



Universidad Internacional de La Rioja
Facultad de Educación

Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

**No student left behind: A didactic
proposal for teaching English using ZPD.**

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Abstract

This proposal aims to interpret Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) for teaching English in a heterogenous class. The Simple Past tense will be taught to 5TH-grade elementary school kids who have different levels of prior knowledge on the subject but share the same class.

Using ZPD, mediation, scaffolding, and the assistance of the more able peer, we will get all the students to develop their cognitive functions to the same extent. Learners will benefit from social interaction to interiorize knowledge and work following ZPD: first with assistance to get to the point of working with autonomy.

There is some work around ZPD in the language classroom but there is not much evidence on how this could develop learning in heterogeneous classes. This proposal will show how we can bridge the gap of ZPD using collaborative work, negotiation, and critical thinking to enhance learning.

Keywords: ZPD, Vygotsky, learning, scaffolding, interaction.

Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 7 |
| 1.1. Justification | 8 |
| 1.2. Brief analysis of the state of the art | 9 |
| 1.3. Objectives of the study | 10 |
| 2. Literature review | 11 |
| 2.1. Lev Vygotsky's contribution | 11 |
| 2.1.1. Social Constructivism | 11 |
| 2.1.2. Sociocultural Theory | 12 |
| 2.2. Mediation | 13 |
| 2.2.1. The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) | 14 |
| 2.2.2. Material and psychological tools | 14 |
| 2.3. Zone of Proximal Development | 15 |
| 2.3.1. Development as a concept | 16 |
| 2.3.2. Relevance of the Zone of Proximal Development | 17 |
| 2.3.3. Collaboration in the Zone of Proximal Development | 17 |
| 2.3.4. Intellectual Imitation | 18 |
| 2.3.5. ZPD in language teaching | 19 |
| 2.4. Scaffolding | 20 |
| 2.4.1. Scaffolding notions | 21 |
| 3. Intervention proposal | 22 |
| 3.1. Aims of the proposal | 22 |
| 3.2. Educational context and/or Target group | 25 |
| 3.2.1. Educational context | 25 |
| 3.2.2. Target group | 25 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 3.3. Timing..... | 25 |
| 3.4. Methodology of the proposal..... | 27 |
| 3.5. Sessions and activities | 27 |
| 3.6. Assessment | 53 |
| 3.6.1. Learning assessment | 53 |
| 3.6.2. Assessment of the proposal | 54 |
| 4. Discussion..... | 55 |
| 5. Conclusions..... | 57 |
| 6. Limitations and further research | 57 |
| References..... | 59 |
| Annexes | 63 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. <i>ZPD and Scaffolding</i> | 15 |
| Figure 2. <i>The dynamic interaction between an instructor and learner which illustrates the notions of contingency, fading and responsibility</i> | 22 |
| Figure 3. <i>The structure of the CEFR descriptive scheme</i> | 23 |
| Figure 4. <i>The CEFR descriptive scheme Illustrative Descriptor Scales</i> | 24 |
| Figure 5. <i>Oral Presentation Rubric</i> | 54 |
| Figure 6. <i>Swot Analysis</i> | 55 |

List of tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1. <i>Organization of the learning sessions</i> | 26 |
| Table 2. <i>Session 1</i> | 28 |
| Table 3. <i>Session 2</i> | 30 |
| Table 4. <i>Session 3</i> | 33 |
| Table 5. <i>Session 4</i> | 36 |
| Table 6. <i>Session 5</i> | 39 |
| Table 7. <i>Session 6</i> | 42 |
| Table 8. <i>Session 7</i> | 44 |
| Table 9. <i>Session 8</i> | 47 |
| Table 10. <i>Session 9</i> | 49 |
| Table 11. <i>Session 10</i> | 51 |

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in a Spanish-speaking country has always been a challenge. Living in Peru, students do not have many opportunities for social interaction with English speakers. Consequently, learners only receive formal instruction and practice English exclusively in the controlled environment of the language classroom.

After two years of online lessons due to the pandemic, even this type of practice has been reduced and students have suffered from it. Once they have returned to their regular lessons, all of the gaps and shortcomings in their learning have become evident.

This has led to heterogeneous classes with students who have somehow managed to continue their learning process, some others who have tried but have not succeeded, and then there is a third group of students who were not even able to follow the lessons.

After the pandemic, everyone has come back to regular lessons and learners must study at the level that they are supposed to be after the two online years. However, this is not the appropriate level for most of them, and we must find a way for all of them to engage in the learning experience and benefit from it.

In the following dissertation, we will explain how Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development could help face these challenges and be on the basis of a proposal that will suit the needs of the students in class. First, we will explain all the theoretical background around Vygotsky's contributions along with some studies done around his theories; then we will design a proposal to teach the Simple Past using the Zone of Proximal Development; and finally, we will draw some conclusions around the dissertation.

The activities will be based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development because students are part of a heterogeneous class in terms of prior knowledge. We will benefit from the knowledge of those students who are more able, to get the class going and act as partners for those students who are still in the learning process.

The students will get to know the Simple Past of the verb to be and other verbs, they will learn the grammar rules using the inductive method and based on projects that will allow them to put all their knowledge into practice. Using scaffolding, ZPD and Vygotsky's phases of

negotiation, critical thinking and collaborative work; we will get to significant learning with the class as a whole.

1.1. Justification

There are different ideas around grammar teaching. After the impact of the Communicative Approach and its attempt to show grammatical structures only as language in use, there has been some discussion around the effectiveness of this model. It has been noted that the Communicative Approach could be an over-simplified methodology (Swan, 1985) and that there is a constant need for reinforcement of grammar, beyond just the authentic material used.

The Communicative Approach needs to evolve (Roberts, 2004) because fluency and accuracy should be encouraged to the same extent to benefit students. We must offer the same opportunities for students to practice their communicative skills, and reinforce their grammar knowledge since this will be a tool for communication.

In the Hispanic context, research showed the need for grammar reinforcement and the constraint of explicit treatment of the grammatical structures used in several communicative situations. The research (Camps & Milian, 2020) also pointed out the essential role of metalinguistics to focus on the grammatical content in a more specific way. Teaching grammar is important; it implies language in use and also the fact of highlighting the grammar subjects, practising them and analysing these forms to develop the students' metalinguistic activity.

This dissertation aims to work in that regard, trying to teach grammar using a Communicative Approach and complementing it with an explicit treatment of it. This will be done using Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development because the learners in the class have different levels and must all reach the same one (or as close as possible) by the end of the Unit.

The Zone of Proximal Development, understood as the gap between what a child can do independently and what they can do assisted; and how to bridge this gap through social interaction, and the creation of meaning in a collaborative way (Turuk, 2008) will foster the learners' understanding. This will help us lead the learner through a path where they will be able to work independently using the Simple Past at a similar pace during the lessons.

With this dissertation, we intend to create a proposal to bridge the gaps and take all the students to the same significant learning experience as a group, in a collaborative way through negotiation and critical thinking in a social environment.

1.2. Brief analysis of the state of the art

Teaching grammar in a foreign language can represent a challenge since it is not the same as teaching grammar to native speakers (Beare, 2020). Many aspects should be considered when acknowledging the goals that each class will have, keeping in mind the fact that the grammar structures will be different from the student's L1. It is crucial to manage this information, as teachers, to facilitate the tools and achieve the set goals in class.

Another important aspect to consider is that the heterogeneous classes need special attention when receiving formal instruction. Even though a group could seem homogenous, there are many possibilities that it will show some diversity. The differences don't necessarily have to be related to formal facts, such as age or level, but there can also be differences in prior knowledge, language skills, previous training, and aspects more connected to learning (Ghent University, 2021).

There are some strategies that we could use in heterogenous classes, such as diversifying the contents, materials and activities. However, there are also differences in prior knowledge (Ghent University, 2021), and these should be addressed differently.

We could help the students who are suffering from the gap, due to the lack of previous knowledge. We could bridge that gap with some tools, such as revising after each lesson to create a reinforcement class after each grammar subject. We could also use the help of the students who have the appropriate level, to serve as guidance to the students who could benefit from it. In this way, we could provide opportunities for the class to achieve its goals in the fairest way possible.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development has been used all around the world in learning and teaching practice because the emphasis is placed on the child's development and this has led to positive results inside the heterogeneous classroom.

The Zone of Proximal Development uses tools such as imitation, mediation and scaffolding, which will be explained thoroughly in the following sections, as the main characteristics for learning to take place. This process acts as a bridge between what the learner can do before the instruction and what they will be able to do afterwards. Considering that some of the students could act as more able peers and learning guides for their partners since we are recognizing that this proposal will be addressed for a heterogeneous classroom.

In the Zone of Proximal Development, learning collaboratively has shown to be rather beneficial for students and has enhanced the significance of the contents seen in class (Khaliliaqdam, 2014). Through the presence of the teacher or the more able peer, the learner can imitate different possibilities for completing a task, and later on, find their own tools to achieve the goals independently.

Scaffolding and reinforcement could benefit the learner, and with this assistance, it is easier for them to feel capable to pass to the next level in the EFL classroom. Thanks to these notions we could enhance learning and create a safe and social space for interactions to foster English learning.

There have been some studies (Tayebipour & Tajeddin, 2015) that suggest that the Zone of Proximal Development helps because it is through an environment of assistance that learning can be internalized. Scaffolding should be considered to obtain greater results. It has been seen (Mirzaei et al, 2021) that learning as a socially co-constructed process would enhance knowledge. Using ZPD can make learning easier and more significant in the EFL classroom.

1.3. Objectives of the study

General Objective:

The main objective of this master's dissertation is to design an intervention proposal to foster the usage of the Simple Past tense through ZPD for students in 5th grade of Elementary School. ZPD will be used to get all the students working together regardless of their different previous knowledge in the heterogeneous class.

Specific Objectives:

To develop this dissertation in an organized manner, four specific objectives have been set:

1. To investigate Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and its implications in learning.
2. To associate the concepts of mediation and scaffolding with learning strategies applicable in the learning classroom.
3. To select specific tasks that will foster students' independence in their own learning process and mature their cognitive functions.
4. To develop a learning unit around the Simple Past using the Zone of Proximal Development to improve the usage of this verbal tense among students.

2. Literature review

2.1. Lev Vygotsky's contribution

2.1.1. Social Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky lived in the USSR and even though he devoted his life to studying linguistics, his work was unknown until he was translated in the 1960s. Once his theories were known, Vygotsky's ideas challenged the adult's role in children's learning (Overall, 2007). He had always been interested in the connection between language and learning and thought that these two could never be separated.

For Vygotsky, children could construct their knowledge, and play is crucial in this regard, especially in the early years when kids start understanding the world around them (Barfi et al, 2021). He realized that some characteristics of play refer to it as an organized activity, instead of a free one. It was seen that there were rules to play and these rules were followed to achieve the goal of the game.

Play is central to constructivist theory because we can see that to construct meaning on their own, children need some assistance, and it is then when an adult (or more knowledgeable peer) will enter and mediate. If someone can help the child show that they have understood something, knowledge is going to be acquired. Therefore, the child can construct knowledge on their own but they need assistance, they need the help of a social environment to enhance

learning. For Vygotsky (Overall, 2007) learning is continuous, many steps should be followed to achieve knowledge in the best way possible.

Constructivism focuses on the thinking process and the way we learn. For Vygotsky, students construct knowledge (Liu & Chen, 2010), they are not just passively waiting for it to be given to them. Students develop meaning and construct it, by creating knowledge. Social Constructivism emphasizes the social setting and its importance to develop meaning and therefore knowledge.

2.1.2. Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's work revolves around the fact that humans have the unique trait of understanding meaning (Eun & Lim, 2009), and through interpersonal interactions, we tend to develop linguistic processes that will then result in the arisen of meaning.

He thought that children learned because of cultural mediation, which is to say that they were able to develop knowledge from different behaviours and habits from their cultures and also through social interaction. This was due to the internalisation of culture, because of mediation.

Vygotsky's books *Thinking and Speech* (1934) and *Thought and Language* (1978) express the connection established between language and thought processes. For Vygotsky, this connection was evident because internal speech developed thanks to humans being exposed to external language.

There are other theories around the Zone of Proximal Development: mediation and scaffolding, both will be addressed individually in the following sections. However, we can start by focusing on the roots of this research process, which is Sociocultural Theory.

Social interaction is at the core of this theory, according to Vygotsky, it has a primary role in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). He believed that to make meaning, an individual must base their cognitive functions on social interaction. This would mean that teachers, parents, and peers make an impact on human learning. In addition, cultural beliefs and demonstrations also affect the way we develop cognition.

Vygotsky observed that some mental functions were elementary for the human mind, such as attention, perception, sensation and memory. These could be developed thanks to social interaction and become higher mental functions that could bring more elaborated strategies for developing cognition.

According to Vygotsky, we cannot understand development just by the study of the individual, we should also consider the external factors, which imply the external world where the individual's life has developed and the elements that have impacted that development. We should understand cognitive functions as part of social interactions.

In the exchange of a learner and a teacher or a more capable peer, language will act as a symbolic tool (Shooshtari, 2014). The language will find its way into creating meaning and developing learning through that social interaction. According to Vygotsky, the learner could not make sense of that knowledge if that exchange would not take place. This is because the making of meaning and the development of cognitive functions are directly linked to social interaction, and can only be achieved through the assistance of others.

2.2. Mediation

In Vygotsky's theory, there is a strong emphasis on mediation, understanding that human functioning can be formed by several factors, such as social, cultural, and historical. On this line, many processes could interfere with human development, and also in learning.

Vygotsky had a psychological approach regarding how development could be affected by social, cultural and historical factors. He proposed methodologies that aimed to understand how is it that culture can get into the psychological processes. Mediation plays a central part in these proceedings.

Mediation supposes the interaction of a person less experienced in knowledge with one that is more knowledgeable. This interaction could be between a child and a teacher, but also between a child and a more able peer.

The development of the learner will be affected because the psychological tools will be internalised in the learner thanks to mediation. We could use Bruner's notion of a "*vicarious conscious*" to explain this interaction (Askew, 2013). Since this is the conscious that is visible

during mediation. Two natures to this conscious will help internalise the psychological tools for mediation. The first nature relates to the fact that the more able peer has knowledge that the learner does not. There is an awareness of this lack of knowledge on one side and achievement on the other side.

The second nature has to do with intuition, the “*vicarious conscious*” needs to be aware of the learner’s consciousness, since it should consider what the learner is suggesting, even in an implicit way. It is in this accommodation that tools will become internalised because the more able peer or teacher should consider the learner’s organization of information, development and consciousness. Mediation will only happen if the two consciousness interact and adapt not only to knowledge degrees but also to how learning will lead to development in that specific space of interactions. That is why the mediation process is a socio-cultural one because it relies on these interactions to take place.

2.2.1. The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)

This is one of the most important principles of Vygotsky’s work. As we can infer from the name, the more knowledgeable other is another person who has more knowledge about a specific topic, which enables them to complete a task since their ability is higher than the one of the learner (McLeod, 2018). A more knowledgeable other tends to be an adult (a parent or a teacher) but, it could also be a more able peer.

The most important thing about this concept is the social interaction between the learner and the more knowledgeable other since it is through that social mediation that cognitive processes will be developed.

2.2.2. Material and psychological tools

For Vygotsky, a crucial part of mediation was the tools and symbols used to establish the interaction (Daniels, 2002). He differentiated between material tools and psychological tools, both equally important for achieving cognitive development.

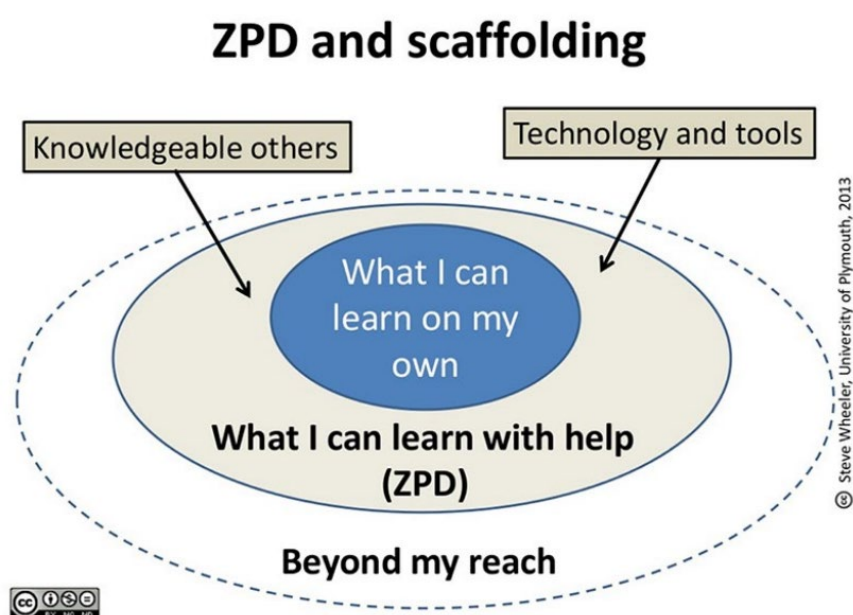
The difference was put on the fact that psychological tools could be used to direct the mind, hence the behaviour. On the other hand, material tools do not influence the mind but are used to bring changes to other objects.

For Vygotsky, there are three types of mediators: material tools, psychological tools and human beings. And it is the mixture of these mediators which will reinforce social interaction, tools and signs that help to achieve the final objective which is to improve the process of development.

2.3. Zone of Proximal Development

This concept is the most important one done by Vygotsky for this proposal. The Zone of Proximal Development was defined by Vygotsky many times during his career. The most evident definition appeared in *Thought and Language* (1978) which said that the Zone of Proximal Development is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

Figure 1. ZPD and Scaffolding



Source: (Wheeler, 2013)

In figure 1, we can observe that the blue circle in the centre represents what the learner can do alone, what they are ready to do unattended. Opposite to the bigger grey circle which expresses what the learner can do with the help of a more capable peer or teacher. We can see that the Zone of Proximal Development is influenced by technology, tools and also by the assistance of more knowledgeable others. And the bigger circle points out what is beyond the learner's reach since it is not part of the next stage for the learner and their maturity that will be expressed by their psychological functions.

There are three aspects of The Zone of Proximal Development (Kozulin et al., 2003): generality assumption, assistance assumption and potential assumption. The first one is the generality assumption which is linked to the fact that a person can do some tasks alone, but in collaboration, that number of tasks would be higher. The second one is the assistance assumption which emphasises the more knowledgeable other, and how as a result of the interaction with the learner more tasks can be achieved. The third one is a potential assumption and it focuses on the learner and their potential to learn.

The Zone of Proximal Development presupposes that there will be a new formation of psychological functions. After the mediation by the more knowledgeable other, the learner will be faced with a new structure, regarding knowledge, and through imitation and scaffolding the learner will pass through a new formation of functions. At the end of this process, a transition will occur, one to the next period or stage in their learning.

2.3.1. Development as a concept

If we are going to use the concept of Zone of Proximal Development, it is crucial to understand the meaning of development for Vygotsky. He describes a model that could explain development as depicted principles. Furthermore, this model should consider the child as a whole (Vygotsky,1998), an integral person that could acquire higher psychological functions thanks to social interaction. Vygotsky also emphasises the fact that there are periods in childhood and each of those should be portrayed with its different psychological structure.

For Vygotsky, there is a social situation of development, that happens during a specific period. At this moment the child's abilities contradict their needs and the demands of the

environment. That is why the child gets immersed in the social interactions and tasks that will allow him to achieve higher psychological functions to overpass the contradictions.

2.3.2. Relevance of the Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development has two main purposes: the first one is to differentiate the several psychological functions and how they mature from one stage to the next one, and the second is to locate the child in this process of developing functions to make a transition from one period to the other one.

The age periods are established both historically and materially. This is because they are assembled through the history of humans and the cultural practices and materially built through activities that involve social interactions.

For Vygotsky, the importance is placed on discovering where are the child's maturing functions at, and how they locate keeping the objective of the next development period in sight. The Zone of Proximal Development is a discovery that can be described as theoretical and empirical (Kozulin et al., 2003); because it objectively refers to the historic periods and the functions that should be developed in each of those, but it also refers subjectively to the child's current ability in relation with those psychological functions and how they need to develop in an ideal way.

2.3.3. Collaboration in the Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky used collaboration to refer to the Zone of Proximal Development. We can identify the psychological functions that can be achieved without help and the ones that are achieved through assistance. Collaboration takes place on that exchange.

The interaction between the learner and a more capable peer is at the core of the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. That is why collaboration emerges as a way to assess it (Kozulin et al., 2003) since success in performing a task can be an indicator that the assistance has led to maturing psychological functions. Hence, collaboration was effective and the Zone of Proximal Development led to the full achievement of the task.

We could also categorize the zones of proximal development that each individual has, according to how much advantage of collaboration will a child take into enriching their psychological functions. We could say that a large Zone of Proximal Development would imply a bigger ability to take in the benefits of collaboration and this will lead to a bigger development of cognitive functions. Thanks to the Zone of Proximal Development, we could predict how the functions will mature and how the learning will take place and more likely evolve.

2.3.4. Intellectual Imitation

The Zone of Proximal Development unfolds as a person's ability to imitate some functions, as in to complete a task that is not within his independent reach. However, when assisted the child can perform those functions, by imitating them.

Vygotsky considered that this imitation implies the understanding of some of the structural relations (Vygotsky, 1998) that have been used to solve the specific task or problem that the child encounters. This is to say that imitation requires some kind of understanding, therefore the child imitates only the functions that could be part of his intellectual potential.

Indeed, the child cannot perform these tasks on their own. However, with the help of the more knowledgeable other, the child can perform the task, imitating what they have seen while being assisted.

This implies that the psychological functions are not mature to the point of the child being able to perform independently (Kozulin et al., 2003). However, the functions have matured enough for the learner to understand how to use mediation to their benefit and be aware that the functions are maturing by that intellectual imitation exercise.

The Zone of Proximal Development exists because the functions can mature, and it is the ultimate goal for them to be mature enough for the child to be able to use them as cognitive tools that will allow the learner to achieve the goal of each task independently.

2.3.5. ZPD in language teaching

Vygotsky considered that the Zone of Proximal Development was extremely relevant for the social mediational mechanism to succeed and lead to significative learning. It is important to take into account that L2 pragmatics and language development are socially and culturally constructed processes (Mirzaei et al, 2017).

ZPD brings together all the notions for language learning and helps at each step of the way (Mirzaei et al, 2017). It considers getting the learner's attention and focusing on a task, it also simplifies the task for the learner to succeed when trying to complete it, it helps to focus on the objective of each task, and the more able peer's assistance guarantees some kind of modelling for the resolution of the task.

Vygotsky's theory is a psycholinguistic explanation for the process that could foster language development through a pedagogy based on a sociocultural context (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000). When referring to learning a language, the collaboration between a novice learner and an expert guide (teacher or more able peer) should be emphasised as an ongoing verbal collaboration. Using ZPD will offer this dialogue that will be fundamental when learning a new language.

Learning should be based on prospective education, which will enable students to gain abilities to develop their potential (Kozulin, 1998). Students should be oriented to be in charge of their own learning, but this has to be created giving them tools to develop autonomy, and learners should be able to solve problems similar to the ones presented in class. This is considered productive knowledge, because it enables students to work on their own, and this is the core of ZPD.

Through the Zone of Proximal Development, learners work in a social context and collaborative learning fosters their independence (Kinging, 2002). Students use their communicative competence, to match their own experience in this social interaction setting to develop meaning and to use tools that will, later on, enable them to solve problems on their own, after practising with their peers in social interaction.

When teaching using ZPD, it is important to understand that it will give the learners cognitive tools. However, these must be developed through collaboration and the inference of structures that will be learnt thanks to mediated interaction (Kinging, 2002).

Vygotsky's work suggests a more dynamic approach to get students to a higher mental process through the usage of the appropriate tools. Learners should be active in their learning experience; this is how they will get to develop several skills that will allow them to deal with more complex tasks (Turuk, 2008). In every learning stage, we must encourage joint activities, so students can understand the effects of working with a partner to negotiate around meaning and internalize the benefits of social interaction and collaborative work. Learners must start their process of development towards independent work in the future. In this regard, the only way of achieving this final learning phase is through critical thinking, which will enable them to acquire their potential development.

That is why, in this proposal, we will use the concepts of negotiation, collaborative work and critical thinking at every stage of the learning experience to reinforce social interaction in class and to foster learners' agency in their own process of reaching their potential development.

2.4. Scaffolding

This concept was used by Wood, Bruner and Ross (Shoaib, 2017) to explain the role of the teacher in the learning process. It was later on used and linked with Vygotsky's work; according to all the concepts that we have already revised. It is important to recall that learners need interactions for their cognitive functions to mature, they shouldn't be left alone with their difficulties to overcome a certain period linked to their psychological functions.

Scaffolding refers to the process where we help children achieve the end goal as we promote their development in the functions that challenge their level of maturity (Schneider & Watkins, 1996). This theory is directly linked with the more knowledgeable other since it proposes not only supporting to achieve the final goal on the specific psychological period but also adapting to the child's abilities and respecting the way they learn, accommodating the process to make it beneficial for a specific learner.

Scaffolding has proved to be a very efficient method in several areas, due to its recognizable advantages (Turuk, 2008): it helps students to keep on task and engage with it, it gives evident purpose and directions, and it offers clear expectations for the students which leads to certainty in their development.

The process of scaffolding implies that the teacher or more capable peer will adapt the materials, scaffolding them into smaller chunks, making it easier for the learner to understand the materials and go beyond their knowledge in a more efficient way than if they had not received the help of the more knowledgeable other.

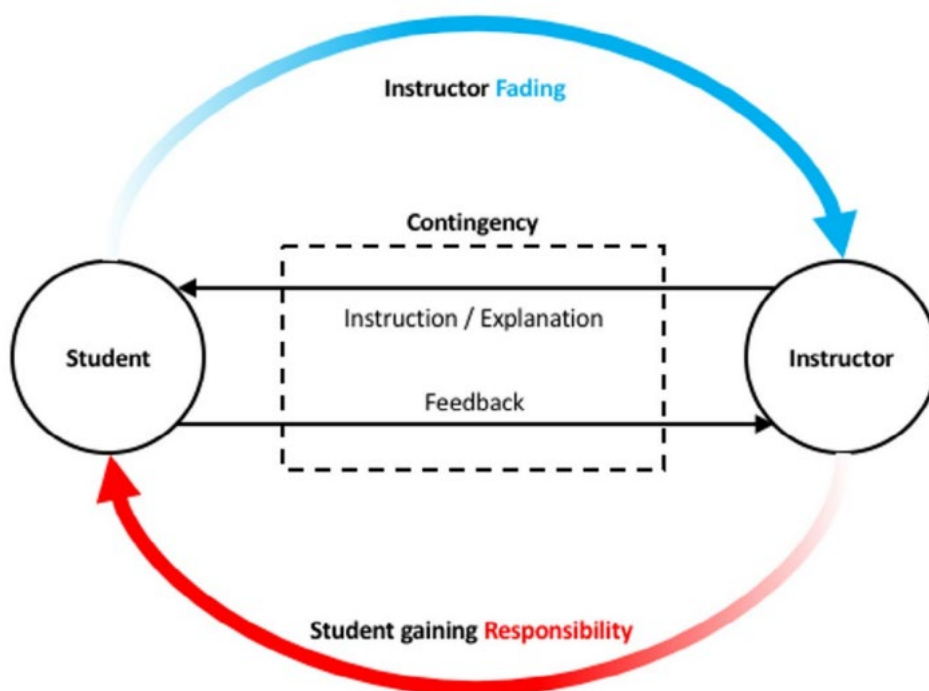
2.4.1. Scaffolding notions

The scaffolding dynamic can be explained using three important notions: contingency, fading and responsibility (Shoaib, 2017). The first notion of contingency refers to the accommodation of contents that we have previously explained. Strategies and flexibility are key to customising the learning experience according to the learner and their ability. We must also consider the fact that through the scaffolding process, we will receive the learner's feedback on our strategies; we will be able to notice if cognitive functions are maturing due to understanding or if we must change the strategy according to the learner's capacity.

The second notion is fading and it involves the awareness that scaffolding is just a temporary assistance. We should recognize at all times that the more knowledgeable other will only mediate until the learner is ready to achieve the task independently. Therefore, we should know when to withdraw our assistance in a way that feels sequenced and gradual, to reinforce the learner's independence.

The third notion is responsibility and it shows as opposed to fading. This is explained following the fact that we, as teachers or more capable peers, fade in the interaction giving more independence to the learner. It is in this regard that the learner will gain more responsibility in their own learning. This is explained in figure 2:

Figure 2. *The dynamic interaction between an instructor and learner which illustrates the notions of contingency, fading and responsibility*



Source: (Shoaib, 2017).

As we can see, the child will gradually be in charge of their learning and this will be reflected in the fading of the assistance and the full responsibility of completing the task. However, this process should be gradual and the more knowledgeable other should always be observant in case the assistance needs to be restored. Scaffolding needs to be understood as a dynamic process of social interactions that will foster the development of cognitive functions.

3. Intervention proposal

To present the sessions more clearly, we will explain some relevant aspects of the proposal in the following sections

3.1. Aims of the proposal

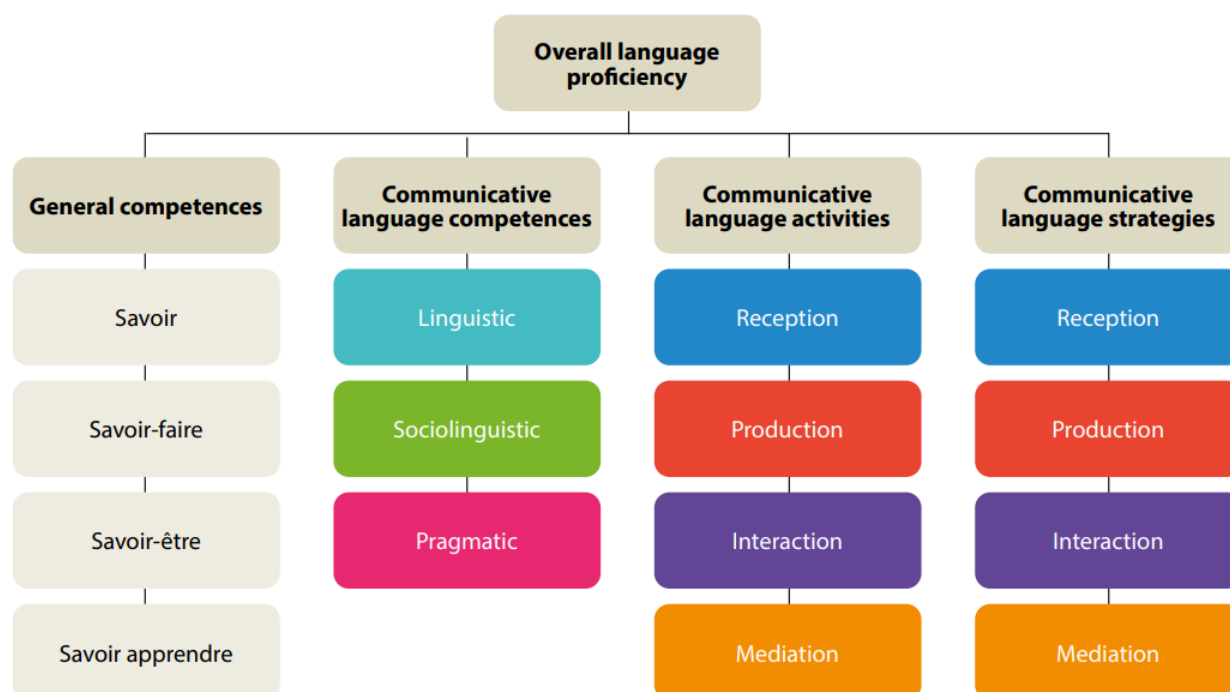
The school, for the one this proposal is aimed at, does not follow the national curriculum. Being a private school, the English level is above the state requirements. Schools in Peru have

to teach English as part of the curriculum, but students receive a very traditional education, usually following the Translation Method. In some schools, they get to end all the school years achieving only A1 or A2 levels.

This proposal is aimed at a school that is part of the International Baccalaureate program. That is why each year students are prepared to complete a level on Cambridge, and at the end of the year, they must take a Cambridge test according to their grade level. After all the elementary, middle and high school education years, students should take the B2 or even C1 exams and pass them successfully.

The state curriculum wouldn't help in that regard. Therefore, the school curriculum is based on the Common European Framework of Languages, every level is guided according to the descriptors on the CEFR, and it encourages the competences shown in figure 3, below:

Figure 3. *The structure of the CEFR descriptive scheme*



Source: ECEP project publication: Piccardo E. et al. (2011), Pathways through assessing, learning and teaching in the CEFR, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at http://ecep.ecml.at/Portals/26/training-kit/files/2011_08_29_ECEP_EN.pdf.

The class level is A2, so all the skills will be developed keeping the Flyers exam in mind. Therefore, the curriculum will aim to achieve the descriptors for the A2 level on the CEFR.

Figure 4. *The CEFR descriptive scheme Illustrative Descriptor Scales*

| Overall oral comprehension | |
|---|---|
| A2 | Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly. |
| | Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment), provided people articulate clearly and slowly. |
| Overall reading comprehension | |
| A2 | Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language. |
| | Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items. |
| Identifying cues and inferring (spoken, signed and written) | |
| A2 | Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context. |
| | Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts. |
| | Can exploit format, appearance and typographic features in order to identify the type of text: news story, promotional text, article, textbook, chat or forum, etc. |
| | Can exploit numbers, dates, names, proper nouns, etc. to identify the topic of a text. |
| | Can deduce the meaning and function of unknown formulaic expressions from their position in a text (e.g. at the beginning or end of a letter). |

Source: ECEP project publication: Piccardo E. et al. (2011), Pathways through assessing, learning and teaching in the CEFR, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at http://ecep.ecml.at/Portals/26/training-kit/files/2011_08_29_ECEP_EN.pdf.

The main aim of the proposal is for students to express using the Simple Past to narrate their last vacation. This main goal will be achieved by the fulfilment of the objectives which have been specified at the beginning of each session

3.2. Educational context and/or Target group

3.2.1. Educational context

Students take part in regulated education in Arequipa, Peru. The school is private and it is an IB (International Baccalaureate) school. The school is non-bilingual and it doesn't follow the state curriculum, because the schools in Peru follow a basic curriculum that is below what is taught at school. The contents are aligned with the CEFR components because every year students must take a Cambridge Test according to their level, as we have stated above.

Hence, the school curriculum is adapted from the CEFR descriptors for each level. Students in 5th grade of elementary school must take the Flyers test (YLE: A2 according to the CEFR)

3.2.2. Target group

The learning unit proposed is intended for 5th-grade students, who are around 10-11 years old. There are 12 students in the class (7 boys and 4 girls) and their L1 is Spanish. Students have been learning English for at least 3 years and their level is A2 according to the CEFR. Students live in a city where there are not many English-speaking residents, so students can not practice that much in real situations outside the classroom.

Students take English lessons 5 days a week, 45 minutes each day. There are no students with special needs in the group. Students sit in small groups of four students each.

Students are learning face to face, after two years of online lessons, as we have stated before, this has made the class heterogeneous in terms of previous knowledge, so not all students have successfully achieved the A1 level, and not all of them took the Cambridge Movers Test (A1 according to the CEFR) because they did not have the chance due to the pandemic (2020-2021).

3.3. Timing

The learning unit includes ten sessions that will be held five times a week, each session will last 45 minutes and they will be developed as shown in the table below:

Table 1. *Organization of the learning sessions*

| WEEK | SESSION | NAME | TIME |
|-------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1 | My preschool years I | 45 minutes |
| 1 | 2 | My preschool years II | 45 minutes |
| 1 | 3 | Asking questions about our past | 45 minutes |
| 1 | 4 | What did I do at recess? | 45 minutes |
| 1 | 5 | Writing a story I | 45 minutes |
| 2 | 6 | Writing a story II | 45 minutes |
| 2 | 7 | Vacations | 45 minutes |
| 2 | 8 | My vacation I | 45 minutes |
| 2 | 9 | My vacation II | 45 minutes |
| 2 | 10 | My vacation presentation | 45 minutes |

Source: (Own Source)

As we can see in table 1 the classes will be given in two weeks, since students have English lessons five times a week, and each session lasts 45 minutes.

3.4. Methodology of the proposal

This proposal will be put into practice using a chart that will lead students to their main goal which is to talk about their last vacation. In this regard, we will use a Communicative Approach. However, grammar will be reinforced using the inductive method, to get students to infer rules and give examples using their previous knowledge and personal experience.

We consider that the Communicative Approach will be the best because students need to develop all of their skills, and for them to solve problems using the target language. Following communicative tasks, learners will get to achieve the independence stated on the ZPD, they will pass the zone using all the language tools they have acquired to complete the activities with autonomy.

Students will complete projects every other class, and each session will equip them with the tools needed to deal with the final project, which will be done in session 10. The students will use Vygotsky's ZPD and this will be shown every step of the way, each part of the session will display one of the three important principles of collaborative work, critical thinking and negotiation.

Students will be seated in small groups of four or three, depending on the activity. They will also work in pairs, moving their chairs to get closer to their assigned partner. Students will work together until they get to the point where they can independently complete the final task, without the help of a more knowledgeable peer.

The teacher will work as a facilitator of the learning process, emphasising the fact that students can help each other, and the teacher's assistance will be given only when necessary, to create a learning atmosphere where children can support each other and do not rely on the teacher unless they have to.

3.5. Sessions and activities

The learning unit will unfold according to the lesson plan below:

Table 2. Session 1

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 1 | Name: My preschool years I | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Students can create sentences using the Simple Past of the verb to be to describe their preschool years. | | |
| Session development: 1. Warm-up (10 minutes): Students talk about the time when they were in preschool. The teacher shows some questions on the board and the students raise their hands to share their answers with the class: Do you remember when you were a pre-schooler? What were you like? The teacher projects some images (Annexe A) and uses the images individually to ask kids if they were funny, responsible, artistic, and so on. Students answer using the verb to be in the past. (Critical thinking) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Were you artistic?- No, I wasn't / Yes, I was 2. Introduction (5 minutes): The teacher asks: What do you think we will work on today? Why? Students answer that they will work on the past because they talked about a time when they were pre-schoolers. (Critical thinking) The teacher tells students that they will start on their next project, and it will be about their previous vacation. The teacher shows them a chart where they will see the steps that they will take to be ready to share their last vacation with the class. (Annexe B). The first step, according to the chart, is learning about the verb to be in the past. 3. Pair Work (15 minutes): The teacher explains that she will share a paragraph about her preschool years, with some personal information about that time in her life. The teacher gets students in pairs, | | |

according to their previous knowledge of the verb to be in the past, so that in each pair there is a more able partner to help the other student. The teacher asks students to find examples of the verb to be in the past. (Negotiation/ collaborative work)

MY PRESCHOOL YEARS

When I was 4 years old, I was very spoiled. My sister was my best friend, she was 7 years old and she was very quiet and responsible. On the other hand, I was loud and naughty. I was very intelligent but I wasn't happy about going to school, so I was always late, I was more worried about taking my toys to school to play with them. My parents were always around me and they were happy to pick me up from school in our car. Our car was beautiful, it was a white Volkswagen. I loved that car! And I loved those days!

Those were very happy moments for our family! (Source: Own source)

Students share their answers with the class and circle the examples on the board.

4. Inferring usage (5 minutes):

The teacher shares some questions so students can infer the answers by looking at the text they have just read. (Critical thinking)

- When do we use the VERB TO BE in the past? What does it express?
- When do we use WAS? When do we use WERE?
- Can you give more examples?

Students share their examples and the teacher emphasises the correct usage of Was/Were.

5. Exit slip (10 minutes):

The teacher gives students two pieces of paper so they can work on their exit slips, she asks them to work individually to write two sentences about their preschool years using WAS/WERE, and she gives them some examples using the text about the teacher's preschool years.

She asks students to write these statements as a secret, because the rest of the students cannot know what they are writing, since they will be guessing who's the author of each sentence, in the next class.

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, images, learning chart, pieces of paper.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table, we can see how critical thinking is developed by making students infer what the subject of the new project will be. Critical thinking is key to getting students to be agents of their learning. A route of how the project will unfold is shared with students, they will always refer to this route so that objectives are clear from day one and students are familiar with what is expected of them and what are the aims of each learning experience.

The teacher, as the knowledgeable other, shares a paragraph with students. But she scaffolds this text, by asking students to find examples of the verb to be in the past. Scaffolding will be of great importance when applying ZPD. Students negotiate and infer the rules using the Inductive Method.

After that, the exit slip works as the first step for the scaffolding of the text. Students will eventually write something similar, but in this first moment, they must write only two sentences. Following ZPD, the students can now write only two sentences, and in some cases, they still need the help of the teacher or a more able peer.

Table 3. *Session 2*

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 2 | Name: My preschool years II | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Students can design a paragraph describing their preschool years using the verb to be in the Simple Past. | | |
| Session development: 1. Warm-up (10 minutes): | | |

The teacher divides the class into four groups (three students per group) and gives each group one question:

- When do we use the VERB TO BE in the past? What does it express? Give examples
- When do we use WAS? When do we use WERE? Give examples
- How do we form a negative sentence? Give examples
- How do we form a question? Give examples

She asks each group to create a poster around the question they received. After they have finished working in groups, they show their poster to the class and paste it on the class walls. (Critical thinking/ collaborative work)

2. Introduction (5 minutes):

The teacher asks students: What do you think we will work on today?

They infer that they will continue working with the verb to be in the past. The teacher asks students to copy the most important information from each poster on their notebooks because this will help them to have some notes about the verb to be in the past. They choose the relevant information and take notes. (Critical thinking)

3. Game (15 minutes):

The teacher puts some photographs of the students when they were in preschool, she explains that she got the photos from the school yearbook. And she asks students to come close to the images to try and recognize who is in each photo without saying anything.

The students work in the same groups from the previous activity, the teacher gives them tags with all the students' names, and each group has tags in a different colour. Group 1 has red tags, group 2 has yellow tags, group 3 has orange tags and group 4 has green tags. They must put the appropriate tag below each photograph. The teacher encourages students to use the verb to be in the past to describe the photos. For example: This was Anna in preschool. (Negotiation)

Once they have finished, the teacher reveals the answers and the students see if their guesses were right. Now with the photographs and the name tags on the board, the teacher tells them that they will continue guessing. This time the teacher hands them the sentences that they wrote the day before, describing how they were as pre-schoolers.

The teacher has already photocopied the sentences so that she has 6 sets, students get in pairs and the teacher hands them the sets, each set has a different colour and they must pair the sentences with the person that they are describing. (Negotiation)

After all the groups have pasted their guesses, the teacher asks each student to come to the board, stand next to their picture and say the two sentences they wrote. This is how the answers are revealed.

4. Writing (10 minutes):

The teacher asks students to use the sentences they wrote the day before to create a paragraph about how they were in preschool. She projects the image of the text she wrote and reads it again so students have an example. The teacher tells students to create a paragraph or two describing those preschool times, she encourages students to check their spelling before handing in their work.

Once they have finished, the teacher hands them a cardboard where she has pasted their photograph, so that each student pastes the text next to their own photograph.

5. Peer assessment (5 minutes):

Students exchange their texts and they read what their partners wrote. They use the strategy of Two stars and a wish, to assess their partner's work. The students paste their texts and photographs on the English corner, of the class.

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, learning chart, cardboard, students' photographs, name tags in different colours, photocopied sentences, and pieces of paper.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table, we can see that students are using their prior knowledge from session one to review the grammar subject. Students are working in groups, so collaborative work is encouraged, the teacher has chosen the groups so that the students with more prior knowledge can act as the more able peer and guide the rest of the group into an effective review of the verb to be in the past. Students negotiate around the concepts with their peers.

Students continue working in groups, for the guessing game, where they will link what they are studying with their own life, this will also help as a significative practice of the verb to be in the past since linking it with their personal experience will lead to significative learning.

Students will start working on a paragraph about themselves, following ZPD after the scaffolding in the previous class and the review of this session, some students should be ready to complete this paragraph on their own. However, some might still use the teacher's text as a template, or the teacher's help, in this case, we still have not reached the learners' independent development.

Table 4. *Session 3*

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| Session: 3 | Name: Asking questions about our past | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Students can formulate questions using the Simple Past of the verb to be, and answer them according to their personal experience in the past. | | |
| Session development: 1. Warm-up (5 minutes): The teacher shows the class traffic light which is pasted on the class door. Students already know how to use it. They know that the red light means that they did not quite understand the topic, the yellow one means that they understood it but they need some help or could use extra practice, and the green one means that they have learned the topic entirely and they are ready to move on. The teacher writes: USING THE VERB TO BE TO EXPRESS IN THE PAST. The kids use their name tags and put them in the light that is appropriate for their learning stage. (Critical thinking) | | |

The teacher realizes that most of the kids put their names on the yellow light and some of them put it in the green light. She asks students to continue with the questions after the traffic light. Students know that they should ask:

- Did we all learn the topic?
- Are we ready to move on?

Students notice that they did learn since nobody is on the red light, however, they also know that they cannot move on unless everyone is on the green light. (Critical thinking)

2. Review (10 minutes):

The teacher explains the verb to be in the past with the help of the students, asking questions about how to form each sentence, and using the examples from the posters that they created or using new examples from the students.

After the teacher has covered all the important information about the verb to be in the past, she asks students if they have any other questions. Next, she asks each student to give her an example of an affirmative, negative or question using the verb to be in the past. (Critical thinking)

3. Making a board game (15 minutes):

The teacher asks students what else they could do to practice the verb to be in the past, she offers them some options: complete a worksheet, read a text, create a board game, create a Kahoot with questions or any other idea that the students could have.

The students vote on their favourite option to continue their practice. They choose to create a board game. (Negotiation)

Students get into three groups; each group has one of the students who put their name tag on the green light. The teacher explains that they will create a board game, each group will receive a template of Snakes and Ladders (Annexe C) and they must create questions for each number on the board. The teacher encourages students to use the past of to be and to be creative with the questions so they turn out to be fun for the players. (Collaborative work/ Critical thinking)

The teacher walks around the class to see that students are working helping each other to make the questions.

4. Playing with the verb to be (10 minutes):

Once they have finished, the teacher asks them to exchange board games, so that each group has a board game different from the one they have created. Students start playing and go on asking and answering questions using the past of the verb to be. The teacher encourages them to complement their answers with more information. (Critical thinking)

5. Exit slip (5 minutes):

The teacher presents the traffic light again and asks students to place their name tags one more time after the game. Students ask the follow-up questions:

- Did we all learn the topic?
- Are we ready to move on?

Since all the students' names are on the green light, they decide to move on and the teacher asks them the question for these cases:

- What would you like to learn now?

Students write their answers on a sticky note and give them to the teacher as an exit slip. (Critical thinking)

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, images, learning chart, class traffic light, name tags, game template, sticky notes.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table we can see that some adjustment has been done so that no student is left behind, the teacher observes that knowledge is not achieved so she goes back for a final review. Scaffolding again and giving place to ludic activities. Play, as explained before, can be quite beneficial for learning, so it is used as a reinforcement.

Students are given the opportunity to use their critical thinking to assess their own learning stage at the beginning and end of the class. This will validate their experience and it will

empower them to rely on themselves which will lead to autonomous learning, which is at the core of ZPD.

Table 5. Session 4

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 4 | Name: What did I do at recess? | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Analyse the Simple Past tense, in application and structure, to use it to express the past | | |
| <p>Session development:</p> <p>1. Warm-up (10 minutes):</p> <p>The teacher tells students that they will listen to a song and complete the lyrics. The teacher gives the students the lyrics printed on a big poster, with the blanks for them to complete (Annexe D). She also hands them cards with the missing words, so they can use them to complete the lyrics.</p> <p>Students listen to the song <i>Ironic</i> by Alanis Morissette (Morissette, 2015), and they complete the lyrics in groups of four. The teacher plays the song two or three times, if needed so that all teams have completed the lyrics. (Collaborative work/ Negotiation)</p> <p>After completing the lyrics, the students share their answers with the class, and the teacher asks them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think the words you have used have in common? <p>Students answer that they are verbs and that those verbs are in the Simple Past since some students in the class are familiar with this verbal tense (Critical thinking).</p> <p>2. Introduction (5 minutes):</p> <p>The teacher asks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think we will work on today? Why? | | |

Students answer that they will continue working on the past, but using different verbs (Critical thinking), they know it because that is part of the chart about the project. The second step is learning about the Simple Past of other verbs. (Annexe B)

The teacher reminds students that as a final project, they will have to talk about their vacation, so they have learned about the verb to be in the past, and now they will learn about different verbs so they can use them in their descriptions.

3. Pair Work (15 minutes):

The teacher hands the students the tablets and they work in pairs, the teacher pairs the students so that the kids who have more prior knowledge about the past (according to what the teacher could infer in the warm-up, introduction and previous sessions) can work with the ones that are still learning it.

The students must answer the following question in pairs, using Padlet <https://padlet.com/karlaluciarg/zgai9lpw1k31ojsp> :

- What do you remember about the Simple Past? (Critical thinking/ Collaborative work)

After answering, the teacher asks students to organize all their thoughts on the board creating a graphic organizer with all the students' ideas on cardboard. (Critical thinking/ Collaborative Work)

The teacher asks students to copy the graphic organizer on their notebooks so they can have information about the Simple Past. They paste the graphic organizer on the class walls, next to the posters about the past of the verb to be.

4. Group Work (10 minutes):

The teacher asks students to look at the graphic organizer on the cardboard, and answer:

- When do we use the Simple Past?

The students answer that, according to the graphic organizer, the Simple Past is used to express activities that happened in the past (Critical thinking). Then, the teacher tells them that they will do that in groups, they will talk about the past, and she writes the next question on the board:

- What did you do at recess?

The teacher reminds students that they have just come from recess, so that is already in the past. She encourages them to share all the things they did and gives each of them a sticky note, so they can take notes on what their peers say. The teacher explains that after sharing in groups, she will ask them to report what they did to the class. Students know the strategy Think, Pair, Share. The teacher reminds them of each stage and asks them to do it with the question on the board.

The teacher gives students some time to think individually about what they did at recess, then they work in groups sharing their ideas and taking notes on their partners' ideas.

(Collaborative Work)

5. Wrap-up (5 minutes):

The students share what their partners did during recess, they take turns and the teacher emphasises the correct usage of the Simple Past.

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, learning chart, song lyrics, cards to complete the song, tablets, Padlet, sticky notes, and pieces of paper.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table we can see that the second grammar subject is introduced, this is done using the inductive method and students are asked to negotiate and work collaboratively to infer the rules and usage of the Simple Past. Once more, scaffolding is used so that students based on their notes can write only one sentence in the simple past. Following ZPD, they should be able to do this independently, but because some students don't have a lot of prior knowledge, this might not be the case for everybody. The students are working in groups so they can ask their more able peers for help, or they can also ask the teacher.

Table 6. Session 5

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 5 | Name: Writing a story I | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Students can create an ending for a story using the Simple Past and their predictions. | | |
| Session development: 1. Warm-up (10 minutes): The teacher gives each student a piece of paper with a verb written on it. Some students get verbs in base form and some others get verbs in the Simple Past. She tells them that they need to find a partner who has the same verb, she explains that one person will have the base form and the other person will have the simple past, but they have to find the person who has the same verb. Students look around the class, compare verbs and find their partners. (Negotiation) The students sit next to their partners and the teacher asks them to paste the verbs on the board <ul style="list-style-type: none">- LISTEN - LISTENED- STOP - STOPPED- LOVE - LOVED- TRAVEL - TRAVELLED- HIT-HIT- GO - WENT The teacher asks students if the Simple Past was done in the same way or in different ways. Students say that it depends on the verb if it is a regular or irregular verb. The teacher asks them to recognize the regular and irregular verbs with the partner they have worked with before. (Negotiation/ Collaborative work) The teacher explains that each of the verbs corresponds to a different spelling rule, so students must get in groups of four, observe the two verbs they got (since each group of | | |

four will be made by two of the previous pairs) and try to infer the spelling rule. The teacher also asks them to give more examples of that same rule. (Critical Thinking/ Collaborative work)

Students work in groups and write their spelling rule and example on a piece of paper, they present it and explain it to the class. Once they have finished, the teacher asks if they have any questions and students paste all the rules on the class walls.

2. Introduction (5 minutes):

The teacher explains that they will continue working on the Simple Past and that they will review more about it to use it to express and make descriptions of the past. She explains that students will learn how to create a story that happened in the past. To do so, students will watch a video and read a story.

3. Predicting the end of a story (15 minutes):

The teacher shows students a picture of Roald Dahl, and asks them if they know who he is because it would be hard for students to recognise the author, the teacher shows them some pictures of the books he has written (Annexe E)

The students, then, recognize Roald Dahl's work. The teacher tells students that they will watch a video that was made for one of Dahl's poems that tells a story. It is the story of The Little Red Riding Hood and The Wolf, but it is a version of it, so some changes have been made to the story.

She plays the video of the poem (Just Connor, 2020) and she stops it at the minute 2:05. The teacher asks students to get in pairs and predict the ending, she emphasises the fact that Roald Dahl's version is not like the original version, so they should be creative.

The teacher reminds them that the story should be in the past, so students could use their notes or the information on the class walls to help them write. The teacher pairs the students so they can work with a more abled peer and hands them a worksheet with the story without the ending. Students work in pairs to complete the story using the Simple Past. (Collaborative work / Critical thinking)

4. Sharing our work (10 minutes):

Once students have finished writing their stories endings in pairs, they read them to the class, pass their worksheets and listen and read their partners' work. After they have all read the six different story endings (one for each pair), each pair of students gets a story that they did not write.

The teacher explains that she will give them a checklist so they can use it to assess their peers' work. So, students read the story ending again, discuss the items on the checklist and choose if they are included in the story or not. (Negotiation / Critical thinking)

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. The story ending was interesting. | |
| 2. The story was well-written and grammatically correct. | |
| 3. There were no spelling mistakes. | |
| 4. The handwriting was understandable. | |

After they have finished, they write a positive comment for their peers on the checklist worksheet and they give it back to their partners as feedback.

5. Exit slip (5 minutes):

The teacher puts the video again and shows students the story one more time, but this time with the ending. She asks them:

- Which ending did you like the most? Your ending? Roald Dahl's ending? Any of your friends' endings?

The teacher asks them to write which one was their favourite ending and why on a sticky note and share it with the class as an exit slip. (Critical thinking)

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, verbs cut-outs, learning chart, images, video, story worksheet, checklist, sticky notes, and pieces of paper.

In this table we can see that students are working collaboratively, first to infer the spelling rules and later on to complete a story. Following ZPD, students are not ready to write a story yet. However, we can help them scaffold and make them create the end of a story that they have read, this will be just one paragraph and they will write it in pairs, as a first step into ZPD, which is dealing with scaffolded content and receiving assistance.

In the end, students will benefit from their peer’s assessment, and the fact of assessing each other will empower students to independent learning and foster their critical thinking.

Table 7. Session 6

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 6 | Name: Writing a Story II | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Students can illustrate a story they already know, using the Simple Past. | | |
| <p>Session development:</p> <p>1. Warm-up (10 minutes):</p> <p>The teacher divides the class into two groups and tells them that they will go outside to race. She explains that in teams they will find cardboard with some verbs in the base form at the end of the yard, and they will find a table with verb cut-outs at the other end of the yard. She explains that students from the same group will make a line, next to the cardboard, and one by one they will run to the other end of the yard to look for a verb in the Simple Past and match it with its base form.</p> <p>When a partner has finished pairing one verb, they will give a high five to the next person in line and then they can run and match another verb. The first group to get all the ten verbs in the cardboard, with their matching Simple Past form, will win. (Collaborative work / Negotiation)</p> <p>Students go outside and start playing, once they have finished the teacher congratulates the winning group for their victory and the other group for their participation. They all go back to the class.</p> | | |

2. Introduction (3 minutes):

The teacher asks:

- What do you think we are doing today?

The students answer that they will continue working on the Simple Past and the teacher agrees, then she points at the chart (Annexe B) and she tells students that they will learn all they need to write a story in the past.

3. Parts of the Story (15 minutes):

The teacher tells students that they will talk about stories, asks students to share their favourite stories, she reminds them that stories could be written or also shown through a movie. Students share their favourite stories.

The teacher tells them that they will watch a video about the elements of a story, she tells them to take notes on the five elements they will hear about because she will ask them to describe each element based on their notes.

The students watch the video (Innovative Teaching Ideas, 2021) and take notes. Once they have finished, the teacher asks them to tell her the five elements and she writes them on the board:

- Characters
- Plot
- Setting
- Conflict
- Theme

The teacher puts the students in five groups and asks them to choose an element that they would like to describe (Negotiation). The students choose one, the teacher asks them to create a poster with the most important information about the chosen element (Collaborative work).

Once they have finished each group presents the element they have focused on and they present their poster to the class. They paste their posters on the class walls.

4. Telling a story (10 minutes):

The teacher asks students to get into groups of three students and chose one story that they all know and like (Negotiation). She tells them that they will have to create some images to tell the story. The teacher hands them some paper cards for them to use as a storyboard.

Students can use up to six pieces of paper to show how their favourite story unfolds. The teacher emphasises using a story that they really love and know well. (Collaborative work / Critical thinking). Students create the story orally using the drawings on the storyboard as a visual aid. The teacher emphasises using the five elements of the story.

5. Wrap-up (7 minutes):

Students use their storyboards to tell their stories in front of the class. The rest of the students listen to the stories. At the end of each story, the teacher asks if the five elements were included and if there is time the teacher asks what each element was in each of the stories.

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, verbs cut-outs, cardboard, learning chart, video, pieces of paper.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table, we can see play used one more time as an opportunity to build significant learning. The game has some rules that will help the learners to get to internalize the cognitive functions, this will get them ready to work more independently in the second part of the class, with the writing task.

Following ZPD, students are not ready to create their own story yet, but through scaffolding, they will get to know the parts of a story and retell a story that all the class is familiar with, this will be the previous step to creating their own. Some students will work independently, some others will rely on the more knowledgeable others.

Table 8. *Session 7*

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 7 | Name: Vacations | Duration: 45 minutes |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|

Grouping: Small groups and pairs

Objectives: Students can discuss a text about vacations to formulate questions in the Simple Past to obtain complementary information

Session development:

1. Warm-up (8 minutes):

The students play charade, and the teacher writes on the board:

- What did they do yesterday?

Students come to the board, stand below the question and the teacher whispers the activity that they must act on the charade. The student on the board acts that action and the first student to guess using the correct form of the verb in the past is the one to play next. All students act and guess at least one action in the past. (Negotiation/ Critical thinking)

2. Introduction (5 minutes):

The teacher shows the chart with the steps (Annexe B) to get to the main objective which was learning to talk about their last vacation. And she asks students:

- What do you think we will do today?

Students get excited because they have got to the final goal, so they answer that they will express what they did on their last vacation. (Critical thinking) The teacher asks:

- Why do you think we had the previous objectives on the chart? How does it help us with our final goal?

Students answer that to talk about the past they need to know the past of to be and also the Simple Past of the rest of the verbs. They say that to talk about a personal experience they need to know the elements of a story.

The teacher explains that they will learn how to express themselves in the past referring to their last vacation.

3. Pair Work (15 minutes):

The teacher shows students a text about her last vacation. However, the text is incomplete, so they have to complete it using the appropriate verb and the correct tense. Students get in pairs to complete this task (Negotiation/ Collaborative work)

MY LAST VACATION

Two months ago, I _____ to Piura. I love Mancora beach, so I always try to go there. It _____ very hot and the sea _____ warm. I _____ to the beach with my family. They wanted to see the whales, so we _____ to the middle of the ocean by boat. We loved them! There _____ two whales, one was a baby! It _____ beautiful!

We _____ ceviche and seafood, and our hotel _____ next to the beach, so we could always hear the sound of the ocean.

My favourite part _____ spending time with my family and being so close to nature. We lost coverage! So, we _____ our cell phones! We _____ Internet connection either. That is why it was a moment for us, no cell phones, no technology. Just nature and us! I loved it! (Source: Own source)

Once students have finished filling in the blanks, they share their answers with the class, and the teacher emphasises the correct usage of the verbs in the past.

4. Group Work (10 minutes):

Students get into groups of four students, and the teacher asks them to create some questions using the previous text. They could ask any question that can be answered with the information in the text. She asks them to create four questions per group. (Critical Thinking/ Collaborative Work)

Once students have finished, they exchange questions so that each group gets the questions from a different group. They get the questions and try to look for the answers as a group, looking at the text. They share the questions and answers with the class.

5. Wrap-up (7 minutes):

The teacher asks students if there are more questions about her vacation that they would like to know. Something that she did not share in the text, but that they will be interested

| |
|--|
| in knowing after reading the text. Each group creates two questions and the teacher answers. (Critical thinking/ Collaborative work) |
| Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, learning chart, pieces of paper. |

Source: (Own Source)

In this table, we can see that as part of the scaffolding process, the teacher asks students to complete a story in the past, following ZPD this is the goal to achieve, but since they are not ready yet, they must complete the teacher's story. After that, they continue working collaboratively to create questions, most of them will be done independently because they have learnt and reviewed the subject in the previous sessions.

Table 9. Session 8

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 8 | Name: My vacation I | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Students can design a text based on their last vacation using the Simple Past. | | |
| <p>Session development:</p> <p>1. Warm-up (10 minutes):</p> <p>The teacher asks students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the best place for a vacation? <p>The students share some options of nice places to visit (Negotiation). The teacher tells students that now they will play a guessing game, she tells them that they will answer this question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was the place of your favourite vacation? | | |

The students must keep it a secret, so they should only write three clues for their partners to guess the place they choose. The teacher encourages students to use the Simple Past and to be very specific with their clues. She shares an example:

- My favourite vacation was in Peru

Students start guessing city names in Peru. Then the teacher says:

- It was in the most important city for our ancestors: The Incas.

Students guess that the teacher is talking about Cusco City. The teacher encourages them to write three or more clues. Once everyone has finished, they start the guessing game. (Critical thinking)

2. Introduction (5 minutes):

The teacher tells students that they will finally start working on their vacation stories. Students need to choose a vacation that they really liked or maybe the most recent one and write about it.

The teacher encourages them to use the visual aids on the Simple Past and the past of to be on the walls, and also to consider the parts of the story for writing about their personal experience.

3. Individual Work (15 minutes):

The students start writing their stories individually, and the teacher walks around the class, in case any student may need help. When students ask questions, the teacher asks the rest of the group if they know the answer or if they can offer help. Only if nobody knows the answer, the teacher provides it. (Critical thinking)

4. Pair Work (10 minutes):

Once they have finished writing, the students exchange their texts with a partner. The teacher chooses the pairs, each student gets a text and the teacher asks them to draw circles in the parts that they consider could be improved. That way they will help their partner.

The teacher reminds them to be caring and share the parts that could be improved with their partner who wrote the text. She encourages students to help their peers in the

correction of their mistakes or to ask for the teacher's help to make those texts the best they can be. (Negotiation / Collaborative work)

5. Exit slip (5 minutes):

The teacher changes the pairs so that each student is with a different partner after the first correction. The teacher asks students to use the strategy of Two stars and a wish to assess their partner's work, congratulating what they did well, and giving them one tip to improve.

The students share their feedback. (Critical thinking / Collaborative work)

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, learning chart, pieces of paper.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table, we can see that students are starting to work individually to achieve the tasks independently. However, they are not alone, the teacher monitors what they do and students benefit from peer assessment when correcting their pieces of writing. They continue with a different peer to share their work and incorporate their peer's corrections into their paper. Students receive assistance but this assistance is fading, leaving them more responsible for their work.

The teacher tries to make students rely on their partners as the more able peer, and only ask for the teacher's help if their friends cannot help them. This will help students rely on their social interactions and leave the teacher just monitoring this valuable exchange.

Table 10. *Session 9*

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 9 | Name: My vacation II | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups and pairs | | |
| Objectives: Students can create visual aids to describe their last vacation using the Simple Past. | | |
| Session development: | | |

1. Warm-up (10 minutes):

The teacher asks students about oral presentations, she asks if they are difficult or easy and if students like them or not. Students answer. The teacher asks them a question and shares a Padlet and the tablets with them, so students in pairs can think of 3 pieces of advice for oral presentations

- What tips for oral presentations can you share?

Students agree on some tips and write them on the Padlet (Negotiation / Collaborative work). After all students have finished, the teacher projects the Padlet <https://padlet.com/karlaluciarg/t14qywu12zmdpzvg> and students read their tips to the class.

2. Introduction (10 minutes):

The teacher explains that they will start preparing their oral presentation. The teacher gives them back their texts from the day before, with the teacher's feedback. She tells them to use that text as a foundation for their oral presentation, and consider the tips they have just shared.

She tells them that they will have 2-3 minutes to share about their vacation, they can create visual aids, and they can create a poster or a PowerPoint presentation, however, they feel more comfortable. She also explains that at the end of the presentation, their peers will ask them questions to learn more about their experience.

The teacher shows students the rubric that will be used to assess their presentation (Annexe F). She reads every item with them so that it is clear. She asks if they have any questions or if they need her to repeat any instruction or the rubric explanation. The students ask questions if necessary.

3. Individual Work (20 minutes):

The students use their texts and the feedback they got from the previous class to improve their work. They organize it and choose if they want to create a poster and draw their vacation, or maybe they want to make an online presentation and use the tablets to work and get the images from the Internet. (Critical thinking)

The teacher makes sure they have the time to finish all of their preparation for the oral presentation in class.

5. Exit slip (5 minutes):

The students use the class traffic light. The teacher writes on the board: BEING READY FOR MY ORAL PRESENTATION. The kids use their name tags and put them in the light that is appropriate for their learning stage. (Critical thinking)

The teacher realizes that most of the students feel ready (green light), only some of them are in the process (yellow light) and none are not ready (red light). She encourages students to practice at home, so they can be ready for their oral presentation that will take place in the following class.

Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, learning chart, Padlet, tablets, class traffic light, rubric, pieces of paper.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table we can see that students are working independently, basing their work on the items in the rubric. They are asked to choose how is it that they want to present their work, they are in charge of their presentation, but they are still part of the social environment in case they need help. The teacher fosters their agency as a way to help them be more independent in this final stage.

Table 11. *Session 10*

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Session: 10 | Name: My vacation presentation | Duration: 45 minutes |
| Grouping: Small groups | | |
| Objectives: Students describe and evaluate their last vacation in an oral presentation using the Simple Past. | | |

Session development:

1. Warm-up (5 minutes):

The teacher shows students the chart, so they know that they have achieved all the goals and are now ready to share all about their last or favourite vacation.

She asks them if they are ready and congratulates them on their learning journey.

2. Introduction (5 minutes):

The teacher shows students the rubric (Annexe F) and makes sure they understand each item and how they will be assessed.

The teacher explains that the rubric will be used by one of their partners, and that person will complete the rubric and write the comment according to how they think their partner should be assessed.

The students ask questions if necessary and the teacher clarifies any doubts they may have.

3. Presentations (30 minutes):

Students take turns sharing all about their last vacation. The teacher asks students to think about a question they could make according to what they are hearing. She reminds them that the question should be in the Simple Past.

During the presentations, the students have the rubrics, so they can assess their partner's presentation, and write a positive comment. The students share the rubric with their partners and explain their comments to them.

4. Wrap-up (5 minutes):

The teacher asks students about the experience they have just had, preparing themselves for the oral presentation and achieving that goal. She asks them to answer this question on the board using sticky notes. She writes on the board:

- How did you feel in this learning process? Why?

Once all students have answered, they share their thoughts with the class. The teacher congratulates the students on achieving their goals and praises their hard work.

Resources needed: Resources needed: Smartboard, projector, computer, learning chart, rubric, pieces of paper, and visual aids from the students.

Source: (Own Source)

In this table we can see that the ultimate goal in ZPD was achieved, students are working independently, to the point of using their own materials to share their stories about their last vacation. They also work independently when assessing their partners using a rubric and giving appropriate feedback after each presentation.

3.6. Assessment

3.6.1. Learning assessment




Learners' experiences will be considered using both summative and formative assessments. Throughout the ten sessions, evidence of their learning will be collected as formative assessment, using different techniques and tools (specified in each session) and giving immediate feedback after each task. The peers' assessment and feedback will be emphasised over the teacher's feedback. However, both will be considered.

At the end of each session, students must reflect on their learning or give an exit ticket; the teacher will assess these entries and she will also have a journal writing the students' advances daily.

Once students have finished all ten sessions, we will use summative assessment for the oral presentation about the students' last vacation. A rubric has been chosen, because students are already familiarized with the rubrics format, and because we are trying to build their agency on their own learning, they will assess their own partners. Students will use a rubric, shown in figure 5, that will have different items for students to consider when assessing their peers.

Figure 5. Oral Presentation Rubric

ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|---|
| QUALITY OF VOICE AND ARTICULATION | The voice is hard to hear throughout most of the presentation | The voice is sometimes difficult to hear in some parts of the presentation. | The quality of voice and volume is good. It is well heard throughout the whole presentation. |
| FLUENCY AND PRONUNCIATION | The presentation is difficult to understand, most words are mispronounced. | The presentation is understandable, and few pronunciation mistakes are made during it. | The presentation is easy to understand, and the words are well pronounced. The presentation is fluid. |
| ACCURACY | The Simple Past is used appropriately only in a few sentences. | The Simple Past is used appropriately in most of the presentation. | The Simple Past is used appropriately during the whole presentation. |
| COHERENCE AND COHESION | The presentation is difficult to follow and the organisation is not evident. | Most of the presentation is organized and we can follow the story with some effort. | All the presentation is well organized and easy to follow. |

COMMENTS:

Source: Own Source

They will consider where each student is according to the descriptors and they will write a comment at the end of the rubric.

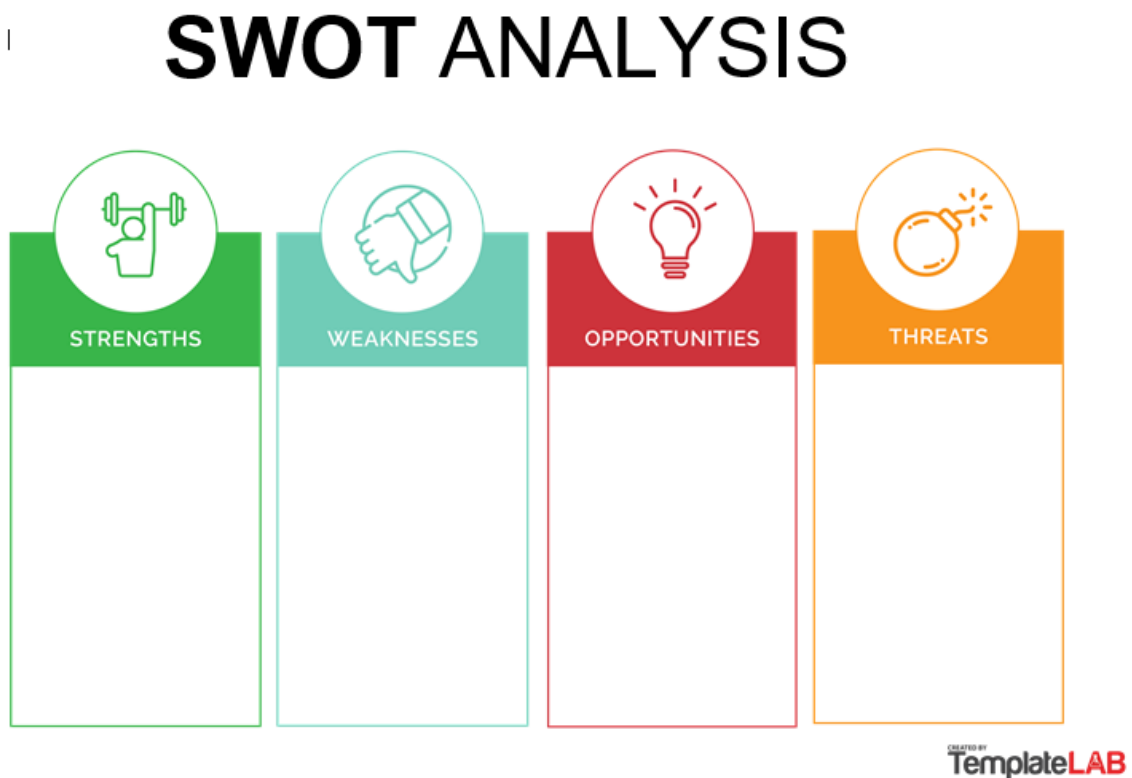
We have used four items on the rubric, they are explained on the descriptors, and because students will be using this rubric, we have added the traffic lights as visual support.

3.6.2. Assessment of the proposal

The proposal will be assessed using SWOT analysis. This will allow us to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the proposal. We have decided to use this format because we consider that even though some aspects of the proposal might work during the sessions, we want to focus on all the learning opportunities to improve the proposal once it is put into practice. We consider that SWOT analysis gives room for flexibility and a deeper reflection on what we have done.

The assessment will be done after each class. According to the main objective of each session, specified on each table, we will assess how the proposal went daily. The following chart in figure 6 will be used to assess every session. At the end of all the reflection charts, we will make a general one to assess the proposal.

Figure 6. *Swot Analysis*



Source: Template Lab. (2022). *SWOT Analysis* [Table]. Template Lab. <https://templatelab.com/swot-analysis-templates/>

4. Discussion

Many concepts have been developed in this intervention proposal; it has been done to achieve our goals. This study implied understanding the Vygotskyan concept of ZPD as the backbone of this dissertation, we have used scaffolding techniques to help students get to a learning experience where autonomy was reached.

The aim was for students to learn the Simple Past tense and use it, even though they did not have the same prior knowledge. It was expected for students to interact socially to bridge their differences and learn at the same pace. Students worked collaboratively so that the more able peers could help the students who needed assistance.

At the end of the activities explained in the sessions, students will be able to move from what they can do without assistance to what we want them to learn. This would imply moving from a basic notion of the Simple Past (working with assistance from the teacher or a more able peer) to expressing using the Simple Past accurately to tell a real-life story. It is expected for them to complete this task with autonomy.

We have found some similar proposals that were taken into practice and had the results that we are expecting to have with the intervention proposal. After working with the students, it becomes evident that interpersonal communication is key (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000). Patterns in written and oral interactions shape the dynamic of English learning. Learners take different roles in different interactions, some students may be proficient users of the language but the knowledge will be shared in the end, as part of the social interaction.

Students are expected to interact and this interaction will foster Vygotsky's ideas of negotiation and confirmation of word meanings (Guk & Kellogg, 2007). When students interact with the teacher, we will see that through scaffolding learners will be able to initiate solutions and develop learning autonomously.

In social interaction, students will get to develop according to ZPD. Mediation will lead to different forms of knowledge; these could be intra-mental (learners working with a model or imitating) or inter-mental (learners creating their own solutions to a task). Both forms could coexist, and following Vygotsky's ZPD, the inter-mental will gradually replace the intra-mental, and autonomous learning skills will be developed (Yi & Kellogg, 2006).

In this intervention proposal that is exactly what is expected. Hence, by following Vygotsky's concepts of ZPD, mediation, scaffolding, and social interaction; we hope to achieve the same results and get students to achieve the learning goal for each activity presented.

5. Conclusions

After completing this proposal, we can draw some conclusions. First, we have designed this intervention proposal making sure it will foster the usage of the Simple Past. Vygotsky's ZPD will help the students in 5th grade to develop their skills and get to autonomous learning. Social interaction and scaffolding are key to getting students to learn the Simple Past regardless of their prior knowledge.

Vygotsky's ZPD has a big impact on learning; since it is bridging the gap, between what a learner can do assisted and what they can do independently, which will lead to significant development. Learners are monitored and assisted to get to the point of autonomous learning in a social interaction context.

The sessions are conducted using the Inductive Method and Communicative Approach, to generate tasks where critical thinking skills are fostered. The teacher and the more able peers will mediate and scaffold to get all learners to understand and express using the Simple Past.

Learners will work based on projects; therefore, they must complete tasks that will enable them to communicate using the target language. They will be equipped with all the grammar and they will develop their skills, by working in pairs, in groups and also individually.

Each session has many opportunities for learners, they will have the chance to use collaborative learning, negotiating and critical thinking. Learners will use the Simple Past; at first, following models and scaffolding in chunks; at the end of the sessions, they will use their written and oral skills independently, to prove their development. All the objectives will be met using the sessions that this proposal explains in detail.

6. Limitations and further research

The biggest limitation of the proposal would be the time taken for the sessions since according to what has been planned, we would take two weeks to develop the Simple Past tense with students. We will also need to create material before each class, such as cut-outs and tags that will be time-consuming for the teacher.

When applying ZPD we must rely on more knowledgeable others, in the case of heterogeneous classes, this will vary. We could find several levels in terms of prior knowledge; therefore, we could find that in the group we could only rely on a few students to perform that role. We need to have at least one more able peer in each group of three students; if this is not the case, it would be very hard for students to benefit from social interaction.

Objectives were met successfully. However, the proposal design is meant to be used with a small group. This is because activities are ludic and also require many whole class discussions. It would be very difficult to use this proposal with large groups because we could not guarantee active participation in these discussions, and it would be challenging for the teacher to monitor all the group work appropriately. The more able peer in each group is also monitored, as well as their interaction and guidance towards the group. For these reasons, the limitation of this proposal would be the fact that it will fit better with small groups.

Another point to consider is the choice of the more knowledgeable others, it would be suggested to start the sessions with a clearer idea of who they are from the beginning. On the first session, or even before that, we could have a prior knowledge test to get to the first session knowing who could act as a more able peer and who needs more guidance. In the proposal, this is discovered through warm-ups and grammar inferences. However, we recommend a needs analysis design to be done at the beginning of the lessons, to start with a more evident diagnosis of the class.

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Annexe A ¹



¹ Freepik. (n.d.). *Kids drawing pictures* [Image]. <https://www.freepik.com/>. https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/kids-drawing-pictures-wall-paper-artistic-children-painting-cartoon-young-artists-boys-girls-with-creative-art-hobby-vector-set-preschool-activity-cute-characters-with-brush-pencil_20519037.htm

Annexe B²

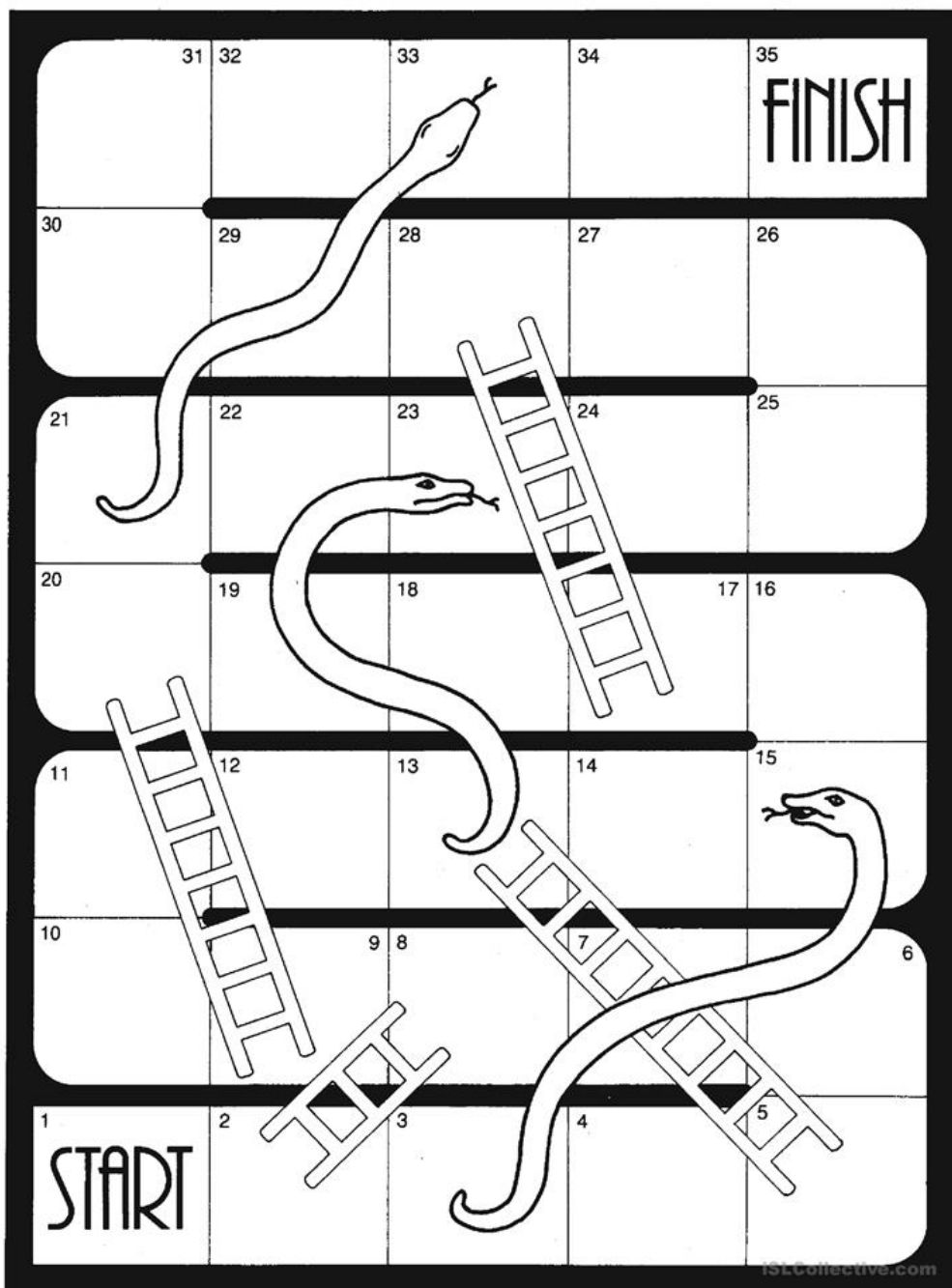
MY LAST VACATION
Simple Past Perfect

- 1**
Use the verb
TO BE in the
Simple Past
- 2**
Use other
verbs in the
Simple Past
- 3**
Learn the
parts of a
story
- 4**
Talk about
our last
vacation

² Source: Own source

Annexe C ³

Snakes and Ladders



³ Moore, L. (2022). *Snakes and Ladders* [Image]. <https://en.islcollective.com/>.
<https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-worksheets/material-type/fun-activities-and-games/snakes-and-ladders/2754>
Web image

Annexe D ⁴

Ironic (Alanis Morissette)

An old man _____ ninety-eight

He _____ the lottery and died the next day

It's a black fly in your Chardonnay

It's a death row pardon two minutes too late

[Chorus]

And isn't it ironic?

Don't you think?

It's like rain on your wedding day

It's a free ride when you've already paid

It's the good advice that you just _____

And who would've thought? It figures

Mr. Play-it-Safe _____ afraid to fly

He _____ his suitcase and kissed his kids goodbye

He _____ his whole damn life to take that flight

And as the plane _____ down

He thought, "Well, isn't this nice?"

[Chorus]

Well, life has a funny way of sneaking up on you

When you think everything's okay and everything's going right

And life has a funny way of helping you out

When you think everything's gone wrong

And everything blows up in your face

A traffic jam when you're already late

A "No Smoking" sign on your cigarette break

It's like ten thousand spoons when all you need is a knife

It's meeting the man of my dreams

And then meeting his beautiful wife

[Chorus]

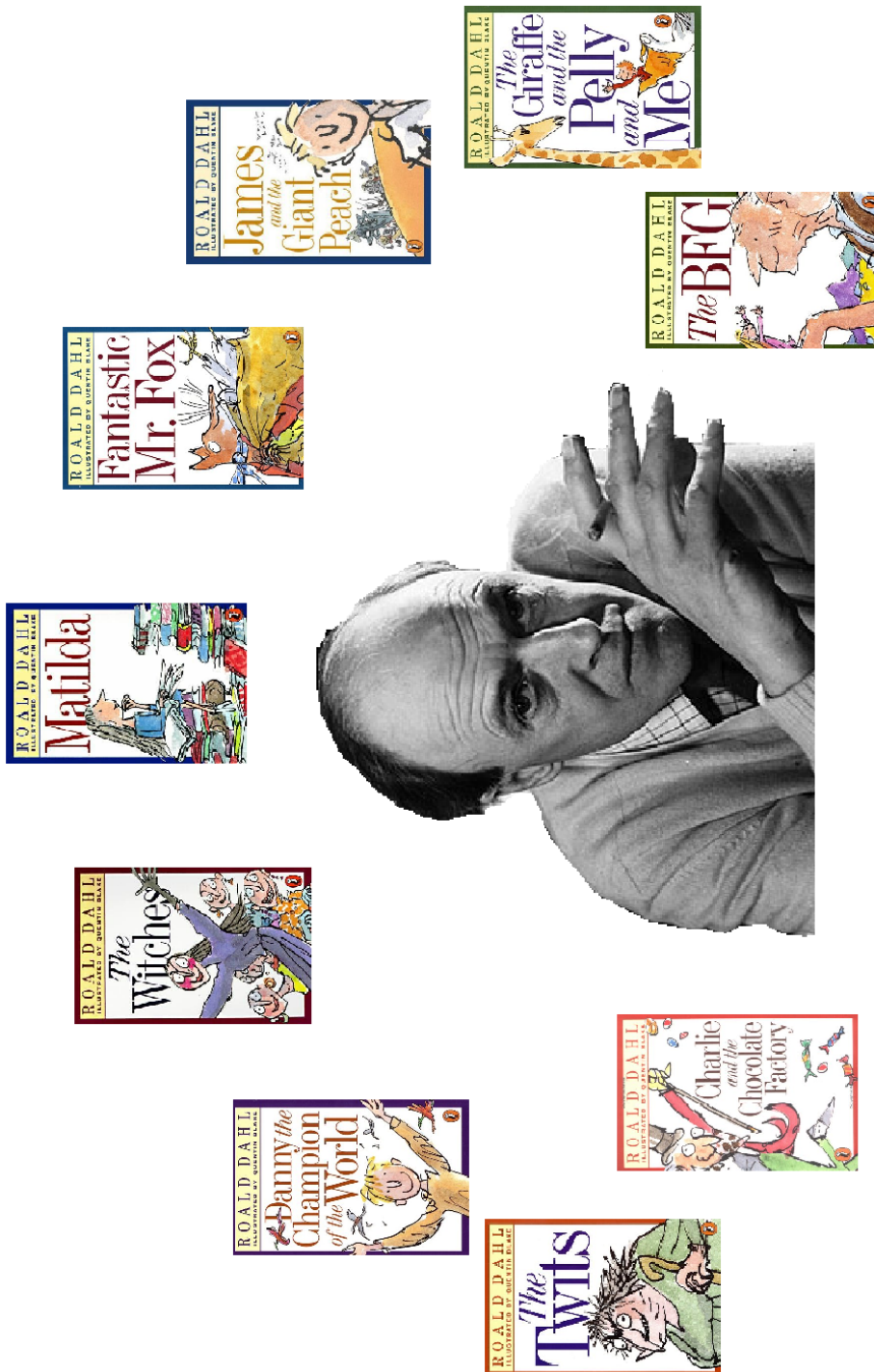
And yeah, life has a funny way of sneaking up on you

And life has a funny, funny way of helping you out

Helping you out

⁴ Alanis Morissette – Ironic. (n.d.). Genius. <https://genius.com/Alanis-morissette-ironic-lyrics> Webpage




Annexe E ⁵



⁵ Road Dahl and his books. (n.d.). Fandom. https://roalddahl.fandom.com/wiki/Roald_Dahl

Annexe F⁶

ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

| |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|---|
| QUALITY OF VOICE AND ARTICULATION | The voice is hard to hear throughout most of the presentation | The voice is sometimes difficult to hear in some parts of the presentation. | The quality of voice and volume is good. It is well heard throughout the whole presentation. |
| FLUENCY AND PRONUNCIATION | The presentation is difficult to understand, most words are mispronounced. | The presentation is understandable, and few pronunciation mistakes are made during it. | The presentation is easy to understand, and the words are well pronounced. The presentation is fluid. |
| ACCURACY | The Simple Past is used appropriately only in a few sentences. | The Simple Past is used appropriately in most of the presentation. | The Simple Past is used appropriately during the whole presentation. |
| COHERENCE AND COHESION | The presentation is difficult to follow and the organisation is not evident. | Most of the presentation is organized and we can follow the story with some effort. | All the presentation is well organized and easy to follow. |

COMMENT S:

⁶ Source: Own source