy can change the brain and thought patterns with a lot of commitment. Accordingly, it is crucial that in the academic setting, students engage in activities that encourage embodying another person's social and cultural experiences thoughtfully in order to change the neurons in the brain. Affective learning based on experiences at a visual, auditory, and somatic levels can help students increase empathy because they might feel experiences they have never had before (Gerdes, Lietz & Segal, 2011).

Gaining understanding of other people's feelings is transformative in that students become involved in the world that surrounds them, and they become

more concerned in issues such as politics, the environment, racism and so on and so forth. Therefore, it fosters a deeper understanding of the society and creates greater belonging and involvement in the place they live in (Wade, 2019).

In the educational field, teenagers who have empathy have more opportunities to succeed because they can establish deeper relationships with their classmates, understand differences between them and have greater tolerance. It can also lead to better communication skills, lower likelihood of aggression, emotional disorders, and less bullying (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2021). Thus, dealing with empathy in the educational setting is imperative to promote "the growth of civically responsible individuals who base decisions (...) on the thoughtful exploration of the experiences and backgrounds of society as a whole" (Wade, 2019, p.14).

2.1.5 Social skills

Social skills are extremely important in our current society since we were naturally born to make bonds with other people. Having social skills implies communicating effectively with other people, having a helping behaviour, co-operating, being altruist and having conflict-resolution skills (Zsolnai & Kasik, 2014). Social skills ensure better interpersonal relations that may lead to general well-being.

Having good social abilities includes two different competencies. On the one hand, quality verbal and non-verbal communication, and, on the other hand, social perception. The former refers to how we communicate with others, which includes posture, social distance, facial expression, eye contact, speech tone, etc. The latter refers to the way we perceive our counterparts, particularly if we have empathy, solidarity, etc. (Zsolnai & Kasik, 2014).

It is widely known that social skills can be acquired through the learning process in high schools. For this reason, the school context is ideal to encourage students to strengthen their interpersonal relationships. It is accepted that students with

prosocial behaviour experience positive relationships with both their teachers and classmates, and they are more participative in the lessons. Moreover, they are usually more successful in the educational and social environment since they know how to cope with different personalities, and they are able to get along with those who share different beliefs with an attitude of acceptance. In addition, it has been proved that social skills are associated with higher academic achievement (Mindtools, 2021).

2.2 Emotional intelligence in the school context

The influence of emotional intelligence in the educational field has increased enormously in the last decade. The pandemic has encouraged teachers and researchers to give more importance to emotional intelligence among the youth, due to their emotional vulnerability. It is a fact that EI has a crucial role in the students' academic achievement and success. For this reason, research is now focusing on how to raise the emotional state of teenagers in order to help them feel comfortable in the educational environment and take advantage of the school experience.

Many studies have demonstrated the relationship between the individual's high emotional intelligence with better academic success (Pishdagam, 2009; Balluerka et al., 2013). Martín (2016) stated that a healthy mental condition leads to more efficient cognitive processes. What is more, in Spain there was a study conducted by Sánchez-Álvarez, Berrios and Extremera (2020) in the Basque Country among 20,000 secondary education students that showed that EI is associated with higher academic grades. Therefore, they realized that being able to recognize feelings, and having problem-solving skills is fundamental in the school context. In addition, it was manifested that student who adapted best in the school environment, had higher motivation and self-regulation skills. In addition, teamwork was a valuable method of learning among students with high EI since they reinforced interpersonal relations, and they became more affectionate with their mates.

Another piece of research was carried out by Costa and Faria (2020) in Oporto whose participants were 520 students aged 14 and 18 years old. What they found is that the ability of managing the emotions of oneself and other people can help students cope with negative feelings effectively. In addition, students who master emotions are more likely to cope with the complex academic demands in high school. Surprisingly, the study also revealed that a great number of students with high EI predicted negative academic results at the end of the school year, even though literature says that optimism is one of the features that makes students succeed. This feature suggests that motivation should be addressed to make them believe in themselves to succeed academically.

Literature has pointed out not only the relevance of an individual's EI but also the groups' EI to analyse group academic achievement. In a classroom, students share emotional experiences throughout the year that can have an impact on their individual well-being. The interaction between classmates generates a "collective construct" that is different from the individual's construct (Aritzeta et al.; Gartzia, 2015). Therefore, it is relevant to consider whether the group pays attention to the classmates' feelings in order to avoid negative conducts in the classroom that can provide negative feedback and worsen the overall learning experience. On the other hand, a positive and supportive environment encourages students "to transform the patterns of feelings, behaviour, resilience and academic diligence among students" (Artizeta et al., 2015, p. 2). In addition, an exceptional classroom experience positively influences intrinsic motivation and learning as well as the attitude towards school, themselves, peers, and adults.

Balluerka et al. (2013) conducted an experiment in which they wanted to perceive the emotional intelligence of specific groups in the classroom environment. Through a questionnaire, they examined the student's emotional behaviour and consciousness when they interacted with the group. The results showed that groups with a positive affective environment had better grades than those groups

that did not have strong bonds. This study was also supported by the one carried out by Ruthig et al. (2008) in which they also found a correlation between higher academic achievement and positive group relations.

The next section of the first part of the paper is going to focus on the discipline of social and emotional learning to achieve the positive results found in the previously mentioned studies and specifically to boost the communicative competence of high school students, which is the main aim of this paper.

2.3 Social Emotional Learning

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2020) defines Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as "the process through which children and adults obtain and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions".

Social Emotional Learning focuses on strengthening and maintaining positive relationships between the school, the family, and the community. In addition, it focuses on aiding people to communicate ideas clearly and assertively and have empathy towards others. It is believed that SEL leads to prosocial behaviour since students see themselves as assets in their community, and they show greater caring and concern for others (Adams & Richie, 2017). Furthermore, people have a better view of the society and have a stronger commitment to democratic values. Moreover, Morris (2010) argues that social emotional learning results in a better understanding and interaction with the counterparts. Zinc and Elias (2007) have identified that it reduces aggressive behaviours, disruptions, interpersonal violence and conduct problems. Therefore, collaborative work is a core methodology in this type of learning because it empowers people to have a sense of responsibility and build real and healthy relations with their colleagues (CASEL, 2017).

Additionally, SEL aims at helping people take responsible decisions in difficult situations and solve problems effectively. Several studies have confirmed that the effects of SEL are long-lasting regarding lower rates of depression, anxiety, and risky behaviours, for instance drugs or unwanted pregnancy. It is also linked with a decrease in dropout rates of between five and twelve per cent. (Committee for Children, 2020).

Moreover, it has been proved that SEL can trigger success in both life, school, and work. Longitudinal analyses have demonstrated that when social emotional competencies are taught in childhood, it results in a better well-being later in life (Jones, Greenberg & Crowley, 2015).

Another study showed the follow-up effects of applying SEL at school through a meta-analysis. Some findings demonstrated that SEL has long-lasting effects from 56 up to 195 weeks following the program. Another important discovery was that students from different racial groups and socioeconomic status improved emotional skills. In addition, this study reported an improvement of the participant's future social relations and a reduction of the presence of clinical disorders (Taylor et al., 2017).

Having mentioned the advantages of integrating social emotional learning, the next section is going to deal with the ways in which SEL could aid foreign language students to learn a new language easier and, at the same time, finding pleasure and enjoyment in the process of learning English.

2.4 Social emotional learning in foreign language learning

Learning a foreign language has always been a challenge. In Spain, children start learning English at a very young age, yet they still struggle to communicate in English during high school (Zafra, 2019). The traditional method of learning a foreign language has paid little attention to emotions and generally students are not encouraged to speak until they reach a higher level. Some students do not

have the courage to communicate in English either because they are introverted or because they feel they do not have the necessary abilities to interact in the foreign language. For this reason, putting SEL into practice in high schools might help establish a safe communicative environment that could help students feel comfortable and safe speaking in English and, ultimately, improve their speaking skills.

Dewaele (2015) states that learning a second language is not only a process that involves cognition but also affectivity. The method though English has been taught traditionally has followed a teacher centered approach, with very little interactive feedback from the students. They are mostly expected to activate their cognitive and memory abilities to learn grammatical structures and vocabulary and pass exams. However, the emotional side of learning has always been omitted in foreign language learning even though some research has shown that emotions can either boost the brain's ability to learn or hinder it, which means that both cognition and emotions need to go hand in hand.

Putting SEL into practice in secondary education takes time, effort, and a great planning as well. As a starting point, it is convenient to build a safe environment in the group in which the youth feel comfortable, especially in the foreign language classroom because usually students believe that speaking English and gaining fluency are demanding tasks. In addition, some teenagers struggle with emotional issues and their self-esteem can be quite low. Contrary to that, the foreign language classroom should be an opportunity for students to work on their social skills while practicing their speaking at the same time. Accordingly, it is crucial to work on the different emotional competencies mentioned before to create a proper emotional classroom environment in which students feel secure and free to share their opinions and feelings about the topics they deal with (Crisafully, 2020).

Creating group trust could be achieved through student-centered activities that boost the students' confidence by deciding on their own, monitoring their goals,

interacting with classmates, and learning from each other (Corley, 2020). Making activities like role plays allows them to express openly, make mistakes without serious consequences, gain awareness of themselves and others and develop skills of empathy (British Council, 2020).

Moreover, SEL demands contextualization so that students can connect what they learn in class with real life. For this reason, students need to understand the relevance and usefulness of what they learn, particularly, the reasons why it is important for them to be competent in the five competencies that compose social and emotional learning. This way, they will be more motivated to perform the activities and disruptive behaviours will be more likely avoided. In addition, setting measurable goals will help students track how they are improving (Adams & Richie, 2017). Above all, personalizing SEL instruction is crucial, so it needs to be considered the socio-cultural environment of the high school and evaluate what the emotional needs of students are.

Another trait of SEL is that the program ought to be mainly focused on problem-solving activities, which means those that encourage students to think critically, find solutions, question ideas, and become responsible for their own actions. Open-ended questions are an example of a problem-solving activity because there are no right, or wrong answers and students can give their point of view openly without being judged. Indeed, according to Neba (2019) critical thinking can help students avoid future problems that depend on their own actions and reflect on their own decisions based on their values. Moreover, they could "make connections among disciplines, see knowledge useful and applicable to everyday life and understand content on a deeper more lasting level" (p.100).

Apart from that, it needs to be considered that SEL might work differently for different levels or groups in the same level. For this reason, getting to know the group can help teachers provide a suitable working environment in which all students feel integrated into the activities (CASEL, 2020, p.7). Teachers should consider that some groups are more receptive and open to share their feelings,

but it can be hard for others to share them. With some groups, spontaneous speaking activities, such as role-plays could be very effective and with other groups they may not work at all. Additionally, students in lower levels may not be prepared to perform spontaneous SEL activities because they still do not have the fluency to express themselves in English. Therefore, more controlled activities with clear and simple guidelines should be put into practice, especially in lower levels. Therefore, to ensure success of the program it needs to be addressed considering the level of English, maturity, and personality of students (CASEL, 2020).

Another worth-considering aspect when implementing SEL in high schools is the participation of all the school structure to ensure a common policy that directs teachers towards this approach. The participation of the school staff is crucial to make sure that the program is not only applied in the classroom but also in the playground, cafeteria, extracurricular activities, etc. For this reason, it is highly desirable to have a commission leading the program that continuously assesses that everyone follows the same path. People in charge of this program need to have specific qualities, such as a shared vision of the school, sense of responsibility, high expectations, plenty of resources and good social and organizational skills. They need to promote an appropriate language and practices that enhance SEL and encourage other members of the community to do the same (CASEL, 2020).

Certainly, families and other members who might be involved in high school have a crucial role to reinforce SEL outside the academic setting. There is plenty of research that evidences the importance of teacher-family communication for its success. Ideally, both would share the same values, goals, level of responsibility and commitment to the program. Parents should have a voice and be able to participate in some activities of the school because social emotional learning "is most likely to be successful when school, district and state-level priorities are aligned" (CASEL, 2020, p.7).

Since SEL is a relatively new approach that is starting to be applied now, there are not so many studies that corroborate its benefits. However, there are some reliable studies that confirm the advantages of introducing SEL to enhance high school education. For instance, Cho, Wang, and Christ (2019) made a study in the United States in which they interviewed high school English teachers to identify which competencies English language learners lacked most. What they found was that teachers perceived that social-awareness and relationship abilities were the skills that students needed to improve because they had difficulties interacting and cooperating with each other in the classroom. This study is supported by the one carried out by Dresser (2012) in which he found that students who had social skills and were accepted by their peers were more likely to succeed academically in English. Contrary to that, those with low self-esteem and fear of being judged had more difficulties learning the foreign language.

Payton et al. (2000) identified five steps for ensuring a quality and successful practice of SEL in the classroom. The first one is to select activities carefully, considering the specific purpose of the lesson. The second one is to actively encourage students to participate and allow for feedback. The third one is to use SEL to encourage interdisciplinarity and collaborate with other teachers. The fourth step is to have a lesson plan with clear objectives that links the overall program. Finally, to have assessment tools to have feedback on the effectiveness of the program.

To finish with the first part of this paper, the following section is going to deal with role of the teacher when it comes to boosting communication in English through a social and emotional learning program.

2.5 The role of teachers to enhance social emotional learning in the English classroom.

When it comes to enrolling in a social emotional learning program, it is vital to ensure that students get engaged in the activities. For this reason, the role of the teacher is crucial since it is the principal figure that will mediate, track, and accompany students into improving their emotional intelligence. Therefore, a teacher ought to have emotional intelligence skills to guide and manage the classroom properly since they will be role models for the students (Krishnan & Awang, 2020).

Teachers involved in a SEL program need to know the students, so it would be convenient to begin once the teacher has created a bond with them. Since every student is different, teachers should know their background, interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Moreover, they should be allowed to share experiences with the classroom to create a positive environment where they feel understood, empowered, and not intimidated (Crisafully,2020). Additionally, it would be convenient to approach their vulnerability to mental health concerns with an open mind, providing support to alleviate them, since they can be barriers of learning (Adams & Richie, 2017).

According to Diaz and Osorio (2017) there are different ways to measure the students' emotional intelligence. First, teachers may identify the signals students convey after certain stimuli that evoke emotions. Secondly, teachers should identify how the students reason with emotions. For instance, how they respond when they have the desire to learn something opposite to how they perform when learning is being forced. In addition, they should try to understand the emotion that is carried by a specific message a student conveys. For example, if the student is always using negative and demotivating words, teachers might encourage this student to change the words he or she uses to change the emotion. Teachers would ideally know how students manage emotions, in other words, whether they have control over them or let emotions control them. Thus, teachers will notice which students need to work on self-management.

In addition, the teacher should give individualized instruction because not all the students can work with the same kind of activities and some adaptations may be necessary. Taking the theory of multiple intelligences as reference, students should be offered alternatives that make them feel more secure and to ensure better outcomes (Gardner, 1983).

Providing feedback is extremely important for both teachers and students. On the one hand, students can get to know whether they are performing well and what they need to improve. On the other hand, teachers can check if the activities are working as expected. Encouragement and support are also needed, so the teacher must be willing to help students when necessary. Besides, it is important that he or she has leadership skills since it is said that students who see the teacher as a leader perceive that they are more approachable and motivation is shared between both (Barling, Slater & Kelloway,2000).

When implementing SEL not only is it paramount to train students but also teacher training should be provided to choose the most suitable strategies to develop emotional skills among students. Bisquerra (2005) established a list of theoretical points that teachers need to be instructed with before providing social emotional learning, which are conceptual framework of emotions, types and theories of emotions, the emotional brain, emotions and health, contributions of emotional therapy, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, emotional consciousness, emotional regulation, emotions and subjective well-being, flow, applications of social emotional learning (pp.101-103).

Once teacher instruction has taken place, they should aim at preparing lesson plans that have clear activities, aims and assessment tools. Choosing the right tools to monitor the program is of utmost importance because it will allow teachers to make the essential modifications for future implementation of the program (Adams & Richie, 2017).

What is more, a social emotional learning program should be accountable through the students' academic outcomes, which refers to the classroom assessment, progress, and participation but also through the engagement of parents and teachers. Considering that emotional and social competencies are influenced by many external factors, teachers should choose reliable and valid assessments wisely (Grossman, 2016). In addition, teachers should consider different ways of assessing them, since emotional intelligence varies across ages and gender. However, even if students are from the same level and age, it is quite problematic to establish a completely reliable measurement of emotional learning in a group. Informal assessment might be the most convenient way of evaluating students since they perform naturally without being pressurized. Activities that try to bring out the students' emotions such as role plays, theatre, debates, etc. are great to assess the speaking skill since they are very engaged in the activity, and they do not think about whether they are making mistakes or not (American Institutes for Research, 2015).

Moreover, another way of tracking social emotional learning is by keeping a journal of the student's behaviour at the beginning, during and after the program. Students could also have their own journal and do self-assessment at a specific point in the program, so they can track whether their behaviour has changed and how (AIR, 2015).

Online surveys are also excellent to take accountability of the program so that the teacher can see what competencies students still need to improve, the activities that they enjoyed the most, the ones they did not like, and so on and so forth. It is also relevant that students evaluate the teacher after the program and see whether they have met their expectations. Finally, evaluating whether they have accomplished the objectives that were established before starting the program should not be omitted.

3. Didactic proposal

3.1 Introduction

The second part of the paper is focused on providing an example of a didactic proposal that is aimed at putting into practice social emotional learning in the subject of English in high school. This proposal has been designed for students of 1st Baccalaureate aged 15 and 16 years old. In addition, it could be carried out with 3rd of ESO students since adaptations have been included.

All the activities are going to deal with the five competencies of emotional intelligence explained above to achieve two main aims. First, to help students improve the communicative competence in English and, second, to develop emotional skills and create a positive learning environment.

To accomplish the purpose of this paper, the proposal has been structured as follows. Five different activities are going to be presented, each of them corresponding to a didactic unit that will relate to emotional competencies. Therefore, the main idea is to integrate emotional skills in every activity to work on the emotional state of students during the whole course. These emotions are going to be the driving force of the didactic units, which means that they have been organized purposely in this specific order.

Moreover, the activities could very easily fit into different units of work in a conventional coursebook. Yet, they could be applied even though a coursebook is not used. Ideally, in a school year these emotional competencies would be integrated in a yearly didactic proposal.

Table 1 below shows how the activities could be embedded in the contents that students usually cover in high school.

Table 1: Overview of topics and emotional competencies

Activity	Competency	Language	Expectations
"Overcoming fear"	Self-awareness Empathy	Fears and Phobias Modal verbs	Gain awareness of real and imaginary fears.
"Matching soulmates"	Social skills	Relationships Modal verbs/ Relative clauses	Develop interpersonal relations
Love yourself	Self-motivation Self-esteem Social awareness Self-awareness	Priorities Future tenses	Boost self-motivation and self-esteem
"What would you do if…?"	Self-management	Feelings and emotions Conditionals	Gain emotional management skills
"Put yourself in my shoes"	Empathy	Environment Passive voice	Be able to relate to something/ somebody else's feelings

The following program will focus on improving the communication skills of students incorporating social emotional learning. With that end in view, students are going to practice different skills, but the central point is going to be on the speaking skill. Hence, these activities have been designed following a task-based approach that will focus on emotional competencies while putting into practice the language of the unit. Because of this, the tasks should be carried out at the end of every didactic unit.

Each activity is going to be explained this way: firstly, a table will be used to explain the student's outcomes, personal aims, methodology and assessment. Then, the procedure of the activity and the justification will be mentioned

considering the theory that has been explained above. Finally, adaptations will be presented and a brief analysis of an activity that has been put into practice will be provided.

The main reason why these activities have been chosen is that they can easily been applied in the subject of English while fostering social emotional learning. Moreover, the proposal follows an integral approach that suits a great variety of learning styles. In fact, each activity has been thought considering the "Theory of multiple intelligences of Howard Gardner" (1983) as it will be explained in each activity.

Additionally, all of them have been carefully selected because they contribute to the development of all the key competencies according to the Decree 34/2015, of 15th May, by which the Foreign Language curriculum for Secondary Education in the Balearic Islands is established. The most salient competencies that will be activated are learning to learn, linguistic competence, digital competence, social and civic competence, initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression.

Besides, this proposal meets the requirements of the specific objectives according to the curriculum. Specifically, in this didactic proposal students will mainly work on the following objectives. First, they will learn how to "express and interact orally in everyday communicative situations in an intelligible and appropriate way as well as with certain autonomy". They will also "use phonetic, lexical, structural and functional patterns of the English language in real, communicative contexts correctly". Moreover, it is assumed that they will "develop autonomous learning and reflect upon one's own learning processes and to transfer into English the knowledge and communicative strategies that have been acquired in other languages". In addition, students can learn to "show a receptive and self-confident attitude towards the ability to learn and use English", "use learning strategies and didactic resources, including ICT to look up, select and present information both orally and in a written form", "appreciate English as a

means to access information and as a learning tool" and, finally, "promote respect, managing emotions and solidarity through the foreign language" (Decree 34/2015, pp. 9-10).

3.2 Description of the didactic proposal

Activity 1: "Overcoming fear" (Self-awareness)

The first activity of this proposal deals with the topic of fears and phobias and is related to the emotional competence of self-awareness. Table 2 below provides an overview of activity 1.

Table 2: Overview of activity 1

STUDENTS OUTCOMES	Write a dialogue about a real or imaginary fear in pairs Express and share a real or imaginary fear orally Give advice to overcome a fear Use the vocabulary of fears and phobias and modal verbs effectively to carry out the activity
PERSONAL OBJECTIVES	Empower students to talk about real or imaginary fears or frustrations Gain awareness on fears people may have Understand other people's feelings and give thoughtful advice
METHODOLOGY	Pair work Communicative approach Task-based learning
ASSESSMENT	Survey Role-play assessment grid Teacher self-assessment rubric

❖ **Procedure**

First, the teacher is going to give students a worksheet with all the instructions. They are going to watch a video of adolescents talking about their fears and phobias, and they will be asked a couple of questions in which they will be able to talk about their own experience (Appendix A). After that, students are going to work in pairs, and they are going to choose a real or imaginary fear. Once they have decided on the fear, students will work with their partner and imagine a real or imaginary situation to represent the fear in the form of a dialogue.

Students will have two differentiated roles: student A is going to be a person who has a fear and reveals it to a close friend, family member, etc. Student B is going to be the person who gives some advice to speaker A to alleviate, reduce, or overcome the fear. Students need to think of a story, a name for their character, a setting, and the personality that each character is going to have. Apart from that, they will have to decide who is going to play each role.

After doing the brainstorming they will write a draft of the dialogue on a piece of paper. Then, the teacher is going to correct the mistakes, and provide some feedback on the story. After that, students are going to write the final dialogue, which is the one they are going to use for the role-play. Finally, students are going to rehearse the dialogue in class and at home.

The final aim of this activity is going to be the performance of the role-play in the school theatre. Each dialogue will have to be about five minutes long. Since they will have studied modal verbs, students are expected to use them as well as other tenses from previous years. After all the performances, both students and the teacher are going to vote for the best role-play. In case students may not wish to do performance, they could be hidden behind a screen or, if necessary, record it in a video.

❖ **Activity justification**

This activity has been chosen because it can empower students to express fears in English while practicing the communicative competence. The main emotional skill of this activity is self-awareness because they will gain consciousness on the fears people may have. As it has been said before, recognizing feelings is fundamental for students to cope with the academic demands (See section 2.4). Additionally, sharing emotional experiences has a positive impact on the individual's well-being since it reinforces a positive affective environment. Another skill they will put into practice is empathy because they will put themselves in their partner's place and make responsible decisions to give them thoughtful advice.

Role-plays are an excellent activity that can help students who are quieter to get the chance to have a voice by adopting the personality of a different character (See section 2.4). In addition, it challenges the opportunities of learning that occur in the classroom since students have complete freedom to talk about what they desire. Students are also given the chance of recreating real life situations and give them a twist. Thus, this activity is going to help students develop conflict resolution skills because they will need to find solutions to solve problems caused by fears. Being able to speak about them will encourage students to get out of their comfort zone, show their vulnerability and trust their classmates.

Above all, students will be able to express their creativity with total freedom without being judged. They will be active participants in their learning by promoting a student-centered approach in which the teacher will only act as guide to help them give their full potential (See section 2.5).

This activity is suitable for different learning styles, especially kinesthetic students, who will learn the contents deeply by actively participating in the activity. Additionally, linguistic learners will take advantage of using words in a written and oral way. Since visual learners are excellent learning in context, they will be able to see the whole picture and, lastly, auditory learners will acquire information by listening to their classmates (Cherry, 2019).

Regarding the language, students are going to put into practice vocabulary of fears and frustrations of the didactic unit, since they will be able to express fear in the foreign language. Indeed, they will have the chance of practicing modal verbs in a real or imaginary context. As a result, they will be aware of the importance of using language in context in order to gain fluency and improve their communicative abilities in English.

❖ **Adaptations**

This section is going to focus on how this activity could be adapted for 3rd of ESO students. First, the materials ought to be modified in other words, as the selected video might be difficult for them to understand, it should be changed to another one that suits their level. What is more, the worksheet explaining the task would need to be adapted by providing a shorter list of fears that meets the vocabulary they have studied in the unit. Besides, they could also be given an example of an already made dialogue to help them accomplish the task. Finally, the teacher may provide them with some structures they may use in their dialogue, such us simple modal verbs, future tenses, and conditionals. However, they would not be required to use complex grammar structures such as conditional three.

Activity 2: "Matching Soulmates" (Social skills)

The second activity of this proposal focuses on the topic of healthy relationships and the main emotional competency is social skills. Table 3 shows an overview of activity 2.

Table 3: Overview of activity 2

STUDENTS OUTCOMES	Engage in spontaneous conversation
	Ask questions to get to know another person
	Use social conventions to communicate
	Use vocabulary of relationships, relative clauses, and modal verbs effectively
PERSONAL OBJECTIVES	Strengthen interpersonal relationships
	Get to know each other
	Achieve student engagement
	Recognize positive and negative aspects about themselves
METHODOLOGY	Autonomous work
	Communicative approach
	Task-based learning
ASSESSMENT	Class participation
	Self-assessment rubric

❖ **Activity procedure**

First, students are going to watch a video of teenagers talking about what a healthy relationship means for them (Appendix B). While they are watching it, students are going to write down all the adjectives that adolescents use to describe a healthy relationship, and they will share them in a Padlet that the teacher will have posted previously in Google Classroom (Appendix B). After that, students will exchange what they have written, and they will be asked what it means for them to have a healthy relationship and the most important trait a friend/ partner needs to have. Students will have to justify their answers.

After this short discussion, the teacher is going to share a worksheet that has the form of a chart where students will write down the positive and negative features about themselves, their hobbies and interests and the values that the other person must have (Appendix B). Additionally, they are going to write down the

traits that the friend or partner must have and cannot have. Once they have completed the worksheet, two students will be chosen at random, and they will sit in front of each other. They will do "Speed Dating", so in a short period of time (about five minutes), students will have to talk to each other asking questions about their interests and the positive and negative features about them. If they discover they like each other they will have matched. Then, two more students are going to do the same until everyone has participated.

❖ **Activity justification**

The choice of this activity has been made because students can develop the emotional competency of social skills, which is crucial in the current society. Focusing on interpersonal relations will be beneficial for students in many areas of their lives: family, friends, working environment, etc. Having healthy relationships with other people will not only make them more successful in life, but they will also feel better with themselves and boost their self-esteem.

According to social emotional learning theory, communicating effectively is crucial, so the sooner adolescents learn how to establish a proper conversation in English, the better their relationships with people from other countries will be (See section 2.2). In this activity, students will have to use social conventions to have a proper conversation with the other person, since the main objective is to give the best version of themselves. They will also get to know how to use appropriate language when they first meet somebody in another language. This might be very effective if they need to communicate with people in another language for instance in a job interview, travelling, making friends in a different country, etc.

Certainly, students will cope with different people throughout their life, so accepting differences is crucial to become more flexible and adopt a mindset of acknowledgement. In this activity, students are supposed to get to know somebody who might have traits they do not like. Therefore, they are expected

to be respectful and accept those differences using appropriate communicative conventions.

The reinforcement of relationships skills is of utmost importance during the period of adolescence (See section 2.1.5). Indeed, in this classroom task students will be able to strengthen their interpersonal relationships, practice turn-taking and active listening, and compliment people.

Even though the main competency they will work on is relationships skills, students are going to dive into self-awareness too. It is reasonable to think that when students write down their positive and negative features about themselves, they need to be able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, reflecting on the things they are good at and the ones they need to improve can lead to better and healthier relationships (See section 2.2).

Taking all students into consideration, this activity will suit different styles of learning. To begin with, visual learners, who successfully read body language and facial expressions, would be able to guess the other person's reactions. Auditory students that learn well by listening, speaking, and interacting could perform well in this activity. Furthermore, linguistic learners, who usually prefer written and spoken information, would have confidence talking to people. This activity is also excellent for kinesthetic learners who will be able to learn by doing. Besides, since the worksheet is going to be arranged in a chart, logical learners will easily identify the purpose of the activity. Interpersonal learners will give their full potential since they do not have trouble meeting new people, and they love acting out real life situations. Finally, intrapersonal students will be able to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and develop trust towards their classmates (Cherry, 2019).

Considering the language, students are going to practice modal verbs, which they will have studied in the previous unit and the relative clauses. For example, they might say: "A friend/ partner must/ should be kind and supportive", or "I'm looking

for somebody who is kind and supportive". Therefore, they will be able to practice English grammar in spontaneous conversation. Moreover, they will be able to put into practice the vocabulary of relationships since they will use descriptive adjectives of relationships.

❖ **Adaptations**

This activity could be used in 3rd of ESO including some adaptations. As for the first part of the activity, before watching the video, the teacher could write down a list of adjectives that describe healthy relationships on the blackboard and students would select and share in the Padlet the ones that appear in the video. Furthermore, subtitles would be used to ensure understanding and the teacher might consider putting the video two times in case students did not understand it well the first time. What is more, the teacher could give students some grammar structures for the speaking part, so that they know how to manage the conversation. For example, the teacher could write "The partner must be hardworking" so that students know how to start the conversation and do it more confidently. The teacher would choose the students that are more talkative first so that the others are more motivated to participate later. At this level, the teacher should expect shorter interventions and less complex grammar structures (e.g., simple modal verbs).

Activity 3: "Love yourself" (Self-motivation/ Self-esteem)

This activity deals with the topic of priorities and it is aimed at working on the emotional competencies of self-motivation and self-esteem especially, but also on social awareness and self-awareness. Table 4 provides an overview of activity 3.

Table 4: Overview of activity 3

STUDENTS OUTCOMES	Participate in a discussion about self-esteem and self-motivation
	Give opinion on a video about self-esteem and social media
	Write down positive things about them and their classmates
	Create a vision board
	Use future tenses effectively in the presentation
PERSONAL OBJECTIVES	Make sure students understand the concept of self-motivation and self-esteem
	Boost the students' self-motivation and self-esteem
	Get to know their strengths
	Help students set goals and priorities
METHODOLOGY	Autonomous work
	Task-based learning
	Communicative approach
ASSESSMENT	Class intervention
	Oral presentation rubric

❖ **Activity procedure**

This activity has been adapted from a program addressed to teenagers called "Crossing the line" (Childnet international, 2020). The task is going to last two sessions, the first one will focus on building awareness on their positive traits and priorities and, the second one, is aimed at creating a project to consolidate what they did in the first one.

First, the teacher is going to introduce the concept of self-esteem and self-motivation by asking students if they know the meaning of them in order to create a definition all together. After that, the teacher is going to ask students about the factors that can affect self-esteem (society, friends, the media, life experiences, etc.) and afterwards, they are going to watch video about a girl who talks about people's lives on social media (Appendix C). Students will do a short debate on

how social media can affect one's self-esteem and the negative consequences of having low self-esteem.

Next, students will write down in a worksheet the negative thoughts they may have of themselves when they do something wrong or have a bad day (Appendix C). Once they have written them down, they will need to change these words or sentences into positive thoughts. For example: "I am not good at this" → "I need more practice at this".

After that, students are going to write five positive qualities about themselves and five things they are good at. Later, they will stick a piece of paper on their backs and moving around the classroom each student is going to write one positive quality of each classmate. At the end, everyone will have lots of positive qualities written on their backs. To close the session, students are going to write down something they did well this week, something fun that happened to them and something they felt proud about to boost their motivation.

In the second session, students will look at the positive qualities about themselves from the previous session. Getting to know their strengths is going to help them with the next exercise in which they are going to think about a list of priorities that matter to them the most. This pre-activity will lead to the final task that is going to be elaborating a poster of a vision board. They will use Canva or any other website to do a short presentation in which they will create their future lives in five years. They are expected to talk about where they would like to be considering friends, studies, family, hobbies, etc. Moreover, they will talk about the things they will have achieved, how they will have made them happen, the difficulties they will have faced, and the solutions they will have provided to overcome those obstacles.

❖ **Activity justification**

This activity has been chosen because it is going to boost the student's self-esteem and motivation through a series of exercises that will help them get to know their priorities in life. The main emotional competency they will work on is self-motivation and self-esteem, but they will also work on social skills since they will be interacting with their classmates, and self-awareness because they will be aware about what they are good at.

As it has been said before, during adolescence self-esteem has been proved to be quite low (See section 2). Accordingly, students with a low self-esteem have more difficulties learning English. For this reason, this activity could increase the students' motivation and help them have a more positive perception of themselves, which ultimately can boost their confidence while speaking English.

What is more, they could develop social skills and self-awareness while relating to their partners' feelings. Particularly, after watching the video, students will be able to think critically on the reality of social media. Additionally, they will reflect on whether their self-esteem might be influenced by social networks, and they will gain awareness of their impact using critical thinking skills.

As mentioned before, positive thoughts are crucial to have positive feelings (See section 2.1.3). For this reason, in the activity where students change negative thoughts into positive ones, they could increase their self-esteem. It has also been said that setting goals is a key aspect to increase the motivation of teenagers. Therefore, writing their priorities down will help them have accountability of what they want to achieve, have a clearer vision, and manage their time more wisely. It is also an excellent way to relate hard work with a sense of fulfilment once they have achieved it. Therefore, motivation will be kept high during the process of working on their objectives. While doing a vision board, students may have an optimistic picture of the future without falling into unrealistic expectations since they will have written down the problems and the solutions they might face (See section 2.1.3).

❖ **Adaptations**

This activity could be put into practice among 3rd of ESO students with the following modifications. Instead of creating a definition of self-esteem and motivation, students would read a text first and create the definition afterwards. Additionally, they would be given a worksheet with clear instructions of the whole project and the teacher might also create PowerPoint presentation so that students understand what is expected from them in the activity. Finally, the presentation of the vision board could be shorter (2.5 minutes each student).

Activity 4: "What would you do if…?" (Self-management)

The following activity deals with the unit of feelings and emotions and it centers on being able to manage one's own emotions. Table 5 shows an overview of activity 4.

Table 5: Overview of activity 4

STUDENTS OUTCOMES	Read an extract from a work of fiction
	Identify a character's emotions in a work of fiction using evidence from the text to support the evidence
	Write down first and second reactions after reading a short text
	Participate in a debate
	Use vocabulary of feelings and conditionals effectively
PERSONAL OBJECTIVES	Help students control their impulses and emotions
	Reflect on the importance of self-management
	Demonstrate an understanding of emotions through discussion and written work
	Apply understanding of self-regulation to their personal lives and discuss its relevance in real life
METHODOLOGY	Autonomous work
	Cooperative work
	Task-based

	Communicative approach
ASSESSMENT	Class participation

❖ **Activity procedure**

This activity is aimed at working on the topic of feelings and emotions. It has been adapted from a program carried out by the Massachusetts General Hospital (2010) in the "Brain Driver's Education: Operator's Guide". It is going to be divided into two different sessions.

In the first session, students are going to be reminded of the importance of recognizing one's emotions to be able to manage them, so the teacher will refer to previous units in which students dealt with self-awareness. Then, the teacher is going to introduce the project by asking students if they think that people experience feelings the same way and are expected to give their opinion. After that, they will read a text called *"*How hot or cold does your emotional engine run?*"* (Appendix D)*,* which explains the different ways people feel emotions. The teacher is going to show a table that portrays the different ways people could react when they face different emotions (Appendix D, table D1).

In the next exercise, students are going to read an extract of a story in which a character has a reaction to an event (Appendix D). Students need to pay attention to the clues that the text gives them to recognize the character's emotions to the situation. Students are going to take notes about the sentences, expressions or words that helped them identify the emotional state of the character. After that, the teacher is going to ask students if they managed to discover how the character is feeling by providing evidence from the text.

Next, students are going to work in groups of three. With the help of the table Spectrum of Emotional Intensity (Appendix D, table D1) students will decide on the level of emotional intensity of the character (passive, intense or balanced) giving reasons why they made the choice. In addition, they will be asked if the reaction of the character was appropriate to the situation that he or she is facing, and again they need to justify the answer. Following, the teacher is going to draw a line on the blackboard that represents the spectrum of emotional intensity and students will decide at which point the character is, from emotionally passive, balanced in the middle and intense at the other end.

The last part of this session is going to be the reflection part. The teacher is going to ask students why it is useful that the character is aware of his or her emotions and how the situation would have changed if he or she had been aware of his or her feelings. To close the session, students will draw their own spectrum of emotional intensity in their notebook, and they will draw a circle at the point that represents their emotional state. Finally, they will be asked why it is helpful to know the level of intensity of their own emotions.

In the second session of this project, students are going to do an activity called "What would you do if…?" In this task, each student is going to be given a card with problematic life situations that could happen to them. The teacher will make sure students can relate to them to make it real. After reading the card individually, they need to write down on a chart words that describe the reactions, feelings, and physical sensations that came to their mind when they first read the text (Appendix D, table D2). Students will read their reactions aloud. An example of a possible situation is the one that follows:

"Your friend asks for answers in a test that he/she didn't have time to study for. You are against cheating and are afraid that you will get caught and fail the test, however you also don't want to lose the friendship."
How should you handle this? (Massachussets General Hospital, 2010)

Then, the teacher will give students another card that include further information on the previous conflict, and they will write down again the feelings, reactions, and physical sensations. For example:

"Your friend didn't have time to study because their parents are getting divorced, and she is not having a good time. If she does not pass the exam, she will fail the subject and she won't graduate."

Finally, the teacher is going to move around and ask for the students' first and second reactions. It is expected that students react emotionally in the first place and reasonably in the second place. Finally, both the teacher and students will reflect on the idea that sometimes the way people react to a problem aggravates it, so being able to control emotions can help people change perspective of things and understand the reasons behind other people's reactions.

❖ **Activity justification**

This activity can help students manage their emotions in everyday life. Students struggling with difficult situations usually face negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, stress and even depression. For this reason, this classroom activity can be very useful to help students confront difficulties with a resilient attitude and positive mindset.

After this workshop, it is expected that teenagers are more conscious of their capability of controlling impulsive behaviour (See section 2.1.2). If students know how to control their emotions, they can avoid negative outcomes, such as attacking other people, and they can also make responsible decisions based on careful thinking.

As it has been explained in section 2.3 regarding critical thinking, this activity will encourage students to reflect and establish connections between what they do in class and what happens in real life. What is more, since the activity will be carried

out cooperatively, it will enhance debate among students who will question their own ideas, discuss them, find solutions, and respect their peer's point of view.

After analysing an external character's emotions, they will need to reflect on their own self-regulation skills with real-life conflicts and situations. Therefore, knowing the difficulties they could face in the future and being able to relate to them is of utmost importance to manage them more successfully in the future. Additionally, imagining a conflict can make them more willing to take up new challenges because they already know the obstacles they may find on the way. If they are aware of what stops them from achieving their goals, they will find solutions to these problems and even anticipate them (See section 2.1.3).

If we consider the different learning styles, this workshop is going to benefit all students. Firstly, visual learners will put into practice their reading and writing skills and diagram interpretation (spectrum of emotions). Moreover, linguistic students will be able to understand spoken information well and express themselves orally. Logical-mathematical students, who are good at problem-solving skills, will help their peers to find solutions to the conflicts they are presented with. Kinesthetic learners will benefit from being active participants in the activity. Students with interpersonal abilities, who are skilled at assessing emotions of other people, can help others to find ways of taking perspective since they are excellent communicators (Cherry, 2019).

Moving on to language, this activity will encourage students to practice the grammar and vocabulary of the unit orally. They will use the conditionals in context, which may help them understand the language better and incorporate more complex grammar structures in their speaking. As regards to vocabulary, since this unit will have focused on feelings, this activity could be a great opportunity to explore deeply their own emotions and the ones of an imaginary character. Ideally, they would use the vocabulary they will have studied in the unit in order to have a deeper understanding of the new words.

❖ **Adaptations**

This activity could be adapted for 3ʳᵈ of ESO students quite easily. The procedure would be the same, however, the materials would need to be changed to suit their level. As for the extract, the teacher would need to select another one that is appropriate for them, so they can understand it to perform the task. Indeed, they would listen to the story before reading it on their own, and the teacher would go through any vocabulary they may not understand. Then, the teacher could write some words on the blackboard to help the students describe the character's emotions in case they do not have enough vocabulary. Regarding the cards of the problematic situations, the teacher could include some images and text to ensure understanding. Finally, in the reflection stage, the teacher might predict some difficulties with the command of conditionals in context.

Activity 5: "Put yourself in their shoes" (Empathy)

The last activity of this didactic proposal deals with the topic of the environment and the emotional competency that is going to be developed is empathy. Table 6 shows and overview of activity 5

Table 6: Overview of activity 5

STUDENTS OUTCOMES	Write a short story about an environmental problem/conflict Do research on environmental issues Use vocabulary of the environment and future tenses effectively
PERSONAL OBJECTIVES	Express feelings in a written and oral way Understand the concept of empathy Raise awareness on the importance of taking care of the environment
METHODOLOGY	Pair work Communicative approach Autonomous work

ASSESSMENT	Student participation
	Writing assessment rubric
	Teacher self-assessment rubric

❖ **Procedure**

This activity deals with the environment and is going to last two sessions. In the first one, students are going to be presented with different environmental conflicts that are taking place nowadays in the form of a visual presentation. Individually, they are going to choose one they are interested in: an endangered animal, the ocean, a landscape that has been spoiled, a polluted city or place, etc. Students are going to do some research on what they have chosen using technology.

After that, students are going to write a short story in the first person, so they will have to imagine they are the animal or landscape they have chosen. They are going to explain what is happening to them, how they are feeling, their expectations for the future and the actions they would like humans to take to stop negative consequences. The teacher is going to move around giving them some feedback on the story. Students are expected to finish the story at home and bring it to the next session.

In the next class students are going to work in pairs. One student is going to read his or her story and the other person is going to guess the environmental conflict her or she is talking about. Then, the teacher is going to write some questions on the blackboard and students are expected to answer them and engage in a discussion in pairs. The questions are the ones that follow:

a) What did you feel when you heard the story of your classmate?
b) What did you learn about (polar bears)?
c) What can human beings do to avoid the extinction/damage of (polar bears)?

d) Did this activity help you be more aware of the situation of (polar bears)? Why?

Then, the class is going to sit in a big circle to engage in a debate guided by the teacher. One student will read the story and the rest are going to take turns to talk about the questions above. Finally, as a class project, students are going to do an online poster in which they are going to put pictures and write down the facts they found about endangered species, places, or plants to raise awareness on the environmental problems that take place in the world.

❖ **Activity justification**

The choice of the activity has been made to work on empathy towards the environment in the classroom. It has been planned to carry out at the end of the didactic unit related to the environment to develop on this emotional competency while working on the contents of the unit as well.

As it has been mentioned before, empathy can change thought patterns among teenagers. Dealing with empathy in the educational setting can help students take decisions based on society in general while avoiding a selfish attitude (See section 2.1.4). Therefore, an activity such as this one can help students become more sensitive towards environmental issues while exploring the emotion of compassion and environmental empathy.

Moreover, a deeper understanding of what happens in the world can trigger a greater involvement and consciousness in environmental issues in the future. Some students may not think about the consequences of their daily actions for the planet. Thus, being aware of the impact of their decisions can help them develop respect and have a pro-environmental behaviour (See section 2.1.4).

Furthermore, this activity could help them improve their relationship with nature and find a connection with the natural world. Playing the role of an animal or a

landscape could be useful to raise awareness of the importance of nature in people's lives and find reasons why it matters to take care of the environment. What is more, this activity may promote a healthier and ethical manner of behaving and avoid an individualistic attitude.

This activity is going to suit students with a variety of learning styles. Visual learners are going to benefit from the interactive images that will help them do the writing afterwards. In addition, they will be able to watch videos on the internet to help them perform the task more easily. Auditory learners could take advantage by listening to their classmates' stories in the discussion part. Since linguistic learners usually have a great command of writing, they will be able to stand out when they write their short story. Kinesthetic learners will enjoy doing the poster since they will learn new contents in an interactive way. Logical learners will appreciate doing investigation on the topic since they are often very curious students. Finally, intrapersonal, and interpersonal students will have benefit from sharing ideas with their colleagues and, especially the latter, exploring their own emotions regarding the environment.

As for the contents, students will be able to practice different skills. First, they will put into practice the vocabulary of the environment they will have studied in the unit. Moreover, they will develop their creative writing skills, and avoid the dependency of more traditional style essays. Pronunciation will also be polished when they read the story aloud. As regards to grammar, students will have worked on the passive voice in this unit, so they will be able to easily apply it with this activity (See table 1). Above all, students will be encouraged to improve their communication skills by discussing some questions. Collaborative work will be put into practice, even though autonomous work will play a crucial role in this activity.

❖ **Adaptations**

For 3rd of ESO students this activity could be divided in two different sessions. In the first one, students would create a story of an environmental problem

collectively. They might do the writing following some steps that the teacher would need to have explained beforehand. They could do a brainstorming first and afterwards the teacher could tell them how to organize the story by showing them some useful connectors they might include in their writing.

In the discussion part, students should be given some time to carefully think of the questions the teacher would have written on the blackboard, and they could be able to write down their answers in their notebook. Finally, the debate would be done in pairs and the teacher could be moving around to make sure students are interacting in English.

4. Putting the proposal into practice

Some activities in this didactic proposal have been put into practice in IES Bendinat, a high school located in the coastal area of Bendinat in Calvià. Due to its location, this high school is characterized by its multiculturalism. The fact that there are many English speakers enriches the lessons and is very positive for the rest of the students. Regarding the sociocultural and socioeconomic context, families are usually from a mid-high level and show a great involvement in the students' academic performance.

At this point, feedback on activity 1 of the proposal ("Overcoming fear") will be explained. First, it needs to be considered that this task was carried out with two groups of 3rd of ESO students and it was executed cooperatively with another English teacher (Amanda Calvo). Since she had been working on emotional intelligence with her students since the beginning of the course, we thought it would be a good idea to do the project together.

The activity was performed in class and in the theatre of the high school, so that students were given the chance to move away from the conventional classroom to do an entertaining and alternative task. Students were expected to have

prepared and rehearsed the dialogue about fears and phobias at home to enact the scene on stage.

At the beginning, students in both groups were a bit shy and nobody wanted to go first, so two students were picked at random to perform the role-play. Once the first group did the performance, the rest were more confident to participate, and they really enjoyed being actors. The dialogues were original, and students had fun playing the role of a different person because they had invented a new character who had a different personality. Most of them had prepared the dialogue beforehand, even though some had to look at their notes because they were nervous. Yet, there was one student with autism who made some attempts of doing it, but he was so shy that the teacher decided he would do it another time without public. However, since the student tried his best, the teacher took into account the positive attitude.

After everyone had done the role-play, the teacher gave students some feedback, and she congratulated them for the good job. She asked them some questions, such as how they felt on stage, if they were nervous to speak in public and whether they liked the activity or not. Apart from that, students answered a questionnaire on the activity so that the teacher could have some feedback (See appendix A). According to the results, most of them enjoyed the activity and they said that it helped them gain awareness of fears, build trust with their classmates, and strengthen relationships.

These activities could be done more often to boost the students' creativity and go beyond the traditional learning methodology that may not suit all students. It might be repeated next year because it was very motivating and fun for the students. Furthermore, feedback from other teachers was very positive and it was proposed to do a contest with all groups in 3rd of ESO in which the best role-play would be awarded.

5. Conclusions

This paper has mainly focused on providing evidence on the role of SEL to enhance speaking in the English classroom among high school students. In addition, it has attempted to show how social emotional learning could promote communication in English through a series of activities based on the theory of SEL that have been proved to be highly effective for the performance of students.

The theoretical part has manifested that there is a correlation between higher emotional intelligence and a better academic performance. It has also been demonstrated that focusing on the development of the five competencies that compose emotional intelligence can boost the individual's and group learning experience. For this reason, social emotional learning has been proved to be very valuable to create positive relations between students and establish a safe and communicative environment.

Due to the challenging and demanding task of speaking English, the benefits of SEL might be very useful in the classroom, as many studies have demonstrated. Therefore, to enhance communication in English it is clear by now that classes ought to be student-centered based on problem-solving tasks that encourage students to think critically. Moreover, they should promote a collaborative work methodology that students can connect with real-life. Above all, teachers should be highly trained, and all the educational community should participate.

Having said that, the proposed activities have been offered because they focus on social and emotional skills that could make students feel more confident when speaking English. Each of them fosters an emotional competency that could help students improve communication more effectively in the English language which indeed might empower them in real-life.

All in all, this didactic proposal could be put into practice in any high school to encourage students feel supported to speak in the English language while feeling

safe and comfortable at the same time. In fact, the activities that have been put into practice so far have demonstrated a great deal of engagement and have received positive feedback, which raises some questions regarding the traditional style of teaching English.

According to Daniel Goleman (1995) "our level of emotional intelligence is not fixed genetically (…) it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experiences, our competence in it can keep growing" (p.7). Therefore, it seems convenient to apply activities that motivate students in their learning of English and heighten their EI. For this reason, it would be highly desirable that more high schools put into practice social and emotional learning programs because this day and age, the best way of learning is to make students crave for knowledge.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Materials activity 1

ROLEPLAY: "OVERCOMING FEAR" (SELF-AWARENESS)

1) Watch the following video about the fears and dreams of different teenagers around the world and do the exercises below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgmFn-suAi4&ab_channel=TheGuardian

1.2.) Put the two columns in the correct order. What do these teenagers fear or dream?

Alfie, 14, UK	He does not like that people see him as someone different from what he is. He is worried about his family's future.
Alex, 20, US	He is afraid of not finding his spot in society, of not fitting in.
Becky, 17, Indonesia	He is afraid of failing exams because of family pressure. He is the only one in his family who has been educated.
Zoeyjoy, 18, Nigeria	She thinks she should value the fact that she can study and go to school. She believes in doing your bit to give back to society.
Fabiola, 19, México	She feels too different from other teenagers from her country. And she shows what she stands for online, but feels unsafe online. She
Daniel, 16, Kenya	She sometimes feels different and has problems at school with bullies. But that experience has made her strong, but she says you need to focus on the support of family and friends to overcome difficult situations.
Kaavya, 16, India	When she goes out, she feels it is a challenge because there is a lot of violence against women in her country.
Alice and Isabel, 14, Sweden	When she looks for a job as a dancer, she is afraid she is not going to be treated the way she should be treated.
Yassine, 15, France	He believes that, in the future, you are going to be responsible for yourself and you need to believe in yourself.

1.3.) **Answer the following questions:**

-With which fears, or dreams do you feel identified the most?
-What piece of advice would you give to each of these teenagers?
-Do you think teenagers' fears around the world are different from yours? Why?

2) **Have a look at the following teenagers' fears and choose one in pairs.**

❖ Failing exams
❖ Disappointing family or friends
❖ Rejection.
❖ Not fitting in
❖ Feeling alone with no friends.
❖ Not being able to be yourself
❖ Death
❖ The future (jobs, different paths you can take)
❖ Not fulfilling people's expectations.
❖ Social pressure (beauty standards, the way you should behave, in what you should believe, etc)
❖ Being bullied
❖ Not being enough, loved or valued the way you deserve
❖ Any other possible fear you may have

3) **ROLE PLAY: Write a dialogue about the fear you have chosen. Describe a situation (it can be real or imaginary).**

-You must write a dialogue that lasts at least between **5 and 10 minutes** maximum. You must use **modal verbs** for advice and "**be going to**" to talk about future plans. You can also use different **other tenses** if necessary.

-Remember you are not yourselves in this role play activity because you are playing the role of a different person. You MUST decide on a **name** for your character.

-Think of **where** you are having this dialogue (at school, at home, at a party, etc.) and what kind of **personality** your character has (introvert, extrovert, passionate, shy, thoughtful, shy, etc.). Decide which of these **roles** you would like to do within the role play activity:

❖ **Student A** is a teenager and is afraid of something. He/she opens up about his/her fears and dreams and talks about them with a family member or friend.

❖ **Student B** is a friend or family member who tries to help him/her out. He/she listens to him/her carefully, asks him/her questions to understand how he/she feels and finally, gives him/her a piece of advice.
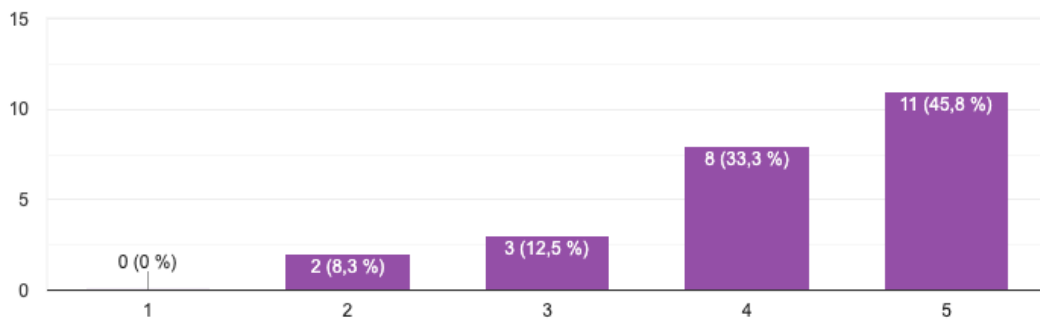
- Survey role-play fears and phobias

Complete survey:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZG_WYAVF6crI93uiJpDAR0T7rQ
9vwQCfS5SGAbhvKXJdOCw/viewform?usp=sf_link

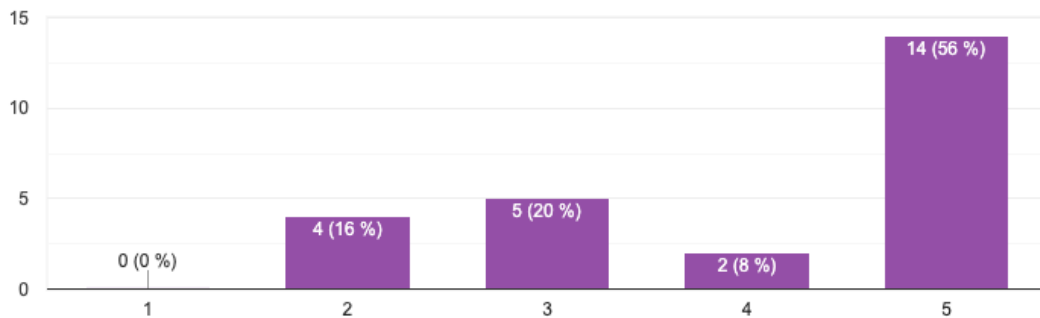After this activity I am able to express feelings more easily

24 respuestas

After this activity I am more aware of other people's feelings

25 respuestas

Appendix B. Materials activity 2

- Video healthy relationships

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPb_B0pTBoQ&t=1s
- Padlet

  https://padlet.com/espemestreriera/mjj6u76b8iikx2qa
- Speed Dating chart

SPEED DATING

ABOUT YOU	ABOUT YOUR FRIEND/ PARTNER
Positive features	Must be
Negative features	Cannot be
Hobbies/ interests	Hobbies/ interests
Values	Values

Appendix C. Materials activity 3

- Video self-esteem social media

https://www.childnet.com/resources/pshe-toolkit/crossing-the-line/self-esteem/eve

● Worksheet

Worksheet 4.4:
How to think positively

Instead of this ...

I'm not good at this

I give up

I'm not as good as him/her

I'm not _____ enough

They'd never like me

No one cares about me

I always get things wrong

Try this ...

I need more practice at this

Helpful hints

I'm good at _____

I need to look at this in a different way/ I need help with this

They don't know me well enough

I need some more practice at _____

_____ are my friends and family who care about me

I have other strengths

CROSSING THE LINE \ FILM 4: **TALKING HEADS**

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Appendix D. Materials activity 4

- Reading: "How hot or cold does your emotional "engine" run?

How hot or cold does your emotional "engine" run?
Emotional regulation

There's a normal spectrum of how people experience their own feelings. At one end of the spectrum are those whose emotional "engine" seems frequently revved up; if you are one of these people, you may feel your emotions (such as mad, sad, or worried) more powerfully than other people do. At times your emotions may get so intense that they cause you to react to things in ways you may later regret.

At the other end of the spectrum are those whose emotional "engine" frequently seems to be barely turned on; these are people who work really hard to not feel anything at all. If you are one of these people, you may appear tough and uncaring to others. If you're someone who usually tries to shut down your feelings, life may feel boring or empty without access to your emotions.

Some people are right in the middle of the feelings spectrum. They feel their emotions strongly when something warrants a strong reaction, but most of the time, their feelings are more moderate, in the middle. For most people, finding the right balance takes some effort. It's a good idea to check in with your feelings on a regular basis to make sure you know what you're feeling and why. (Sometimes it's easier to do this by talking about it with another person.)

- **When your emotional engine won't start**

  Some people shut down their emotions in an effort to stay in control. They may sit through a violent horror film without flinching while their friends are terrified. Or they may act like they don't care when a teacher is mad at them. Or they may not show any sign of frustration when the coach makes the whole team do 100 push-ups because one kid was late to practice.

  How do they do it? In order to get through a difficult situation without losing control or experiencing a lot of negative feelings, they may tell themselves that they don't care about the situation. This strategy can be useful to temporarily get control in a challenging situation—for example, to overcome anxiety about singing on stage during a performance, you might tell yourself that there's no need to be nervous because it's really just a dress rehearsal.

  But sometimes – without your realizing it – the brain might take protective action as a way of keeping emotions in check. For example, if you lose an election for the Student Council, your brain might prevent you from feeling disappointment by telling you that you never were a serious candidate and that you entered the race only as a joke. The problem with trying to protect yourself too much from painful feelings is that if you aren't even aware that the emotions are there, the

(Massachussets General Hospital, 2010)

- Tables

Table D1: Spectrum of Emotional Intensity

Emotion	Passive	Intense	Balanced
Anxiety	By denying the possibility that something could go wrong, a person may lack good judgment.	Unable to distinguish between true danger and personal fears, may be isolated, on the sidelines.	Able to evaluate situations and decide what steps are necessary to reduce risks.
Anger	Passive, may have difficulty having needs met.	May bully and alienate others. May say or do things that will be regretted later.	Can consciously decide when to be assertive and when to "let things go."
Sadness	Unacknowledged feelings can build up and break through in unexpected ways.	May lead to loss of ability to carry out daily functions, leading to further sadness and withdrawal.	Can feel sadness when appropriate, but also feels other emotions. Knows strategies for taking care of self, including doing enjoyable activities.
Happiness	Difficulty enjoying successes, feels they are temporary and/or not due to own efforts.	May alienate others by denying/avoiding problems or failing to appreciate others' struggles and perspectives.	Takes pleasure in own successes and successes of others, acknowledges and learns from challenges along the way.

(Massachussets General Hospital, 2010)

Table D2: Students' reactions

Situation	First reaction	Reflection	Second Reaction
A friend wants to cheat on the exam and copy my answers.	The teacher will notice, I am going to fail, she is being unfair and selfish.	She is having a bad moment, she needs help, even though I fail this exam I will pass the subject.	I will help her, she needs to pass this exam, it is very important to her. I would like her to do the same for me.

- Cards "What would you do if…?"

Healthy Relationships Resource Kit

The Choice is Yours! Life's Situations for Teens

The guy who sits behind you in Math has been bothering you all semester. He runs his fingers down your back and across your shoulders everyday. It makes you very uncomfortable and he doesn't respond when you ask him to stop. Your friends think it is kind of funny.

What should you do?

The boy whose locker is next to yours is being picked on by a group of popular kids. The bullying is getting worse each week and the boy is now being shoved, hit and verbally abused several times a day. No one seems to be helping him.

What do you do?

You have told your best friend about a girl you like. Several days later you see him flirting and laughing with her in the hall.

What do you do?

You have been 25 pounds overweight for a couple of years. For the last 6 months you have been following a sensible eating plan and exercising regularly. It has been hard work, but so far you have lost 10 pounds. You overhear someone at school comment on your cute face, but big body and are devastated.

What should you do?

Ashley and Nick are on a date and are having a very nice time. At the end of the date, Nick is pressuring Ashley into having sex. Ashley likes Nick but doesn't want to have sex with him at this point in their relationship.

Question – Should she have sex or not and why?

You and a boy at school like each other and would like to go to the movies

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(Western Health, 2011)

- Reading extract

"I was genuinely angry, because I thought he was lying to me, just when I deserved to be taken into his confidence. Spotting a girl I knew a few places back, I went over her, leaving Tommy standing. I could see he was bewildered and crestfallen, but after the months I'd spend worrying about him, I felt betrayed, and didn't care how he felt. I chatted with my friend- I think it was Mathilda- as cheerfully as possible, and hardly looked his way for the rest of the time we were in the queue.

But I was carrying my plate to the tables, Tommy came up behind me and said quickly:

'Kath I wasn't trying to pull your leg if that's what you think. It's what happened. I'll tell you about it if you give me half a chance.'

'Don't talk rubbish, Tommy.'

'Kath, I'll tell you about it. I'll be down at the pond after lunch. If you come down here, I'll tell you.'

I gave him reproachful look and walked off without responding, but already, I suppose, I'd begun to entertain the possibility that he wasn't, after all, making it up about Miss Lucy" (*Never Me go*, 2017).