Title: DIALOGIC TEACHING AND BLIND-SPOTS: PROPOSAL OF A TEACHING UNIT

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School year: 2019-2020
Delivery: Spring 2020
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1. ABSTRACT

a. English: This dissertation explores dialogic teaching and learning as classroom management techniques and also as theory of education. This paper analyses some dialogic academia constructs, such as “blind-spots” and “ontological traps” and puts forward the claim that dialogic education helps to foster self-acknowledge and self-esteem. Doing so, it helps avoid conceptual traps and habits that can lead to school violence. As an example of “blind-spot” research in the classroom, offers a Teaching Unit designed for Secondary School students.

b. Spanish: Este trabajo de fin de máster explora el aprendizaje y la enseñanza dialógica como métodos de gestión del aula y también como una teoría de la educación. Analiza constructos de la literatura académica dialógica, como “puntos ciegos” o “trampas ontológicas”, y afirma que la educación dialógica ayuda al desarrollo del auto conocimiento y de la autoestima, al mismo tiempo que permite evitar trampas conceptuales y hábitos que pueden conducir a violencia escolar. Como ejemplo de exploración de “puntos ciegos” en el aula, este documento ofrece una Unidad Didáctica diseñada para estudiantes de secundaria.

c. Catalan: Aquest treball de fi de màster explora l’aprenentatge i l’ensenyament dialògics com a mètodes de gestió de l’aula i també com a una teoria de l’educació. Analitza constructes de la literatura acadèmica dialògica, com ara “punts cecs” o “trampes ontològiques”, i afirma que l’educació dialògica ajuda al desenvolupament de l’auto-coneixement i de l’auto-estima, al mateix temps que permet evitar trampes conceptuals i hàbits que poden conduir a violència escolar. Com a exemple d’exploració de “punts cecs” a l’aula, presenta una Unitat Didàctica dissenyada per a estudiants de secundària.

1.1 Key Words

a. English: dialogic learning, classroom management, blind-spots, interaction, literature, resources, emotional competence, teaching unit

b. Spanish: aprendizaje dialógico, gestión del aula, puntos ciegos, interacción, literatura, recursos, competencia emocional, unidad didáctica

c. Catalan: aprenentatge dialògic, gestió de l’aula, punts cecs, interacció, literatura, recursos, competència emocional, unitat didàctica
2. INTRODUCTION

This document is the TFM for the Official Master’s Degree in Teaching in Secondary Schools, Vocational Training and Language Centres – English as a Foreign Language at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, done during the course 2019-2020, on the subject “Dialogic teaching and blind-spots: proposal of a Teaching Unit”. Being it an unusual educational year, the expected research on the field was changed into a theoretical analysis build from both the practicum at IES La Mallolaschool (Esplugues de Llobregat) and the study of specific literature on the topic.

This body of work grows out of my interest on dialogic teaching. It is a complex concept, as it stands for a series of specific theories about education (i.e., the possible roles of learners and teachers not in but with the world) and it also offers several practical resources to create an attractive, open and welcoming working-climate in the classroom, as it opens space to students’ voices in classrooms, that were traditionally understood as a mechanical transmission of content (English, 2016, p. 160).

At first, I wanted to explore to what extent dialogic teaching can be a useful tool to prevent and solve bullying issues. As it stands, though, the question seemed too broad in scope, and did not address one of the specific reasons why dialogic teaching is of value: dialogic teaching “entails encountering the limits of one’s knowledge and ability - one’s blind spots” (English, 2016, p. 168). That includes being aware of what it is about our interaction with the world (meaning the world as multiple nested subsystems: members of your family, of your school, of your community, of your country, (Mishna, 2012, p. 16)) that we do not know, or cannot
acknowledge, or do not want to recognize. The matter seemed important to me as one of the main sources of school suffering in our day and age, bullying, can take place without bullies being aware of it (Kincade, 2014, p. 4; Davies, 2011, p. 283-284). Therefore, if our school communities expect students to develop their emotional, ethical and social competences, considered crucial to make the most of any subject at school (Bisquerra, 2007, p. 77) and hence grow into competent citizens, it is of the utmost importance to explore the idea of “blind-spots”.

The triggering questions of my research identify three interrelated subjects:

a) How can classroom interaction be approached in order to create an appealing, interesting, learning environment?

b) How does dialogic teaching enhance emotional, ethical and social competences?

c) How can learners and teachers identify their own “blind-spots” or lacks of knowledge?

Due to COVID-19’s pandemic and consequent lockdown, field research on dialogic teaching has been impracticable. Nonetheless, being able to delve into academic literature has allowed me to discover in what ways dialogic teaching offers powerful resources in terms of moral development and community building (Smith, 2019; English, 2016; Davies, 2011). In other words, when we understand education not as the monological transmission of knowledge but as the creation of spaces for doubt, self-reflection, self-knowledge and discovery of the world (and oneself in relation to it), student participation becomes an essential part of the equation. That is the reason why this document’s goals are the following:

1- Getting to know and analysing different strategies to explore “blind-spots” by dialogic teaching (research documentation)
2- To create a teaching unit that allows the discovery of one’s own “blind-spots” (innovation)

Consequently, the approach chosen in this Dissertation is twofold, being both theoretical and practical, as one of this Master’s goals is the professional growth and skills development of future students. In that sense, the data gathered during my in situ and my on-line interventions with La Mallola students, together with all academic literature analysed during the year, have been used to create a Teaching Unit that may, eventually (and luckily) be used in a foreseeable future. Besides, taking into account the exceptional circumstances in which this dissertation has been written, a substantial part of its conclusion consists of personal reflection on what I have learned during both the Practicum and the whole writing of the Master’s TFM. In that section I also specify further areas to explore in the topics addressed on the previous pages.

With regard to methodology, this TFM includes action-research and reflection on my own practice. On the one hand, several weeks of action-research in La Mallola provided the opportunity to observe class-management techniques that, directly or indirectly, were related to monologic or dialogic teaching techniques, including skills and opportunities to deal with bullying and school violence. Besides, even if it would have been inestimably useful to spend more weeks physically in the school, the possibility of keeping track of the class via on-line meetings has also increased my experience on interaction and class-management. Online sessions via Zoom or Meets have been incredibly instructive.

On the other hand, I have been reading the latest theoretical literature on several dialogic pedagogy concepts. State-of-the-art researchers in the USA, Australia and Canada are exploring dialogic programs and interventions to enhance
classroom management techniques, which can eventually prevent school violence and bullying issues. In this regard, the unexpected lockdown has provided me with the time and space to broaden my research scope, thus allowing me to dig into new, unexpected areas that have become an essential (if sometimes understated) part of the Teaching Unit I am presenting later on. In other words, having in mind the professional challenges all educators face, and understanding the need to bring academic literature to professional expertise and vice versa, this Dissertation, instead of being based on pure research, offers an innovation program too.

Some concepts I will mention latter in the document:

- Dialogic teaching:
- Emotional competences
- Blind spots
- Ontological Traps

3. BACKGROUND: SCHOOL CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

The observation Practicum took place in INS La Mallola school. I observed 7 classrooms of 12 to 16 years old students (four 1st grade classes, two 2nd grade classes, one 4th grade class). I attended 20 sessions per week, during five weeks, when students were learning English and German. After the lockdown, I have met regularly with low-achieving students via Google Meets and Google Classroom.

INS La Mallola is in Esplugues de Llobregat (Barcelona), and offers secondary education and A-Level diplomas to more than 450 students. Most families are middle-working class and live, for the most part, on the outskirts of Esplugues. According to the school’s principal, around a 10% percent of students’ families have arrived from
other countries in two different migratory waves, the biggest and latest one happening between 2004 and 2008. (Campos, 2016, p. 1).

Due to several recent vandalism cases, the school’s focus is nowadays basically on academic results and policy-making and enforcing the rules. In fact, the school is on the verge of becoming a “Centre de Màxima Complexitat” (schools that face multiple, complex issues that lead to underperforming). Several programs have been started with the idea of creating a safer, calmer, warmer environment for students. The TEI Program (“peer-to-peer mentor” program, Tutoria Entre Iguals in Catalan) (INS La Mallola, 2019) involves third grade students mentoring first graders; they are supposed to meet regularly, talk to each other and help each other. However, the program has been poorly received by some students. Two first grade students and a second grade student told me that their older mentors, after listening to them, did not consider their problems as “important” or as something “they could solve”. A first grade student event muttered “Pasan de nosotros” (Translation: they don’t care about us). In a preliminary examination it could seem that the program has been started in what could be described as “unploughed field”. Students are expected to give help and advice to each other, but the school does not provide the information, the resources or the skills to do their job. It would be of primary interest to see when and how the students are explained, or given, their responsibilities as mentors, and how their skills and commitment could be enhanced. For example, third grades may need to be taught listening techniques as part of the program.

With this landscape in mind, it cannot be seen as helpful that new students keep being admitted during the whole year (the school has a “matrícula oberta” policy) which means that classrooms keep growing and changing. That fact may be the source of occasional classroom and teacher confusion, for new students are
enrolled in classes without teachers knowing about it, or without specialists’ advice on whether this or that group is the best they could fit in. New students do not receive extra help if they have any special needs (some of them do not speak Spanish, Catalan or English). To add insult to injury, those students are expected to follow the same curriculum as everybody else, despite none of them having been properly prepared or teachers having received enough information or resources to help them.

In a general school meeting that took place on November 2019, teachers complained about their students being difficult to manage. Several weeks later, a teacher filed a report against one of her students for having insulted and despised her. Another teacher told me that her students were always late to her lessons. On the other side, I could find the best behavior and results in those classes where teachers were strict, expected the rules to be followed and constantly encouraged their students to get the highest marks. Despite their success as teachers and educators, their methods cannot be considered fully dialogic, as will be discussed in the following sections.

4. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY: OBJECTIVES

The general purpose of this study is to explore whether dialogic pedagogy can be a powerful tool to create a teaching unit that gets learners to discover and face their own “blind-spots”. More specifically, it will focus on how dialogic interaction can help teachers and students interact in ways that support "social and moral learning processes" (English, 2016, p. 160) by exploring different kinds of materials (literature, cinema). To build a better community, new concepts, new ideas and new words are of primary interest; just as vital as discovering new ways of listening, understanding and caring for each other. Blind spots may be at the origin of racial prejudices (Gil-
Villa, 2020), standardization (Jacobson, 2010, p. 275), looking down on students for being "half-being" (Smith, 2019, p. A101) or cataloguing violent or distressed students as pathologic individuals (Mitchell and Borg, 2013). According to dialogic pedagogy experts, all those phenomena could be dodged (or at least reduced considerably) by acknowledging one’s own blind spots via interaction and dialogue.

As worldwide concern about classroom management increases by the day, with distracted students and bullying issues, an in depth analysis of dialogic approaches to education can be considered of national and international interest. Young teachers will especially benefit from this research and will hopefully find its Teaching Unit useful.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND STATE OF THE ART

5.1 Main concept: Dialogic pedagogy

In a 2016 article, Andrea English develops the claim that Dialogic Teaching and Moral Learning are deeply correlated. The author explores dialogic interaction as a way of “being with learners” (English, 2016, p. 160) that entails a view of education not as “monologic, or banking education” (in which teachers know how the world is, and describe this already-made picture to their students) but a view of education as “being with”, “speaking with” students, teachers, and the whole community.

As stated in the article, the classroom can be used as a space to discover and explore the notion of “withness”, being with each other, being with the world, and thus discovering personal limits, that is, that I have my own existence and there is a whole world beyond myself. By changing the belief, or behaviour, from “I’m in this world” to “I live with this world”, students may realize that through interaction one can ultimately change the world, according to English (2016, p. 162). Even more,
teachers should be encouraged to experience this transformation too, because behind what students know or teachers say, beyond what any person may tell herself, may hide a lack of knowledge or acknowledging related to one own’s or somebody else’s personal existence or personal limit confusion. In philosopher Stanley Cavell’s words, knowing is acknowledging (Cavell, 2015).

Along similar lines, Bronwyn Davies argues that in order to tackle many education issues, including bullying, teachers should encourage learners to “see the limitations on themselves and others” (Davies, 2011, p. 285). She explains a case of bullying in which three girls bullied a boy from a different race to defend what they believed was the truth, the “normative moral order” dominant in their school and community. As Davies’ paper puts forward, such an order can be the cause of bullying: bullies can actually be guardians of the school’s moral order (Davies, 2011, p. 284). The author claimed that being open to difference (one’s own evolution, other people’s features) and to value it, would make it much easier for the whole school community to discover unexpected skills and unexplored living possibilities. That’s what Davies called an Ethic of Truths.

Mark Smith has fostered debate on whether anti-bullying workshops and programs are any good (Smith, 2019). From a dialogic perspective, instead of allowing students to solve their own, unpredictable, unexpected, maybe even misunderstood problems, anti-bullying discourse forces the difference between right and wrong, blocking students from the possibility of discovering by themselves what it is that is happening. In fact, a "dialogic pedagogy" framework may perceive "anti-bullying campaigns" or "anti-bullying workshops" as deeply anti-dialogical, that is to say, as bad "educational practice" (Smith, 2019, A101), regardless of the positive effects or consequences that such campaigns or workshops may have in a particular
school or place. Anti-bullying campaigns' discourse, based on Kantian moral imperatives "to be kind" and "feel good", fails to reflect student's particular experience as it tends to ignore real life events to focus on "reason" and the teacher's discourse instead (Smith, 2019, A115). That is to say, teachers act as if they already knew the answer to their students issues (by using anti-bullying vocabulary and categorizing children into two different categories - bullies and victims - for example) instead of listening to them and helping them find their own description of what is going on. What is more, traditional anti-bullying campaigns are said to be built upon hierarchical value structures, created originally from the point of view of a dominant adult group. That fact might render anti-bullying campaigns incapable of fostering students’ self-determination and self-knowledge (Kincade, 2014, p. 2), despite a sense of agency, responsibility and accountability for one's own actions being essential skills to restore good relationships among students and develop a school ethos (McCluskey et al, 2008; Gonzalez, 2015).

Smith uses the bakhtian construct “being-as-event” to describe the “highly contextualized, unpredictable”, messy experience of learners (as individuals) as what should be the starting point for any kind of intervention (Smith, 2019, p. 101). Classrooms, and teachers, should be open to a different kind of interaction in which the needs, interests and issues of students can be discussed naturally and openly, learning together, as a team, to face doubt, frustration and dilemmas from multiple points of view (English, 2016, p. 170).

In her interviews with students (Bjereld et al, 2019), with teachers (Mishna et al, 2005) and gay and lesbian sufferers (Mishna et al, 2008) Faye Mishna and her teams provide confirmatory evidence that students would benefit from a dialogic pedagogy in which they felt listened, understood and not judged or blamed (Bjereld
et al, 2019, p.15) by an external, adult, maybe academic or quick-solving oriented anti-bullying discourse. In the end, formal education takes place in highly complex communities, and research seems to validate the point that there is a lack of viewpoints, or “voices”, when studying conflict within school communities. For starters, Gil-Villa has described false mythologies and beliefs created around minorities, for example, one that states that belonging to vulnerable social groups makes a student prone to misdemeanors and that has had an actual impact on research (Gil-Villa, 2020). Or teachers may be unable to listen or help their students on account of a gap between what they "belief" being a "victim" is and what they see or experience in real life, in some cases learned theory or "personal belief" standing in the way of real attention and much needed help (Bjereld et al, 2019, p. 6).

5.2. Challenges: Discovering blind-spots

The main theoretical premise behind English’s blind-spots construct is born from John Dewey’s idea that our encounter with the unknown interrupts us (English, 2013, p. 56) and that it is something that we generally try to avoid in our everyday life (English, 2013, p. 55). By repeating a normative moral code, thus protecting themselves from facing “difference”, some students can end up bullying a peer from another country because his routines, his cultural differences, as they may be seen as a threat (Davies, 2011, p. 281-282). By using anti-bullying discourse as a ready-made concept and tool, some teachers may not pay attention to their students’ main source of suffering (Smith, 2019), because moral discourses can be used as a prophylactic against reality. Then, teachers and students alike can be victims of what Smith calls “ontological traps”: a pattern that keeps teachers and students from transcending their circumstances (Smith, 2019, p. A114), forcing them,
unconsciously, to freeze reality, sticking them in perpetuated feelings and relationships, instead of letting them explore their multiple possibilities and, ultimately, freedom. Blind-spots and ontological traps can and should be spotted, discussed and negotiated through dialogue or interaction.

Smith using the “being as event” construct to describe classroom and school-related occasions shines a light on some features of English’s “blind-spots” and his own “ontological trap”. For instance, “being as event”, as “blind-spots”, imply both a precise moment or event and a personal deed, related in ways that cannot and should not be prejudged or expected. At the end, it could be understood as a real-life based approach that keeps at its chore the following inquiries: “what can I say here and now”, “what is helpful for me as a student/teacher”, “what is helpful or useful now for this student/teacher peer”, “what should be done here and now”. Far from the mechanics of quantitative research, the literature on dialogic perspectives lead the way into a kind of knowledge that teachers and educators cannot anticipate; wisdom that is only acquired through participation and intervention (Smith, 2019, p. A135).

The nature of dialogic events sometimes defy, sometimes confirm, any preconceived notions that teacher or student may have about each other. Notwithstanding, events of the kind, “blind-spots” and viewpoints are always partial and should be negotiable within dialogue (Smith, 2019, p. A132). For the sake of discussion, one could then ask about what good any theory may be if teachers or students are not supposed to have any preconceived notions about “anything” (Mishna, 2012). The answer would be: it is not about denying the power of theory, it is about accepting the fact that teachers and students have a voice; that each one has its limits; and that in a classroom they are in an “ethical relationship” which should be based, on the one hand, on self-reflection, self-critique and narrative
capacity (English, 2016, p. 164) and on the other on listening, interpreting, and
guiding each other (English, 2016, p. 163) into a deeper understanding of what is
going on at the moment, so teachers and students may finally recognise the ways
they act and judge and self-reflect on them, instead of taking them for granted.
Difference should never be considered a burden or a "defect" (Maxam and
Henderson, 2013).

6. INNOVATIVE DISCUSSION: TEACHING UNIT PROPOSAL

6.1 Introduction

Teenage years are commonly described as a phase in which youngsters go
through deep emotional turmoil. Low self-esteem and different fears are usually part
of students' suffering. My Teaching Unit Proposal is called “Can I accept myself?”
and it seeks to answer the following question: “How can we know, and accept,
ourselves?”. The final product would be a written reflection on what it is about
themselves that the students have discovered during the Unit, specifically about what
it is about themselves that they can or cannot accept. The purpose of the whole
enterprise is to make the students reflect on their blind-spots. The whole unit has
been designed using a template designed by Escobar Urmeneta et al. (2019).

In order to explore this topic in an English class, I have divided the research
narration in three different parts: from the specific, easiest to understand topics, to
the more abstract ones. It has been designed on two assumptions:

- Discovering one’s own blind-spots or ontological traps is an important
  part of our being emotionally competent teachers and students.

- Blind-spots and ontological traps can, and should be discussed and
  negotiated through dialogue.
From a theoretical point of view, the underlying hypotheses are:

- Blind-spots can be related to physical, emotional and biographical features;
- By approaching literature, cinema and the arts from a dialogic point of view, they can help students understand the concept of blind-spot.

6.2 Learning objectives and curricular competences

By the end of this Teaching Units, students will be able to:

- Write an e-mail
- Write a review
- Express personal opinions through different written structures

To assess whether students are able to do so, we will focus on the following indicators of learning:

- The student has written an e-mail
- The student has written a review
- The student has expressed personal opinions through different written structures

In accordance with Catalan laws and curriculum (Departament d’Ensenyament, 2015a; 2018), the curricular objectives will cover the following competences:

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORAL COMPETENCE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1. Oral comprehension: global, literal and interpretative comprehension of original or adapted sources.</td>
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<tr>
<th>READING COMPETENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>C3. Reading comprehension: global, literal, interpretative comprehension of original or adapted sources. Topic, main idea and secondary ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<th>WRITING COMPETENCE</th>
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C8. Write texts of different kinds and formats using different composition strategies.

21st CENTURY COMPETENCES

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCES
- Self-Knowledge:
  CC3. Emotional skills: emotions, feelings, moods, etc.

- Learning to learn:
  CC15: Icebreakers and games to learn to work as a team.

- The content obligatory language will be:

  Material objects: mirror, paper, sheet, pencil, film, screen, book, box, table, whiteboard, blackboard, chalk

  Family members: Grandpa, grandma, father, mother, son, daughter, great-grandpa, great-grandma

  Animals and zoo vocabulary: panda, elephant, tiger, zebra, penguin, giraffe, orangutan, seal, dolphin, hippopotamus, aquarium, zoo, aviary

  Body parts: face, nose, hands, arms, chest, mouth, eyes, forehead

  Feelings and emotions: shame, love, self-respect, understanding, forgiveness, fear

  Adjectives: wrapped, secret, big, small, beautiful, ugly, ashamed, scary, normal, different, unknown, familiar

  Western cinema vocabulary: stagecoach, horses, shotgun, badge, pocket watch, car chase

- The content compatible language will be:

  Cognitive verbs: think, believe, understand, describe, compare, contrast, link, match

  Adverbs of frequency: always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, never

- Discourse genres used during the lessons:
  ◆ Narrative
6.3 Context, calendar and expectations

The Teaching Unit is designed both as a way to get to know your students better and as a way of letting them develop curricular skills. For that reason, it should be introduced at the beginning of the year, within the first weeks. It is supposed to last at least 3 days, but it can be adapted according to the circumstances. From a dialogical point of view, it will help the teacher know what students’ and blind-spots or ontological-traps may be, in order to be able to interact with them and guide them in their self-discovery. The teaching unit does not seek to reveal student’s and teacher’s blind-spots per se, but to show that we can be trapped in them, and that it is possible (and necessary) to talk about them.

6.4 Development

Day 1: Physical Appearance

1. Presentation: What scares you?
Materials: wrapped object / picture of David Walliams’ Bob

The lesson is introduced by showing a big object wrapped in black paper with the following message: “What scares you?”. I would ask students to think, not write, what they are most scared of. Then I would ask two of the students to unwrap the object. Under a first layer of paper, they will find a big picture of Bob, the main character in David Walliams’ Blob (Walliams, 2017), with a big question underneath the picture: What scares Bob? I would use the novel Blob as a first literary source because it is a very easy to read book, and many of its characters and situations have been
illustrated by Tony Ross. That makes it visually appealing and clear. Besides, the topic of self-knowledge and self-esteem is pivotal in the novel.

2. **Input. Bob's story:** Materials: wrapped object / map of the zoo / versions 1, 2, 3 of animal descriptions (with little variations) / Bob's family tree and explanation of his "funny face" (his big nose)

   Every group is given the map of a zoo (already available in the book). One student is in charge of taking care of the map and reads a first question: Which animal scares Bob the most? The other students receive different pieces of information. One receives a family-tree (available in the book) with pictures of Bob's family, and a brief explanation of why Bob is bullied because he has a "funny face". Three students receive descriptions of beautiful and popular animals that everybody wants to see except Bob, who wants to take care of forgotten, neglected animals. These descriptions don't come with the name of the animal, so after reading them, students have to guess the correct name. In order to help, version 1 of these descriptions will have the first letter of the animals' name, version 2 will have the last letter, version 3 will give the number of letters the word has. By sharing these clues, students will have it easier to answer the question.

3. **Discussion:** Students have to cross on the zoo map every animal that's been described, until there's only one animal left: BLOB, a fish with a big NOSE. Then, by comparing BLOB to BOB, and after understanding the "Funny face" explanation and comparing it to the family tree, students may be able to answer the question: Bob is scared of his face/his body. The teacher is not encouraged to make the students reach this particular conclusion. He/She should promote students interaction
Teacher asks the questions: Is this topic important to you? Do you think anyone should be ashamed of his/her body?

4. **Class product**: Students write an informal e-mail to Bob with one, two or all of these contents, depending on the level of the student:

- What do they think about his physical appearance issue, and if they consider it to be a real problem
- Sharing something they may like or do not like about themselves.

*Day 1: Chart for the session*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective of the session: Focus on physical diversity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
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<td>------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1- Warm-up | - Listening  
- Speaking | - Guessing game  
- Unwrapping the object | - Show mysterious object  
- Helping students guess what the object is  
- Ask the question: What scares Bob? |
| 2- Input:  
- Bob's family  
- Bob's problem  
- Zoo descriptions | - Reading  
- Speaking  
- Listening  
- Interaction | - Understand literary texts  
- Understand pictures (*Blob*)  
- Describe pictures | - Make teams  
- Give material  
- Answer questions |
| 3- In-groups practice | - Reading  
- Speaking  
- Listening  
- Interaction | - Complete zoo descriptions  
- Cross zoo areas  
- Compare and contrast different texts and sources of information | - Answer student questions |
| 4- Collective sharing | - Speaking  
- Listening  
- Interaction | - Give opinions  
- Listen and respect other students’ opinions | - Ask questions: Is this topic important to you? Do you think Bob should be ashamed of himself? |
5- Output: E-mail
- Writing
  - Write an e-mail
  - Follow instructions
  - Reflect on what has been learned
  - Give opinions
- Explain how to write an informal e-mail

**Assessment:**
Peer-to-peer assessment. Students work on their personal e-mails in groups, share their opinions, make sure that each other remembers the rules to write an informal e-mail. They work with this rubric:

Beginners: E-mail shows short or incomplete sentences. E-mail includes none or very few words learned in class. E-mail does not give personal opinion, or very poorly. E-mail does not seem linked to the story told in class.

Advanced: E-mail shows full sentences. E-mail includes some words learned in class. E-mail shows a personal opinion. The e-mail is linked to the story told in class.

Proficient: The e-mail shows full, content-rich sentences. The e-mail includes some or many words learned in class, and some extra ones. The e-mail a personal point of view in detail. The e-mail is linked creatively to the story told in class.

**Day 2: Emotions and moods**


1. **Presentation.** We tear apart Bob's picture from the mysterious object and unwrap a second layer of paper. There's the picture of an old sheriff and the question: What scares the sheriff?

2. **Input:** We then watch *Borrowed Time* (Coats and Hamou-Lhadj, 2016), a powerful short film about an old Sheriff that cannot forgive himself for what he did in the past.
As the story is build upon several flashbacks, and in order to make sure that everybody understands the film as it unfolds, students (still in fives) will receive several snapshots of the film and they’ll have to re-build the story chronologically after watching it. Moreover, every snapshot will have to be completed with one brief sentence describing the specific moment captured. The film itself, the snapshots and the sentences will guide the students during the task.

3. **Discussion**: After putting the pictures in order, and by putting the correct sentence in each space, students will see that some letters in the sentences are underlined. By reading them out loud in order, students will be able to read: MEMORIES. So the sheriff is scared of what he did in the past, he is scared of his soul. Teacher then asks the question: Is this topic important to you? Do you think the sheriff should forgive himself?

4. **Class product**: A big poster that reflects collective discussion. Every student writes one word, sentence or draws a picture to show what he/she has learned.

*Day 2: Chart for the session*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective of the session: Focus on emotional understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1- Warm-up | - Listening  
- Speaking | - Guessing game  
- Unwrapping the object | - Show mysterious object  
- Helping students guess what the object is  
- Ask the question: What scares the sheriff? |
| 2- Input:  
- Short-film  
- Storyboard | - Speaking  
- Listening  
- Interaction | - Understand literary texts (script)  
- Understand |
| | | - Make teams  
- Give material  
- Answer questions |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3- In-groups practice</th>
<th>artistic objects (short-film) - Describe pictures</th>
<th>- Reading - Speaking - Listening - Interaction</th>
<th>- Orderstoryboard - Complete storyboard - Compare and contrast different texts and sources of information - Answer student questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4- Collective sharing</td>
<td>- Speaking - Listening - Interaction</td>
<td>- Give opinions - Listen and respect other students' opinions</td>
<td>- Ask questions: Is this topic important to you? Do you think the sheriff should forgive himself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Output: Poster</td>
<td>- Writing</td>
<td>- Write a word or a sentence - Reflect on what has been learned - Give opinions</td>
<td>- Explain how to write or draw in the poster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment:**

Peer-to-peer assessment. Students decide in groups what to write or draw on the poster. They share opinions and give each other ideas. Everything written or drawn must be related to the topic of: Memories, forgiveness, loving, accepting, defeat. Students ask each other how they do justify their drawings or sentences.

---

**Day 3: Myself**

Materials: wrapped object / shoebox filled with big, wooden letters / chalk or marker

1. **Introduction.** Two more students will unwrap for a third time the mysterious object. This time there will be no picture attached, just this question: What do you see?

2. **Input.** Students play a version of the hangman. Students will see on the whiteboard / blackboard a word like this: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ . Students will be told that no
letter is used more than once. Each turn, one student per team will have to put his hand into a shoebox filled with big, wooden letters. Just by touching the shapes, and not seeing them, students will have to understand what letter he or she is touching at that moment, go back to the team and tell them. The first team to put all the letters together in order, and discarding repeated ones, will be able to scream: MYSELF. Then they will unwrap the object completely and discover a mirror, with a sentence written on the lower part: CAN YOU ACCEPT ME? Finally, students will be invited to see themselves in the mirror and read the question. Then every student is given a worksheet with different words: body, soul, memories, myself, love, hate, fear. Students underline the ones they like or feel comfortable with, and circle those they may have trouble with. Then students will watch How do you define yourself?, a TEDx Talk by Lizzie Velasquez, about the benefits of her syndrome (Velasquez, 2014).

3. Discussion: The video is discussed in class, together with meaning of the concepts previously read (body, soul, myself, love, hate, fear, acceptance, self-acceptance). Afterwards, the concepts are linked to Bob’s and the Sheriff's stories. The teacher asks the question: Is it an important topic to you? Do you like talking about it?

4. Output: A review of a TV show, a novel, a newspaper story, real life experiences, or any kind of materials that they consider relevant to the topic. They must explain why they have chosen this particular product and explain how it is related to Bob’s, the sheriff’s, Lizzie’s or their own stories.

Day 3: Chart for the session

<p>| Objective of the session: Focus on self-knowledge | 24 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Student’s role</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Warm-up</td>
<td>- Listening - Speaking</td>
<td>- Guessing game - Unwrapping the object</td>
<td>- Show mysterious object - Helping students guess what the object is - Ask the question: Can you accept yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Input:</td>
<td>- Reading - Speaking - Listening - Interaction</td>
<td>- Describing shapes - Understanding videos - Understand speeches</td>
<td>- Make teams - Give material - Answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hangman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lizzie Velasquez’s video</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Collective sharing</td>
<td>- Speaking - Listening - Interaction</td>
<td>- Giving opinions - Listening and respecting other students’ opinions</td>
<td>- Ask questions: Is this topic important to you? What do you think about Lizzie's point of view? Do you agree with her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Output: E-mail</td>
<td>- Writing</td>
<td>- Writing a review - Following instructions - Reflect on what has been learned - Give opinions</td>
<td>- Explain how to write a review - Show and explain rubric to students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment:**

Assessment of learning. Teacher collects student's reviews and assesses them according to this rubric.

Beginners: The review shows short or incomplete sentences. The review includes none or very few words learned in class. The review does not describe or barely describes a product. The review does not link the product to the ones seen in class.

Advanced: The review shows full sentences. The review includes some words learned in class. The review describes a product. The review links the product to
Proficient: The review shows full, content-rich sentences. The review includes some or many words learned in class, and some extra ones. The review describes in detail a product. The review links creatively the product reviewed to the ones seen in class.

6.5 Assessment criteria

On Day 1: Peer-to-peer feedback for learning. Following this rubric:

Beginners: E-mail shows short or incomplete sentences. E-mail includes none or very few words learned in class. E-mail does express a personal opinion, or very poorly. E-mail does not seem linked to the story told in class.

Advanced: E-mail shows full sentences. E-mail includes some words learned in class. E-mail expresses a comprehensible personal opinion. The e-mail is linked to the story told in class.

Proficient: The e-mail shows full, content-rich sentences. The e-mail includes some or many words learned in class, and some extra ones. The e-mail expresses a personal point of view in detail. The e-mail is linked creatively to the story told in class.

On Day 2: Peer-to-peer assessment. Students decide in groups what to write or draw on the poster. They share opinions and give each other ideas. Everything written or drawn must be related to the topic of: Memories,
forgiveness, loving, accepting, defeat. Students ask each other how they do justify their drawings or sentences.

**On Day 3:** Teacher's feedback of learning. Following this rubric:

**Beginners:** The review shows short or incomplete sentences. The review includes none or very few words learned in class. The review does not describe or barely describes a product. The review does not link the product to the ones seen in class.

**Advanced:** The review shows full sentences. The review includes some words learned in class. The review describes a product. The review links the product to one or more of the ones seen in class.

**Proficient:** The review shows full, content-rich sentences. The review includes some or many words learned in class, and some extra ones. The review describes in detail a product. The review links creatively the product reviewed to the ones seen in class.

**6.6 Diversity and Inclusivity**

According to Catalan law (Departament d'Ensenyament, 2015b) all students should be able to succeed in their learning tasks thanks to teachers' strategic usage of Universal, Additional and Intensive Measures. Universal measures include all information and resources every student needs to complete the tasks and achieve their academic goals. Additional measures are a daily, important part of some students' personal academic itineraries, when they need extra resources and
assistance constantly. Intensive measures are specifically designed to be used in particular occasions, to face unexpected or unpredictable circumstances. As an essential part of their job, teachers will have to cater to different needs. In order to maximize benefits from this Teaching Unit, the following measures could be taken into account.

6.6.1 English and other subjects

All educators teaching the same grade should be encouraged to work together when designing the year's curriculum. As a matter of fact, this Teaching Unit should be built on students' previous knowledge and experiences, including other subjects. Therefore, the following ideas should be taken into account:

- Physical education and English: students could work on, or receive, a multilingual dictionary with concepts and ideas related to the human body (in at least 6 different languages: Catalan, Spanish, English, Arabic, Chinese, Russian). Every word should come with a picture that illustrates the concept graphically.

- Science and English: students could work on, or receive, a multilingual dictionary with concepts and ideas related to animals and zoos (in at least 6 different languages: Catalan, Spanish, English, Arabic, Chinese, Russian). Every word should come with a picture that illustrates the concept graphically.

- Catalan/Spanish and English: students could have worked previously on ideas such as "informal e-mail" or "review" in their mother tongues. Having practiced structures and vocabulary before, it would be much easier for them to grasp the words and concepts in English.

- Tutoria and English: as a Teaching Unit about self-knowledge and self-acceptance, it would be interesting to get the Tutor on board in order to enhance the teacher's understanding of students emotions, feelings and occasional issues.
Having practiced vocabulary in Catalan or Spanish before, and having practiced dialogic meetings in tutoria, it would be much easier for students to grasp the words, ideas and practices in English.

6.6.2 Universal, Additional and Intensive measures

To make sure that every student receives the needed information, resources, space and time to succeed in their academic endeavors we will use the following measures:

6.6.2.1 Universal Measures:

- The Teaching Unit offers a variety of sources of input (written, audiovisual, tactile, storytelling, suspense, instructions) to cater to different learning styles.

- Students are at the center of their learning process, there is not a single monologic or "masterclass" session to be found. The whole unit is based on interaction, games, learning vocabulary and self-discovery.

- The furniture in the class will be moved around according to specific needs.

- In case the Teaching Unit is luckily designed with other teachers /subjects, it will build new content on previous knowledge.

- Students will work in previously arranged teams, so different levels, skills and previous areas of expertise can help each other.

6.6.2.2 Additional Measures:

- Some students will have their multilingual dictionaries available at all times.
- Students will be able to take some of (or all) the materials home to study them carefully and devote them as much time as they need. That way they can come fully prepared.

- The texts can be adapted to some specific levels or disabilities.

- Some students will be given extra time to create their final outputs, and, if needed, the chance to create final outputs in several formats.

6.6.2.3 Intensive Measures:

As intensive measures are used when the teacher faces unexpected problems or learning opportunities, it is hard to plan them in advance. Nevertheless, some ideas to take into consideration:

- Conflict is always a good opportunity to learn, but as English teachers we must count on the school's providing us with resources: specialists (Educational psychologists, TEIs) to help us.

7. DISCUSSION

During the pandemics in 2020, schools have remained closed until the moment of submitting this dissertation. It goes without saying that some extra field research would have allowed for more data gathering and even the possibility to conduct the Teaching Unit in a real classroom. The usefulness and appropriateness of the Teaching Unit presented as a dialogic learning tool will hopefully be tested in the future.
The lack of field research, though, has made it possible to tackle on more specific concepts related to dialogic teaching and learning. Academic literature on the subject lends support to the claim that to discover one’s own “blind-spots” and “ontologic traps” may be useful to foster good self-esteem and prevent school violence.

However, there is still much research to be done in terms of what it means to discover or experience one’s own “blind-spots” or “ontological traps” and hence what a teacher must know or do. The objective is to help the student untangle his/her deeply contextualized issue. Research has shown that, no matter how much theory is gathered to predict and solve problems, such as bullying or school violence, every case must be treated according to its own unique features (Collell et al, 2007), which may defy all theory and data accumulated to that point (Mishna, 2012).

To test the Teaching Unit presented in this dissertation would be a good way to prove its validity. As several analysis and interventions show (Sarasola and Ripoll, 2019; Sidera et al, 2019; Kincade, 2014) the importance of projects and interventions of the kind may not lie in its inherent success but in the amounts of information it provides.

In that sense, the Teaching Unit will have to be updated once tested, whether it has proven to be successful or not, in order to make the most of its potential.

At the end, though, it should be students themselves the ones to give proper feedback on the activities proposed. They may not leave enough space for critical thinking or self-exploration, all of them issues that could be reviewed in further versions.
The consensus view seems to be that dialogic pedagogy enhances students' self-knowledge and self-esteem. But there may be a lack of training that renders some teachers unable, at the moment, to embrace dialogic teaching and to bring to life a teaching unit as the one presented in this Dissertation. Bisquerra et al. have fostered a debate on teacher's emotional education with their analysis of emotion-related vocabulary of teachers (Bisquerra et al, 2018). English, drawing from her readings of John Dewey and Paolo Freire, states that self-critique, narrativity and building community are essential capacities for dialogic teaching (English, 2016). Bronwyn Davies claims that schools' moral order should become an ethic of truths (Davies, 2011) where students are open to their “ongoing creative evolution” (p. 278) due to teachers working with them and “learning to open up in themselves, in relation to the children, their own capacities to become different” (p. 285). And can we expect schools, and students, to change, if teachers themselves are not capable of change, or willing to?

Along these lines, Jacobson claims we must attend the “normal ways we educate and the unintended consequences that form student attitudes, dispositions and interactions” (Jacobson, 2010). As stated all through this dissertation, dialogic pedagogy has this particular issue at its chore and underlies all its efforts to create a better world through education.

8. CONCLUSION
Throughout this dissertation I have explored dialogic teaching and learning as classroom management techniques and also as a theory of education. Dialogic pedagogy is considered to be an alternative to traditional, monological education, that considers teaching as experts (teachers) transmitting an already-made, frozen picture of the world to beginners (students), thus establishing a hierarchical structure
(from top to bottom) that does not leave space for natural, unpredictable, messy interaction and learning (Smith, 2019).

Rigid normative structures, prone to avoid too much questioning, may be the source of some cases of school violence (Smith, 2019; Davies, 2011; Jacobson, 2010; Mishna et al, 2008). Some dialogic literature constructs, such as “blind-spots” (English, 2016) and “ontological traps” (Smith, 2019) have been discussed as useful tools to determine lacks of knowledge or acknowledging. They symbolize the relationship of teachers and students with the world in all its diversity, therefore representing also the existence and the limits of each one of community member’s voices. Dialogic teaching, while helping avoid conceptual traps and habits that can lead to school violence, can also help to foster self-acknowledge and self-esteem. As an example of “blind-spot” exploring in the classroom, this Master’s Dissertation presents a Teaching Unit designed for Secondary School students, designed as an opportunity for learners to discover (and accept) the possibility of not knowing (or not knowing enough) about others or themselves, and also as an opportunity for teachers to get to know their students better.

This project would not have been possible without the assistance of my tutor, Mª Nieves Lorenzo Galés, and the whole Master’s, one of the unique ones that bring academic research and field work together. I consider myself incredibly lucky as I have been able to combine professional development on the field with state-of-the-art literature reading and analysis. The literature review included in this dissertation and the Teaching Unit proposed reflect the two faces of this professionalizing degree, that effectively leads to improved action on the field.
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Bob had a funny face. At least, that was what some of the other children at his school told him. Sometimes they used more hurtful words than “funny”. Sometimes they called Bob “Blob”.

Bob was born with his funny face. He had lived with it for all of his ten years. In fact, he came from a family of funny faces. His grandpa, who he lived with in the old man’s tiny flat, had a funny face too. You could trace the funny faces back for generations.

Figure 1: Bob’s funny face  (©Tony Ross, 2017)
Figure 2: Bob’s family tree (©Tony Ross, 2017)
Figure 3: Zoo map (©Tony Ross, 2017)
It was the ugliest face Bob had ever seen. And he had seen some ugly faces – his family photograph album was full of them.

"Arrrrgg gggh!

screamed the boy.
Figure 5: Sad sheriff (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)

Figure 6: Young Sheriff and Dad (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)
Figure 7: The accident (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)

Figure 8: Guilt and horror (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)
Figure 9: Regret (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)

Figure 10: Remembering (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)
Figure 11: Acceptance (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)

Figure 12: Redemption (©Coats & Hamou-Lhadj, 2019)