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# ISSUES IN ENGLISH TEACHING & LEARNING

## ISSUES IN ENGLISH TEACHING & LEARNING

**Departamento de Pedagogía en Inglés**

**Universidad Alberto Hurtado**

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**Editor:**

**PAMELA LARA**

**M.A. Applied Linguistics**

*Pontificia Universidad Católica*

- This magazine aims to promote discussion around the issues that the different actors involved in language teaching and learning face. We invite students and teachers to send their contributions, requests or inquiries for our next issue due in July. Please email us at [plara@uahurtado.cl](mailto:plara@uahurtado.cl)

**uah** / Facultad de Educación  
Universidad Alberto Hurtado

**WELCOME!**

# **WHY WE STARTED OUR MAGAZINE**

**Dear students and colleagues,**

We are very proud to present the first edition of our English Programme Newsletter. It is an initiative we have been looking forward to for a long time and it finally sees the light. Our purpose for this magazine is to keep ourselves, and the rest of the future English teachers and teacher educators, informed about where the Carrera de Pedagogía en Inglés, Facultad de Educación, UAH stands in terms of the Covid19 pandemic and how we deal with the process of online teaching/learning at university and school levels; how we are adapting to new needs and issues in online education and TEFL; how our teachers are updating themselves in new pedagogical and methodological strategies, etc. In essence, what our vision of TEFL with poignant questions is: What do we teach in the English class? What should students learn and how? Is English really important in Chile, so far away from English speaking countries? How should English connect with our very pressing national issues like equality, social justice, inclusion? Is the teaching of English an objective, neutral activity? What does English have to do in the education of a Chilean citizen in these times of violence, injustice, socio-economic issues and after October 18th?

These and more are the questions that are present in our discussions and that we try to answer in the different subjects that are part of our syllabus. Some of the answers you will be able to find in our newsletter, where we will expand on our philosophy, our beliefs, our experiences, and (why not) our strengths and weaknesses. We invite all of you to collaborate and be part of this new adventure of telling the world what we are doing and how we are doing it. We encourage discussions, opinions, debates which will only enrich our Pedagogía en Inglés at UAH.

**MARY JANE ABRAHAMS**

*M.A. Universidad de Carabobo,  
Valencia, Venezuela.*

**March, 2021**



## **MI PRIMER AÑO COMO ESTUDIANTE DE PEDAGOGÍA EN INGLÉS UAH**

### **ALGUNAS RECOMENDACIONES Y ORIENTACIONES**

**VERÓNICA POLANCO**

**M.A. Psicología Educacional**

*Pontificia Universidad Católica*

El proceso que inicias estos días será una ruta interesante de cambios y aprendizajes, tanto para el/la profesional en que te convertirás, como también en términos personales. Habrá muchos desafíos, experiencias nuevas y situaciones distintas a lo vivido en tus años escolares. Conocerás gente nueva, profesores/as y compañeros/as, y verás la apertura de oportunidades de crecimiento.

Es probable que todo lo anterior sea un poco abrumador al inicio, que tal vez no siempre sepas cómo abordar las situaciones nuevas o cómo organizarte en tu primer semestre.



Por ello es que queremos compartir contigo algunas recomendaciones que podrán ayudarte a enfrentar de mejor manera esta nueva etapa de tu vida.

Venimos de vivir un año muy complejo. En general hemos estado en nuestras casas, teniendo que tomar muchas precauciones cuando salimos y lidiando con mucha incertidumbre. La mayor parte de nuestra comunicación con otros han sido de manera virtual y a través de pantallas. Esto sin duda tiene un impacto en nosotros, pero podemos ir buscando formas a través de las cuales continuar con nuestros procesos formativos.

Te presentamos, entonces, algunas recomendaciones para que puedas aprovechar de la mejor manera posible tu primer semestre en la universidad:

### **Conociendo la universidad**

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### **Conociendo la universidad**

- Seguramente al decidir matricularte en la UAH revisaste información sobre ésta. De todas formas, **navega por el sitio web institucional**, revisa qué servicios están disponibles para los estudiantes, y qué actividades se realizan en la universidad. Esto te permitirá conocer más la comunidad de la que irás formando parte.

- **Activa tu correo institucional.** Contacta a la coordinación académica si tienes dificultades, pero es fundamental que actives esta vía de comunicación. A través de tu correo institucional podrás acceder a las plataformas, a la biblioteca y poder comunicarte de manera más fluida con tus profesores.

### Organizando tus clases

- **Revisa con atención tu horario de clases,** los nombres de los cursos, y los nombres de los profesores. Tenlo a mano para consultas, ya sea impreso o disponible en tu computador o celular.
- **Organiza tus materiales.** Verifica que cuentas con lo necesario para tomar apuntes en las clases, para hacer resúmenes de tus lecturas, para ir registrando preguntas que te surjan y que luego puedas comentar en las sesiones.
- **Organiza tu espacio.** Probablemente esto requerirá de coordinación con quienes compartas tu vivienda. Lo más importante es que sea un lugar que puedas ocupar de manera regular, donde tengas a mano tus materiales, donde te puedas sentar de manera cómoda y ojalá tener buena luz, aireación y pocas distracciones.
- **Arma tu horario personal.** Recuerda que las clases no sólo serán las sesiones sincrónicas, durante la semana también deberás hacer trabajo autónomo, como leer los textos asignados, desarrollar guías o actividades que tus profesores tienen preparadas para ti. Si además estás a cargo de alguna tarea en tu hogar, es importante que organices bien tus tiempos. Considera poder descansar lo necesario y por supuesto incluye también tiempo personal, para distraerte, para compartir con tus amigos y tu familia y para otras actividades que a tu juicio sean importantes. Una vez que armes tu horario, cúmplelo durante un par de semanas y luego revisa si necesitas hacer algún ajuste.

### Participando de las clases

- Tener que participar de las clases en modalidad a distancia requiere contar con los elementos necesarios como equipo (ya sea computador, tablet o celular) y contar con una conexión que te permita conectarte a las actividades sincrónicas. Si estás presentando **cualquier dificultad** es fundamental que lo **informes a la coordinación académica**, para que la carrera pueda ver qué apoyos brindarte.
- Una vez que accedas a la plataforma a través de la cual tendrás tus clases, navega por ella, revisa qué información ya está y además activa las notificaciones. De esta manera sabrás cuando se ha publicado algún material o información importante.
- Cuando tengas tus primeras clases, si tienes la posibilidad de hacerlo, activa tu cámara para que **tus profesores y compañeros te conozcan y tú puedas conocerlos a ellos**. Si

te complica estar toda la clase con la cámara encendida, al menos hazlo al inicio de la clase y cuando intervengas. Tus profesores estarán muy contentos de **poder interactuar de manera más directa contigo**. Asimismo, si en una clase te está fallando la cámara o el micrófono, avisa también a tus profesores para que sepan que te comunicarás a través del chat.

- Si tienes **dudas de cómo poder participar en clases** (p.e. enviar preguntas por chat, intervenir levantando la mano, hablar espontáneamente, esperar a que se dé la palabra, etc.), **pregunta a tus profesores**.
- Si tienes dudas sobre cómo abordar las lecturas, o no te quedó claro el programa del curso, o no sabes bien cómo realizar una actividad, nuevamente, **pregunta a tus profesores**. Los profesores están tanto para enseñarte en sus cursos específicos, como para ayudarte en tu transformación en universitario/a.

### **Iniciando tu vida universitaria**

- Mientras no podamos reunirnos presencialmente en la universidad, será sin duda desafiante el sentirse universitario y el poder integrarte a tu curso, pero eso **no implica que no puedas hacerlo**.
- Cuando tengas instancias de actividades grupales con tus compañeros, preséntense entre ustedes, compartan correos o creen grupos de Whatsapp. Pueden compartir sobre sus intereses personales, sobre temas que les interesen. Si en clases alguien comentó algo que te pareció interesante, o sobre lo que te gustaría conversar, escríbele. Un aspecto clave de la experiencia universitaria es poder compartir con otros nuestro proceso de aprendizaje en un área común; pueden además apoyarse con tips de estudio o de lectura.

Comenzar tu ruta para convertirte en profesor/a de inglés será un proceso muy desafiante, pero todo el equipo de la carrera estará disponible para acompañarte y apoyarte.

¡Bienvenido/a a Pedagogía en Inglés UAH!

# TRES ELEMENTOS FUNDAMENTALES PARA UN BUEN COMIENZO EN EL PROGRAMA DE PEDAGOGÍA EN INGLÉS

**FREDDY FREITEZ FREITEZ**

**M.A. Linguistics**

*Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador, Venezuela*

**M.A. TESL**

*University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign, USA*

Iniciar estudios a nivel universitario es sin duda una experiencia emocionante y ciertamente intimidante. Los nuevos estudiantes experimentan un proceso de entender y adaptarse a un sistema diferente al que estaban acostumbrados en educación media. Pérez et al (2013) señalan que el primer año en la universidad tiene un impacto crítico positivo o negativo durante el tránsito en la vida universitaria. Es por ello que el éxito en esta nueva etapa está determinado en gran parte por comprender y abordar de manera





eficaz lo que podría considerarse como las dificultades típicas que emergen al incorporarse a la nueva etapa de los estudios. En el caso de los estudiantes que comienzan la carrera de Pedagogía en Inglés, estas dificultades no solo se circunscriben a entender y adaptarse al sistema universitario, sino que al conectarse de la mejor manera al currículo del programa al cual pertenecen y a tomar conciencia de lo que implica el desarrollo de una lengua extranjera, asumiendo un rol activo en su aprendizaje del idioma inglés. El abordaje proactivo de las dificultades en el primer año de la carrera se puede realizar tomando en cuenta tres aspectos fundamentales.

## **1. Manejo eficaz del tiempo para el desarrollo de las habilidades del lenguaje**

Hay algunas frases usadas con relativa frecuencia por los estudiantes del primer año de la carrera, tales como “No tuve suficiente tiempo para...” o “Tengo mucho trabajo en otros ramos y no pude...”. Es cierto que el trabajo académico aumenta considerablemente en la universidad comparado con el realizado en educación media. No obstante, el tiempo que dediquen los estudiantes para desarrollar sus habilidades lingüísticas es preponderante en el logro de los objetivos propuestos en los cursos del primer año de la carrera. Sopon (2017) señala que el uso apropiado del tiempo se traduce en habilidades y conocimientos en el contexto de educación superior. Esto es particularmente relevante para los estudiantes del curso Lengua Inglesa Integrada I del programa de Pedagogía en inglés, ya que este curso y los subsiguientes incorporan un número de horas en las que el estudiante realiza trabajo durante y fuera de la clase. Este tiempo debe ser usado de manera óptima para asegurar el éxito del desarrollo de la comprensión auditiva, la producción oral, la comprensión lectora y la producción escrita.

### *Sugerencias breves:*

- Crea un horario en que visualices todo lo que tienes que hacer y en el orden en que lo realizarás. Asegúrate de revisarlo constantemente y haz los cambios pertinentes cuando sea necesario. Solo asegúrate que tus modificaciones sean por una razón lógica y justa para ti y para tu desarrollo académico.
- Asegúrate de equilibrar la cantidad de tiempo y en qué momentos del día realizarás cada actividad. Recuerda que todos los cursos tributan a tu formación, no obstante, hay razones que fundamentan el por qué algunos cursos requieren más horas de dedicación que otros

- Distribuye el tiempo de manera que no te agotes al punto de odiar el horario que tú mismo/a creaste. Sé flexible contigo mismo sin perder la rigurosidad necesaria para alcanzar el éxito.

## **2. Desarrollo de autonomía y compromiso personal desde el comienzo de la carrera**

Al aprender inglés es imperativo tener en cuenta que cada uno es el responsable directo del mayor o menor desarrollo de sus habilidades lingüísticas en el idioma. Alvarado (2018) señala que los estudiantes autónomos son aquellos que eligen estrategias, instrumentos y momentos para aprender y practicar lo aprendido de manera independiente. En tal sentido, es fundamental comprender que hay una gran parte del aprendizaje que se realiza de manera autónoma, es decir, de forma independiente. Es fácil caer en la trampa de pensar que esta parte de la formación es innecesaria o que se puede realizar de manera superficial, lo cual es un error que conduce a un aprendizaje incompleto que pondrá a los estudiantes en condición de desventaja en cuanto al ritmo ideal de su aprendizaje del inglés. La autonomía es para los estudiantes una gran herramienta en tanto estén comprometidos seriamente con su propia formación.

### *Sugerencias breves:*

- Sé proactivo. No te conformes con el conocimiento que recibes en el aula. Hay un mundo de conocimiento que puede fortalecer tu aprendizaje del inglés. Explora, indaga y pon en uso lo que aprendas. Sobre todo, esfuérzate por comunicarte.
- Realiza cada trabajo que se te sugiera como asignaciones y lecturas fuera de clases. Cada actividad tiene una razón de ser que contribuye a tu formación.
- Organiza tu aprendizaje de manera que puedas tener evidencia de tu progreso. Por ejemplo, toma nota, guarda tus trabajos y revísalos ocasionalmente para tener un punto de referencia de tu avance, reflexiona sobre las formas en cómo aprendes mejor y más rápido y saca ventaja de ellas.

## **3. Trabajo colaborativo como medio fundamental de aprendizaje**

El éxito en aprender inglés en el primer año en la universidad y en los años subsiguientes está marcado en gran medida por la capacidad de trabajar con otros estudiantes para generar en conjunto los aprendizajes. Esto se debe a la cantidad de interacción que el trabajo colaborativo implica. Tal como lo señalan Rodríguez y Espinoza (2017), la

interacción consiste en “...una serie de actividades mediadoras a realizar entre los participantes para el logro del objetivo [donde] ... se entra además en un proceso de retroalimentación mutua donde se discute, se negocian las diferentes apreciaciones en la construcción del conocimiento.” (p.90). En tal sentido, los estudiantes necesitan entender y valorar el rol de los demás participantes en la interacción generada durante el trabajo colaborativo con el fin de optimizar el desarrollo de sus habilidades lingüísticas y de su conocimiento y formación en general.

#### *Sugerencias breves:*

- Familiarízate lo más pronto posible con las plataformas de comunicación y otras herramientas de uso común por las cuales se llevan a cabo la mayoría de las interacciones con tus compañeros de clase y con tus profesores.
- Esfuérzate por interactuar en Inglés todo el tiempo y combate el temor a equivocarte. Los errores son parte de un elemento natural del proceso de aprendizaje. Nadie aprende sin equivocarse.
- Asiste y participa activamente en clases, no solo con los profesores, sino en cualquier actividad grupal. De esta manera no sólo fortalecerás tus propios conocimientos, sino que también serás de apoyo a otros y a la vez descubrirás diversas experiencias de aprendizajes que tal vez ni imaginabas.

Las dificultades propias de adaptación a una nueva etapa de estudios, el universitario, pueden ser abrumadoras. No obstante, son también una oportunidad de crecimiento y desarrollo para los estudiantes del primer año de Pedagogía en Inglés. Hacer manejo efectivo del tiempo, tomar el compromiso personal del propio crecimiento académico y reconocer la relevancia del rol de la autonomía en el aprendizaje y del trabajo colaborativo, entendiendo cada clase como una comunidad de aprendizaje dentro y fuera de un horario formal, es definitivamente una manera sólida y gratificante camino de la carrera de Pedagogía en Inglés.

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## **THE SILVER LINING OF FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHER DURING COVIDIAN TIMES (...OR TIMES TO REVISIT ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION?)**

**CLAUDIO JARAMILLO YANQUEPE**

**M.A. Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

*UMCE*

**Ph.D. ©**

*Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, OISE*

*University of Toronto, Canada*

The following words emerged from some thoughts I have been mulling over for some time, mostly while I was teaching a few years ago. They have resurfaced during the last two years with all the sudden changes we have experienced. These words are just a brief

reflection, and only that. I hope it triggers some conversation among the new cohorts and, naturally, engages every member of the program, if wished.

I believe that choosing to become an English teacher in these covidian times is an enormous opportunity. I believe so because it is the opportunity for the profession's revisiting. Admittedly, the 2019-2020 was a period we will hardly forget in Chile –who would? –. It stirred our society to new boundaries, particularly in how educational communities struggled, experimented and enacted pedagogies amidst politically unsettled landscapes. These events factually revealed what we all somehow knew: how segregated our educational system is, this time, exacerbated by the pandemic.

Accordingly, new perspectives in EFL pedagogy are needed, but *in which direction?*

I argue that being an English language pedagogy student/teacher in these times may result in more of a gain than a loss, provided we seriously interrogate and shake our siloed ELT tradition. I do not wish to convey to students that initiating a future English language teacher's trajectory will be any easier. If we look at the abrupt destabilization of education worldwide, we need to encourage conversations pivoting around what happened to those involved in English pedagogies. Hopefully, these discussions will both revolve around those learning and teaching in schools and interrogate what kind of changes and transformations are required for the coming times' post' covid –assuming it will decline at some point–, and thus, for future English language educators.

Becoming a teacher can be considered a gain for one simple reason. The initial experiences will be remarkably relevant during the university's first years for many reasons. One of them is that they underpin the beginning of the professional identity. Second, having experienced remote education may serve as an expansion of the pedagogical repertoires. This could be teaching techniques, strategies and methods, you name it. In the end, what is most relevant in these experiences is that they shape our amplitude of how we see things and, therefore, who we will become. This is why the undergrad's educational trajectory must be an identity-shaping endeavour rather than technocratic rationality instruction, so the focus will be on *who I will be* rather than *what I will do*, so to speak.

Arguably, in order to address these experiences, EFL educational communities will undoubtedly require an essential dose of '*unlearning*.' Namely, to dismantle many of the '*truths*' . That is why students who are in their early professional trajectories should be



open to challenge and understand their personal experiences to transform them into a rich contribution to their own trajectories (Shor & Freire, 2014). The process of thinking about the yet-to-come ELT state invites its communities, especially the undergrads, to revisit our trajectories, i.e., as a former school student, and incidentally, as a current undergrad student. However, we need to consider that this past needs to be scrutinized under a different lens: *futurity*.

We need to note here that I have referred to the past experiences, and so the question that remains is '*then what?*' Accordingly, this conversation for English language pedagogies may need to consider this notion of *futurities* (Anderson, 2010; Baldwin, 2012). First, future is the status of 'what has not and may never happen' (Massumi, 2007 in Anderson 2010). The concept of futurity is then undoubtedly of utmost relevance for undergrad students during the program and reminds us that we need to remain open and flexible. If one looks at the conversations these days about pedagogy/education –or related to pedagogy–, all of them are centred on what is yet to happen: *what education will look like, what we will be doing, how we will face future threats*, and so forth. In fact, the programme itself is outlined under the logic of futurity: The ways in which I *will* become a teacher.

I am borrowing the concept of futurity, particularly from decolonial scholars (Anderson, 2010; Baldwin, 2012; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013), to interrogate how the ELT future in Chile is articulated based on pedagogical traditions underpinned on linguistic imperialism, pedagogical instrumentality and neoliberal premises (Phillipson, 1992; Rajagopalan, 2009, Pennycook, 1998; Macedo, 2019). The identities we look forward to shaping need to address these past events to challenge such conditions that affect ELT pedagogy. Futurity's decolonial nature may serve as a unique opportunity to dismantle specific discourses around the ELT field in Chile, which uphold those strong orientations. This notion of future needs to be discussed and hopefully integrated across the curriculum as constant reflection. This is why a past-oriented positionality will be grounding to transform the future –only– if we decide to face the new academic, educational and identitary landscapes through transformative praxis (Freire, 2000). We may ask overarching guiding questions, for example, '*what type of English teacher does the conflicting Chilean society need? What type of English teacher do we need for a post-new constitution Chile?, or 'Is English relevant to address the climate crisis?*'

Futurity, as a space for action, is particularly relevant if we consider our professional discipline. As a starting point, one essential question(ing) may be directed, if desired, to the English language itself. Think of the following: English is not a neutral language. Even though the English language is considered the language of access, the *Lingua Franca* and whatnot, it is also a language that has assembled its power coercively across history (Pennycook, 1998). Decolonizing English language education requires constant reflection about its role among societies as part of a professional identitary project that embraces Freire's *Conscientização* –or critical consciousness– (Shor & Freire, 2014; Agostini, 2018). If we still think about English language from the perspective of the white Anglo native speaker, learning only about what they culturally produce, we will be remiss to resignify the English pedagogy purpose, neglecting our possibility of becoming a different English language educator.

A caveat: all transformational projects will go stagnant if we stick to the traditions. As such, it will be necessary to set forth on the university experience to construe a robust basis of future professional, disciplinary and sociopolitical principles that question language education and that subsequently streamline *identity, critical inquiry, solidarity, human rights* and *democracy* as foundational post-covid pedagogical repertoires. Will this be an opportunity for the ELT communities to revisit both accumulated experiences in English language pedagogies and bestow them a new meaning? Naturally, this opportunity will demand from us to look back and forth, reflect and most importantly, *unlearn*. Indeed, unlearning seems, in my opinion, a substantial opportunity to transform, adapt, and on top of all, practice *radical imagination* (Giroux, 2014), which is a political action that shelters futurity from the pervasiveness of neoliberalism. We must remind ourselves –constantly– that one condition under neoliberalism is that we lose our capacities and legitimacy to imagine and question (Giroux, 2014; Evans & Giroux, 2015). So, it is a challenge for all of us, and again, it is not easy and should not remain unspoken.

English language education has been too traditional for too long and has been based on folk theories for too long (Sayer, 2015). Actually, the socio-educational experiences during the 'pre' and 'while' covid vaccination period and the resuming of the so-called 'normal life' compel us morally to challenge the ongoing reproduction that has been perpetuated across English language pedagogy programs, i.e., a strong sense of *anglocentrism, accentedness/native-centrism*, neoliberal justifications, e.g., '*English as*

*a tool for better jobs and economic opportunities,* and a continuous sense of standardization as the distortion of the educational experiences. It is here, for instance, that radical imagination –which looks toward the future– is required to interrogate our profession and what we think it will look like in the next decades –or perhaps way beyond. Building this repertoire will demand the students’ beliefs –and hopefully their teachers’ too– to question the nature of the overall English language education, its associated pedagogical practices within the particularities of the Chilean educational system and its policies, among many other features. In other words, *what is the future of English education after covid?* Subsequently, one task is to continually reflect on the motivations we draw upon to educate and relate to others with the English language as a mediating space: are these motivations economy-driven? Such as, again, thinking English to access better jobs and positions in the (so-called international) market? Are these motivations cultural ones? That is to say, English as a space in which we can learn about *others*? But who is this *other*? Who do we wish to *communicate* with? Or are these motivations to use languages –English in this case– to understand our identities as part of a hyper-diverse, complex non-binary worldview(s) instead?

I find of utmost relevance for ELT communities to initiate future unlearning paths to expand and become flexible professionals who understand the relevance of being a political –not partisan– agent. Learning to become a teacher is a never-ending process; changes are all the way ahead, it does not stop, nor is it fixed. It is not about learning a bunch of grammatical rules to be repeated for the rest of the professional life. The English language is not only to exclusively serve economic discourses of progress or to travel. It helps to exercise our capacity to relate with others. Thus, it grounds a learning experience that is not only ‘cognitive’ but also sociocultural, geopolitical and racial, in that it outlines identities, affective domains, and most importantly, sociopolitical relations. These areas contribute to generating a future ELT pedagogy that builds the missing block: Its purpose. Some questions that may guide this future-oriented ingredient: What is English for? What do we teach when we teach English? What is English? Who benefits from these experiences? And most importantly, what do we learn when we learn English?

Our accumulated experiences will tell us how to address the future since it is only a critical reflection, and not the sheer complaining, that may yield improvements in our practices. I believe that the covid pandemic, the October 2019 Social Upheaval, and the coming constitutional process are the terrains in which we have to think of our future

trajectories. Thus, the overarching question is whether we can imagine the future of English language pedagogy differently or not. If we can't defy the logic of standardization, measurement and the homogenization discourses, then we will only serve to the neoliberalization of education. You may –obviously– run into oppositions to these thoughts, which may also be skin-deep in some people. You will see that the journey ahead is long and certainly filled with uncomfortable, complex struggles and contradictions. Listen to them, and unpack where those ideas come from; that is a good beginning to have these conversations.

To conclude this words, those who are initiating their English language trajectory will have to reflect on those changes, also thinking about the significant political changes Chile will undertake after the forthcoming Constitutional process. What will those English teachers look like? The same? These may be initial steps to change a language pedagogy that has been stagnant for more than a decade. So, are these proper times to revisit English language education and write a new future narrative?

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## FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE, CONTEXTUALIZING AND UNDERSTANDING TEACHING THROUGH THE ELABS

**FRANCISCA SALAS ACUÑA**

**M.A. Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

*Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile*



Generally, most of the program students enter the third year very excited about beginning the first work experience (ELAB). Since going back to school is very promising and exciting, it is no wonder, mainly because you are going back as a grown-up, a teacher trainee. This process involves many feelings, emotions, and experiences you may have had during your elementary and secondary studies; the most exciting part of this is that you will experience these situations from a whole different perspective.



Schools are a very complex environment in which many factors converge to create a particular setting. Teachers need to understand their school's functioning from a macro sociopolitical and a micro-classroom perspective, including the intricate connections between the current socio-political context and each school environment's characteristics (Liu, 2013).

When it comes to education, it is necessary to understand all types of struggles we are facing today and their impact on students' lives. As Day and Leitch (2001) propose, the professional self in teaching affects and is affected by personal history and education's political and social contexts. Also, it highlights the delicate interaction between rational (cognitive) and non-rational (emotional) and the influence they hold inside the classroom. Most of you will become teachers because you have a sense of purpose, a will to contribute to our society and change all the things that need to improve as soon as possible. This is why your mission and personal drive, your role, and your influence are fundamental to consider in the process of becoming teachers.

A deep understanding of what is wrong in our society can help you become the type of teacher our country needs; a reflective, critical, autonomous expert in their subject and committed to positively contributing to the community. Educational settings are very complex, uncertain, and varied places; that is why when it comes to teaching, we, teachers, must always be searching for effective and nurturing ways to prepare ourselves and all the community involved in the process of learning (Pultorak, 1996).

The ELAB I course is all about deep understanding. This first experience at school will give you experiential knowledge and understanding to shape your future teacher persona. It will encourage you to decide what kind of teacher you want to become when you graduate. This first introduction will give you the tools to understand your personal and professional surroundings, how you feel about your career of choice, and the educational area as a space to develop your skills and capabilities. It will allow you to know how the school *works*.

It is crucial to comprehend that not everything that happens at school is good and pretty for students, teachers, or the school community. We cannot and should not hide this from you: some things that take place at school are complicated or even ugly. Unfortunately, teachers have to deal with all sorts of situations and difficulties. Sometimes, a teacher is a

student's only source of emotional support, a parent's advisor, or a whole class's role model. Your responsibility toward those children or teenagers is enormous. To do so, we need more than just theoretical knowledge about pedagogical practices; we must have the necessary tools to tackle different issues that have surfaced through reflective inquiry and critical thinking (Etscheidt, Curran & Sawyer, 2012).

It may rarely happen that sometimes teachers' attitude toward trainees is not the best. Some teachers have to deal with work overload, difficult working conditions, and personal issues, which might impact their behavior toward our students. However, we assure you that our support and understanding have always been with our students since we know them; we know how they behave and their personalities.

Finally, we would like to address *you*. You, who feel profoundly interested, motivated about education, and want to make a change, even if it is a small one: *Welcome to ELAB!* Let's do our best to make it a significant experience for your professional learning process.

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## LEARNING TO FACE CLASSROOMS: A REFLECTION ON TEACHING METHODOLOGY

**SOLEDAD RÍOS FIGUEROA**

**M.A. Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

*Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile*

During the time I have been teaching different Methodology courses and others directly related to them, I have heard my students say how much they've been waiting for these courses. The answer to this seems pretty obvious: students want to learn how to teach English. Therefore, it may be said that among their expectations, they want to know about strategies and techniques to teach the language, how to design activities, how to select/create material, and how to manage the class, among others. But, are these elements the only ones to be considered when learning how to teach English?

To begin with, we should consider this question: What's methodology? A simple definition refers to methodology as "a system of practices and procedures that a teacher uses to teach. It will be based on beliefs about the nature of language, and how it is learnt." (Retrieved from: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/methodology>).

In the first part of this definition, we can easily recognize some of the elements mentioned in the previous paragraph related to students' expectations regarding methodology courses and what teachers do in the classroom. However, it is worth noting that everything that has to do with this "system of practices and procedures a teacher uses to teach" is one aspect of teaching English. Learning how to teach doesn't start when enrolling in the methodology I course; I dare to say it begins in IEL I.

When analyzing how IEL courses are planned and taught, we can clearly observe the beliefs about the language's nature and how people learn it. Then, exposure, interaction, integration, and fostering communication are at the core of these courses' design. Even though their purpose is that the students learn the language, these courses also help model how to teach English.

Considering what was said above, learning how to teach English can be conceived as the combination of different sources of knowledge that complement each other. On the one hand, future teachers have to know the language, enabling them to communicate to express themselves and understand others. They also need to know about the language, that is, learning about the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics of the language. These aspects highlight the importance of the courses focused on the discipline itself.

On the other hand, knowledge about developmental psychology, child development, and psychology of education helps future teachers be aware of students' different development stages. In the same line, language learning theories, individual differences, approaches, and methods in language teaching equip students with theoretical knowledge concerning how languages are learnt and can be taught. All the latter provides future teachers with a solid base that will be fundamental for the decision-making process involved in teaching.

Students' enthusiasm to start the methodology courses seems to maintain when they realize that their topics appear to meet their expectations. Classroom management, teaching environments, teaching language skills, lesson planning, knowledge about the curriculum, and assessment are topics inherent to the different courses in this strand, and they seem to be aligned with the definition given above. In this way, one could say those future teachers are prepared to face the different challenges in the classroom. As I see it, everything students learn in the several courses mentioned along in this article represents around 50% or 60% of what a teacher needs to know when it comes to teaching. Other elements essential to succeed in teaching (such as paying attention to the context, the resources we count on, the characteristics of the school and students, their prior knowledge, experiences, and background) impact the decision-making process and the teaching process itself. Nonetheless and even though future teachers are exposed to school life through the courses devoted to practicum, we cannot forget that contexts are dynamic; they change from class to class even when working in the same school, with the same levels.

Keeping in mind what I said before regarding the knowledge future teachers gain throughout the courses studied at university, I want to mention the last aspect related to the beliefs teachers hold about language teaching. They may be considered one of the most influential factors in the decision-making process teachers go through. In this line, I would pay attention to Kumaravadivelu's words about methodology, when he says that it "refers to what practicing teachers actually do in the classroom in order to achieve their stated or unstated teaching objectives" (2008, p.84). Based on my experience as a teacher and tutor, both pre and in-service teachers do in the classroom what works for them with the specific classes they are teaching. Is there anything wrong with it? I don't think so. I already mentioned the importance of context. However, I've observed teachers replicating the same "formulas" used with them when they were at school 10, 20, or 30 years ago. Then, should teachers stick to the way they learnt because it worked for them as students? I don't think so. This goes against the idea that contexts are dynamic. As time passes by, societies change, and so do students, their interests, the conditions for studying and working, the curriculum, the purposes for learning English, etc. I could write a never-ending list about the several elements that change and that we have to keep in mind at the moment of teaching. The current pandemic context has pushed all teachers to go beyond their comfort zone, forcing them to adapt themselves and take what they

know about teaching and put it into practice in an online, distant context that most of them/us don't know.

With everything that has been said in mind, I do believe that learning how to teach English doesn't start with the methodology courses, but it is knowledge that is built in combination with other subject matter areas and with the experience gained in the classroom -or, today, in front of the computer, at home- when facing reality. In addition, and without questions, the methodology courses' topics give future teachers essentials tools to plan and design teaching. In this sense, its value is unquestionable. However, teachers need to complement this knowledge to make informed decisions that genuinely meet students' needs and interests and achieve the ultimate purpose, making them learn and use the language.

The final invitation is to use all the knowledge gained to provide our students with meaningful learning experiences.

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## **SURFING THE WAVES OF UNCERTAINTY AND CHANGE**

**SOLEDAD ARAYA PÉREZ**

**M.A. Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

*Universidad Alberto Hurtado*

Throughout my seven years as a practicum tutor at UAH, I have witnessed how pre-service teachers prepare to start their last ELAB journey to finally graduate as teachers. What I have observed is repetitive: anxious and nervous students even before being introduced to the school and guide teacher. Afterward, they feel frustrated because of last-minute changes and feel irritated because they do not understand the host teacher's requests and the institutions. All these feelings are experienced by trainees while adapting to new settings, challenges, and constant changes. During 2020, I noticed my students not only felt impatient, frustrated, and hasty, but also harbored an overwhelming level of uncertainty caused by the pandemic. The first disappointment came when

learning that they were not going to be able to teach in schools face-to-face. Then, they showed anger while demanding the coordination and tutors to offer some certainty when nobody knew the plot twists the pandemic was about to bring. During the second semester, the situation improved, and students started online practicum projects; however, uncertainty, stress, frustration, and resistance to change were still present, in some cases, until the end of the process.

### **Uncertainty and the fear of failing.**

For us to understand the impact of uncertainty, I would like to explain its meaning briefly. The psychologist Marija Roth (cited in Kavajes, 2016) provides a simple definition for uncertainty. She describes it as a state in which we are unsure about circumstances or people, and by not being able to predict or anticipate events, we lose conviction. In the report *Managing change and uncertainty: Education for the future* (2016), she was cited to explain that this instability associated with uncertainty comes from change. In the same report, Roth is referenced again to emphasize that change is an *unavoidable transformation*, which will always be part of the human experience.

After sharing this information, what remains in my mind is the *loss of conviction* caused by uncertainty. If there is no conviction, we lack determination, and if there is no determination, there will be most likely fear of failure. This is probably what our students felt when walking the last kilometer of their degree in the middle of the pandemic. All of us have felt lost, confused, and suspicious because of the uncertainty created by the pandemic and other situations that push us towards change (Kavajes, 2016). However, it is healthy and realistic for pre and in-service teachers to accept that constant change and uncertainty are part of the teaching profession. Looking at the situation from a different scope, we should consider that situations and interactions move up and down daily when teaching human beings, providing us with valuable professional and life lessons. Furthermore, some teachers consider changes during the teaching/learning process a way to personal and spiritual growth (Chu, 2016). In that case, if this is what we are destined to live, then why not to accept it. Why not enduring those feelings, recognize our limits and take actions to feel secure?

**Adaptability and sense-making for self-care.**

In the search for answers to help our students feel more comfortable, I found it helpful to draw upon adaptability and sense-making. In the first place, adaptability is understood as being able to react and respond constructively to changes (Collie & Martin, 2016), while sense-making could help pre-service teachers to understand what is going on around them to adjust and learn from a new situation (Braaten et al., 2020). In this case, I dare to say sense-making should come first, to provide students-teachers with the knowledge and confidence to accept the new rules and adapt to the current context. Following the method suggested by Braaten to work with sense-making (2016), and merging this with my professional experience and studies on Buddhism, I recommend that we: a) dare to ask questions, b) avoid creating unjustified expectations, and c) determine ourselves to face our feelings while living one day at a time.

First, when I say dare to ask questions, I mean we should not feel ashamed to collect all the information we need to get familiar with the new surroundings. By all means, we should take care of our manners when making specific requests; let us do it kindly and respectfully. If a discouraging response comes back, we are not to take it personally. Remember us humans have many dimensions, and those reactions often come from a very intimate space. Second, and regarding expectations, neither early hopes nor paranoid delusions will be useful when we need to know how things work. A piece of advice would be to take our time to observe and figure out what the best way to approach the host teacher and students is. Third, I would say that after getting familiarized with routines and interactions, we should work on self-awareness, being empathetic with ourselves, and living one day at a time. We must acknowledge that self-awareness development does not happen quickly and demands effort. Therefore, when living each day, we should try to be as conscious as possible of our emotions. We can register critical situations and how we react to know ourselves and look for strategies to recenter and continue with work. Tomorrow is always a fresh start for us to get along with ourselves and others.

All in all, becoming teachers implies that we will constantly be exposed to unexpected changes and uncertainty. The nature of teaching demands high adaptability and sense-making of new situations to make the right decisions and act accordingly. In this case, being attentive to feelings associated with uncertainty caused by the change will help us

gain the confidence to get involved with the new place. At the same time, we can raise awareness of our emotional states to learn how to develop a healthy relationship with ourselves and others.

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# TEACHING QUEERLY OR STOP TEACHING STRAIGHT!

**DIEGO VALENZUELA**

**M.A. Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

*Universidad Andrés Bello*

The Chilean national curriculum of English understands language learning from a communicative perspective. In simple words, it encourages teachers and learners to get involved into learning experiences where the foreign language is a tool to participate in diverse communicative situations. Additionally, the national curriculum of English promotes multiculturalism. It states several attitudinal learning objectives that prompt students to be curious and respectful of local and foreign cultures. This curricular framework persuades us to think that TEFL in Chile is not only about learning English communicatively, but it is also an opportunity to get acquainted with different and diverse cultures and identities. Interestingly enough, when browsing through learning materials it seems as if they have been historically imagining a monocultural community of interlocutors.



Whether it is in activity books, suggested materials, or extensive readings, the most represented experiences relate to white-upper-classes and are commonly informed by male-centered perspectives. This tension results in stereotyped coursebooks in which minorities are usually ill-represented or not mentioned at all (Gray, 2013). Sadly, the

learning process ends up being structured under these male-chauvinist and white-privileged viewpoints and several cultures and identities are rendered invisible and silent. Queer people are not the exception.

Queer people have always been around. Sexual and gender non-normative identities have spent a great deal of time creating and living in an underground world that keeps valuable human experiences. In Chile, the queer community has been historically neglected. Regardless of whether it was the discrimination and isolation exerted by a socialist project, or the abuses and molestations of the military, queer people have always been disregarded (Contardo, 2012). Moreover, the queer Chilean community has been typically framed as the abnormal, obscene and forbidden, and therefore they have been forced to live in the limits of our society (Salazar, 2017). Despite all these discriminatory experiences, queer people find in each other a family and the support and love they need to keep fighting for their freedom.

All these issues are not often brought into the EFL classroom. Sexual and gender issues are regularly imagined as aspects of the private lives of teachers and learners, and therefore little pedagogical attention is given to them (Paiz, 2019). However, the only identities that are forced to kept silent in the private lives of learners or educators are those who do not respond to the accepted hetero and binary norms of our system. If a student or teacher happens to be straight and identify him/herself with normative gender identities, their sexual and gender experiences are represented all over, nevertheless if one learner or educator belongs to the queer community, he/she is more likely to be underrepresented, discriminated, or isolated. Thus, sexual and gender issues are part of every classroom, whether it is by over representing one sexual and gender identity or by silencing others. In accepting this, we acknowledge that the English language classroom is a gendered and sexualized place (Nelson, 2002). All language learning experiences, then, produce, reproduce and reinforce discourses in which some sexual and gender identities are valuable while others do not deserve the time and space when learning a foreign language. This view is informed by Queer theory and becomes very useful in TEFL in Chile. Especially to those who engage with critical pedagogies.

Queer theory allows us to teach English communicatively and to promote multiculturalism from a critical perspective (Nelson, 2002). Teaching English queerly is an opportunity to demystify a culture and to get to know it better. In order to achieve this, we need to dive into learning experiences that seek to explore and examine critically the linguistic and cultural patterns through which sexual, gender, and diverse cultural identities are constructed. It is important to note that this approach does not seek to include “appropriate” representation of queer subjects, but to understand the linguistic and social norms beneath the production and reproduction of all sexual and gender identities. Consequently, teaching queerly is not inclusive, but political. It is about promoting queer inquiry experiences, in which learners and teachers are involved in quests to investigate how cultural and linguistic devices create a social discriminatory reality (Nelson, 2006). This process should be complemented with critical language awareness moments. In doing so, learners can identify linguistic limitations and impositions that police and regulate certain bodies, whereas legitimize others. Students can also recognize and respect diverse forms of language performance not only from a phonological point of view, but also from a cultural perspective (Britzman, 1998).

Finally, teaching English queerly is a challenge that does not restrict itself to queer teachers. Chilean English language educators, who identify themselves with normative sexual and gender identities, are also invited to get involved in queer teaching experiences. Teaching queerly means resisting to normalcy by offering learning experiences that question the controlling sexual and gender norms. In doing so, normative teachers can explore and learn the ways in which those norms also regulate and control their bodies and teaching practices. Likewise, teaching English queerly is a chance for normative educators to revise the assumptions they make of their students regularly and, to start questioning all the sexual, gender, and linguistic aspects they take for granted in their teaching environment. Thus, Teaching English queerly is an invitation to all of us to understand language education as a liberating experience through the problematization of all sexual and gender identities from a linguistic and cultural perspective.

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## THE USE OF PADLET IN THE UAH PRACTICUM TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**JOAQUIN EGUREN ÁLVAREZ**

**M.A. in Applied Linguistics and TESOL**  
*Lancaster University*

In year 5, UAH students must undergo a practicum module which requires them to intervene, immerse and teach in a practicum centre. In this experience, students must explore their teaching context, design language units and material, and conduct English lessons. As a result, this text presents the experience of UAH 2020 students in a practicum centre and the use of Padlet as a teaching resource.

### **Practicum Centre and COVID-19 adjustments**

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for students to attend their practicum centres, which forced the module to be redesigned and fostered the use of technology in language teaching; all planning and teaching had to be readapted to online teaching modality to match the requirements and guidelines of the Practicum module, practicum centre and MINEDUC.

For this experience, students were assigned to an elementary school located in San Ramón which had an index of vulnerability of 0.90 (JUNAEB, 2020). The school had an enrollment of 263 students and each level had roughly 40 students. UAH pre-service teachers were assigned to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who had online lessons in Google Meet platform twice a week for 60 minutes. For students with no internet access, asynchronous handouts were designed and distributed to their parents. In terms of design, UAH pre-service teachers developed two language projects based on the principles of Project Based Learning (Magnify Learning, 2021) and Task Based Learning (Wills, 2007). A brief description of the projects is given below:

- **Project 1: Free time and sports in a quarantine context.** The objective of this unit was for school students to be able to show interest in tackling sedentary lifestyle in COVID-19 context. The final product was a poster where school students had to include three features of the selected sports, daily objects they can use to practice these sports and tips to conduct the sports successfully. Regarding the national curricula, listening, speaking, reading and writing objectives were OA1, OA8, OA9 and O14 respectively. In terms of content, the focus was on the use of simple present, modal verbs, linking words and language functions such as describing, sharing and justifying opinions, presenting cause and effects and giving advice.
- **Project 2: San Ramón: A sustainable community.** The objective of this unit was for school students to be capable of developing critical awareness on the different ways of recycling in their school communities. The final product was a video where students had to present a proposal informing their communities of the risks and dangers of environmental problems, along with a map where they showed recycling centres in their neighbourhoods. Students were required to define the 'three Rs' (recycle, reuse and reduce) and their application for developing a sustainable community. The objectives from the national curricula were OA1 for listening, OA8 for speaking, OA9 for reading and O14 for writing, while the content addressed in this project was vocabulary related to the environment and natural disasters, simple past, imperatives and language functions such as describing places, expressing causes and effect, providing opinions and giving directions.

## **Use of Padlet**

Each project lasted 7 weeks and in project number 2, Padlet was used in every lesson. Padlet is a collaborative online board which allows users to build spaces where multimedia resources can be shared and posted, such as videos, audio, photos and documents. The reason why this resource was chosen is because it was free and could be accessed by any browser and different mobile devices. Additionally, the teacher always had control on the comments and content that was posted on the platform, as it was possible to set up different levels of security and specific access to the board.

All lessons from project 2 were focused on the completion of different tasks using online writing templates. Additionally, there was a need to have immediate feedback and identify if students were following the lesson; the teacher was able to check, confirm and clarify students' doubts by assessing their answers immediately. This allowed for the information to be centralised, considering that many answers from project 1 had been sent in the chat and as the information was being received, many of them were lost in the process. Another element that was relevant for the use of writing templates is that at the end of each lesson, the teacher and students had access to their work, allowing students to finish their task and improve their answers. The teacher followed up students' answers, allowing her to collect information on their weaknesses and practice these concepts again in the coming sessions.

The use of the template was engaging for students as in most of the sessions they could complete tasks successfully and use the language creatively. Even though there were suggestions on how to reply to the tasks, students had enough freedom to share their own experiences and provide authentic answers (Appendix 1). This was also confirmed by students who discussed some of the answers provided in Padlet, arguing that they enjoyed reading, understanding, and being understood in English.

## **Conclusion**

According to the observation of the Practicum experience, it can be concluded that the use of Padlet allowed students with an elementary level of English to feel more comfortable and willing to share their views in a straightforward manner on the contents of the unit. It is important to notice that students showed some resistance at the

beginning of project 2, but this was addressed by tutorial sessions on how to use Padlet and its value on language learning.

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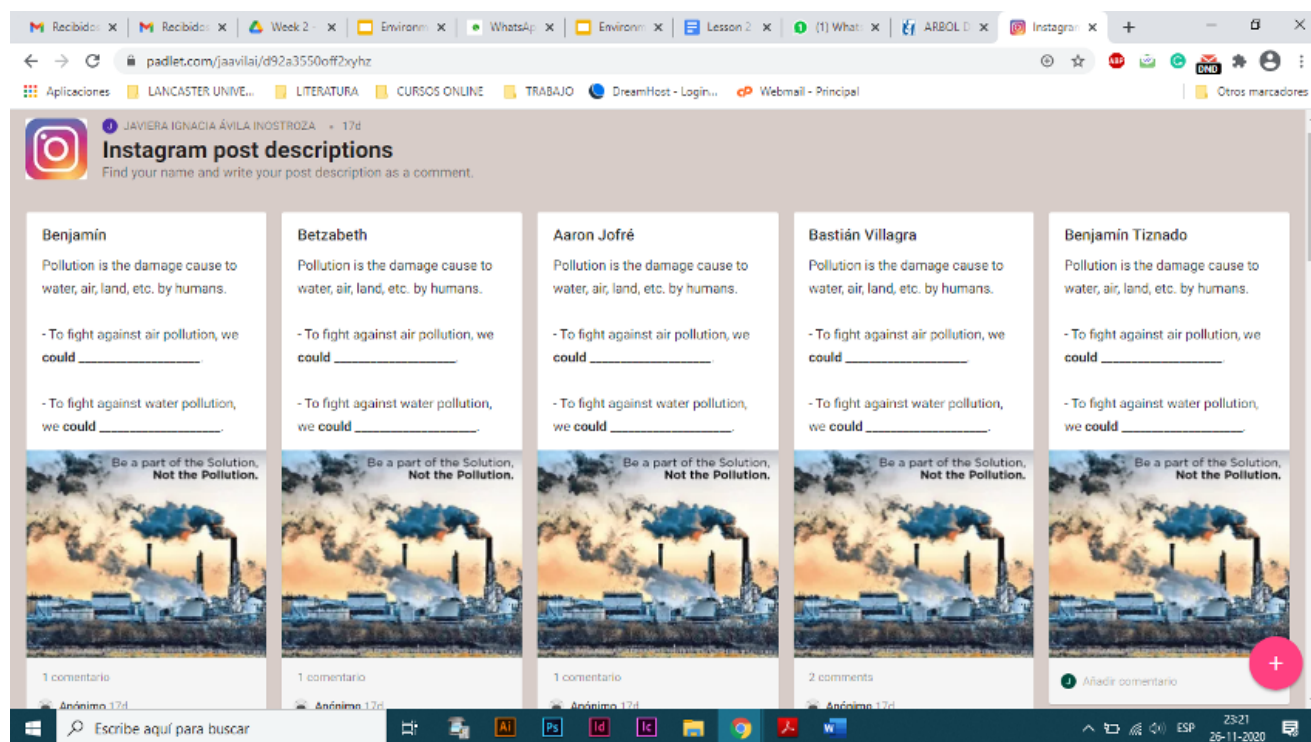
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## APPENDIX 1.

### Samples for Padlet use



padlet.com/sofirivero4/0f54ipkck6d7wo3

Aplicaciones LANCASTER UNIVE... LITERATURA CURSOS ONLINE TRABAJO DreamHost - Login... Webmail - Principal Otros marcadores

throw the little one on the floor and why do they plant trees.

Also, (2) air pollution is a problem in Chile, because we do not know how to take care of the environment.

Tell me if you need more!

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) is a problem in Chile, because

Tell me if you need more!

**Aracely**

Yes, I can help you. For example, Air pollution is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, waste excess is a problem in Chile, because people don't know how to take care of the planet and they keep polluting

Tell me if you need more!

**alan klener**

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) Air pollution is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) waste excess is a problem in Chile, because :

we don't know how to take care of the environment

Tell me if you need more!

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) is a

**Daniel**

**Camila**

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) air pollution is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) drought is a problem in Chile, because we do not know how to take care of the environment.

Tell me if you need more!

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) is a problem in Chile, because

Tell me if you need more!

**reinaldo muños**

Also, (2) Deforestation is a problem in Chile, because Come on to pollute the word and nou us to go to de left where to live Tell me if you need more!

**guillermo muños**

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) We can help by polluting less, for example: stop polluting with cars. is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, Chile, because (2) it's a problem because they don't understand that they have to stop polluting. is a problem in Chile, because

Tell me if you need more!

**jesus garcia**

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) air pollution is an environmental issue in Chile.

**Yanara salazar**

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) is a problem in Chile, because 1 forest fires t Is problems depending on where it is proposed. 2 drought is problems the Main cause of allá brought is lack of rain Tell me if you need more!

**maifer guillen**

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) forest fire is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) air pollution is a problem in Chile, because

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throw the little one on the floor and why do they plant trees.

Also, (2) air pollution is a problem in Chile, because we do not know how to take care of the environment.

Tell me if you need more!

Yes, I can help you. For example, (1) is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, (2) is a problem in Chile, because

Tell me if you need more!

**Aracely**

Yes, I can help you. For example, Air pollution is an environmental issue in Chile. Also, waste excess is a problem in Chile, because people don't know how to take care of the planet and they keep polluting

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