

COMPUTER ENGLISH

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers must always try to find the best way to motivate pupils in order to provide them with a series of skills, abilities, attitudes and habits that help them reach success through the established teaching-learning process.

Technological changes are a constant in our nowadays society and pupils are aware of that. We, as teachers, must take profit of this new self-motivating factor and use it according to our own possibilities within the frame of the development of class activities.

“Computer English” is the name of a teaching experience that adapts new technologies (such as computer, audio equipment and video recorder) to the area of foreign languages (mainly English but also applicable to French, German and others). The possibility of manipulating these technological elements has made possible pupils active participation in the learning process. The inherent value of the use of such new technologies of information lies on the fact that it favours both concrete and significant learning by allowing the development of deductive strategies and, at the same time, letting pupils interact and stimulate their personal activity. English becomes then a communicative, alive and active language.

The general use of new technologies of information facilitates the acquisition, process, storage and spreading of this information and trains people in order to adapt themselves to new social challenges.

New technologies facilitate room variety, group activities, information processing, decision taking, and also crosscurricular work, both individual and autonomous; they have promoted creativity as well as pupils' activity and reflection; finally, they have fostered an increase in the acquisition of conceptual, processing and attitudinal knowledge.

The technology of information has been used as an interdisciplinary core taking into account its bipolarity as an intellectual work and as a way of communicating. The leading idea is that these technologies play an active role in the everyday work at school as applied tools to the pupil's school experience.

The fact that pupils have within reach different settings, atmospheres and learning contexts help them interact and generalise the concept of "**learning to learn**"; they also apply communicative techniques in order to understand and be understood.

A learning-teaching model has been developed which is **functional** (with useful and applicable contents), **significant** (it allows to be placed within the knowledge structure) and **interactive** (the pupil plays an active role in the learning process).

The creative potentiality of human beings is reflected through different ways of expression: audio, mimic, images and word (oral language and creative writing).

The motivational efficiency of using the different rooms at school (computer rooms, language lab, audio-visual room and classrooms) as well as approaching pupils to new information and communicative techniques (computers, video camera, digital photo-



camera, scanner and portable language laboratories) becomes evident through the development of the experience. The tools are put at the disposal of foreign languages learning and may be used to control and select the contents by the pupils themselves.

One of the aims of this experience consists of facilitating relationships between pupils from both the first and the second year of ESO at the school and pupils from other schools through school mailing. At the same time, the communicative competence will be put up to date within a real context.

ACTIVITY EXPLANATION AND DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned earlier one of the aims of this experience consists of facilitating relationships among pupils through school mailing.

The central idea is to help pupils communicate with pupils from other schools through electronic mail. Later on, when the correspondence has already begun, pupils prepare a recording and tape a cassette with more personal information about themselves, and, at the end, a videotape is recorded as the culmination point of the experience.



So pupils meet through the written language, continue exchanging audio information and finally, visual communication takes place.

The teacher's role consists of suggesting, orientating, providing with possible solutions and facilitating pupils the access to the different materials so that they can exercise their own creativity by answering e-mails, manipulating language laboratories, videos and animation computer programmes. The selection of structures and vocabulary has been done taking into account the class activities, which are included in the School Curricular Project.

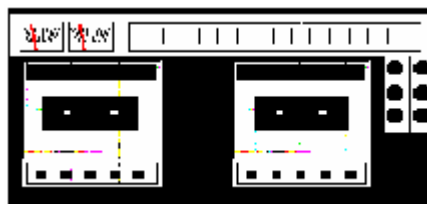


Pupils get to know each other by exchanging information through electronic mail. The following step will be using the language laboratory in order to send their friends greetings and other comments about themselves on a tape. In this way, the foreign language is used in a communicative oral way, alive and active with the

help of new technology.

The text that each pupil is going to record will be previously prepared in a session open to collaboration. From this brainstorming each pupil will create a personal text and practise pronunciation before taping it.

During the next session, the language laboratories will be used to recording the texts. Background music will also be selected and every pupil will tape his/her own text.



Once this activity is finished, the pupils together will listen to the tape to evaluate themselves and also the result of the activity. The tape will finally be sent to their penfriends.

The next activity will include the use of another technological tool: the video (camcorder). The exercise will be divided in two parts. The first step refers to the preparation of a text where pupils introduce themselves orally and visually. They may

development of the different activities and these will be published on the WEB page of our school so that their friends can also see them. Drawing programmes will be used by our pupils to create the title pages of tapes and videotapes that will be sent to the other pupils.

During the process of recording, filming and creating the web page, our pupils will continue exchanging electronic mail with their penfriends, and these letters will also be read and commented at the class.



GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To show receptivity and interest in front of the linguistic diversity through the contact with a new language and culture.
- To facilitate relationships with groups of pupils from other schools via electronic mail.
- To use new technologies of information as productive tools adapted to the pupils' needs.
- To value the knowledge of foreign languages as a way of communication between persons and peoples.
- To communicate orally paying attention to pronunciation and intonation and use non-linguistic resources as a help to oral communication.
- To establish abilities to read, broaden understanding and create written texts.
- To provoke curiosity and motivation in learning foreign languages.

CONTENTS

PROCEDURES

*ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION

- Understanding explanations, instructions and rules.
- Understanding dialogs, narrations, anecdotes.
- Understanding descriptions.
- Producing communication acts.
- Exercising the language in everyday situations.
- Explaining narrations, facts, anecdotes and descriptions.
- Expressing opinions, interests and feelings.
- Using habitual vocabulary and structures.
- Memorising and reproducing texts.

*WRITTEN EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION

- Understanding texts and descriptions.
- Understanding everyday messages.
- Reading aloud text with the suitable pronunciation.
- Producing communicative acts in a social framework of exchange (writing electronic messages).
- Writing narrations, descriptions, facts, anecdotes,...
- Know the orthographic rules of the most used words.
- Using different resources to understand and express: dictionaries, audio-visual tools, audio-visual technological systems, computers.

FACTS AND CONCEPTS

***ORAL LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**

- Communicative functions. Models to:
 - start a conversation or dialog
 - give and ask for information
 - descriptions and narrations
 - express sensations, ideas, feelings, likes, opinions
 - ask and offer things
 - show acceptance or refusal to an offering
 - Lexis
 - know names from pupils' conversations
 - know names about interesting themes for pupils
 - know names related to time
- Grammar categories
 - article
 - plural of nouns
 - quantifiers
 - verbs *to be* and *to have*
 - interrogative and negative forms of *to do*
 - past simple forms of regular and irregular most used verbs
 - *to want+ to*
 - *can*
 - the immediate future
 - change of meaning of some verbs depending on the following preposition
 - the forms *there is/are; there was/were*
 - agreement between 3rd. Person singular and Simple Present forms
 - usual prepositions: *in, on, under, with, near, far from, far, at, at the front, at the back, in front of, behind, between, at the side of, before, after,...*
 - adverbs: *too, very much, very many, only, here, there, usually, sometimes, often, never, again,...*

- adjective placement
- demonstratives
- comparatives and superlatives
- adjectives and possessive pronouns
- interrogative words: *what, where, when, how, which, who, why...*
- numerals, cardinals and ordinals
- *everybody, everything, nobody, anybody, anything.*
- Sociocultural aspects
 - British traditions and habits.

WRITTEN LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- English language orthographic arbitrary structure. Agreement between words and orthography.
- Differences between oral and written languages.

ATTITUDES, VALUES AND RULES

- Taking constant effort in reproducing phonetic elements globally.
- Desinhibition in producing messages and communicative acts.
- Respecting classmates when producing oral messages.
- Participating in conversations in an ordered way.
- Respecting cultural realities.
- Be conscious of the importance of the English language in our days.
- Considering the importance of written language as a way of communicating and asking for information.
- Making constant effort in producing and understanding written language.
- Developing a critical attitude about self work.
- Respecting the classmates productions.

FINAL AIMS

- To distinguish and reproduce the basic intonations of the foreign language.
- To relate sounds and usual graphic conventions.
- To identify the foreign language intonation and relate it to its meaning.
- To make an effort and pronounce correctly and give the suitable intonation in oral expressions.
- To interpret and produce oral messages.
- To understand messages in a given context.
- To show understanding of oral communication acts.
- To explain and describe events, anecdotes,..., with the help of different means.
- To memorise and reproduce short texts.
- To understand written text globally.
- To answer different questions.
- To identify the necessary vocabulary in the given situations.

- To use the different resources (dictionary, visual material, audio-visual means, computers and other information techniques) in an efficient way in order to understand Lexis and to be able to correct written texts.
- To use the most basic communicative structures of the foreign language.
- To use the suitable grammatical elements that make comprehension possible.
- To cooperate and behave in a respectful way when accomplishing individual and collective tasks.
- To value and respect cultural and linguistic differences.

RELATED AIMS

***ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION**

- To apply the suitable accent, rhythm and intonation to a given type of communicative act.
- To distinguish the communicative function of each intonation.
- To understand messages, explanations, instructions, orders, ..., that are produced in everyday language.
- To understand narrations, descriptions, anecdotes that are made taking into account the pupils' knowledge.
- To understand messages globally.
- To produce messages about different themes of the pupils' environment and everyday life.
- To explain little narrations and descriptions.
- To express opinions, facts, interests, needs, feelings, ...
- To use the acquired habitual expressions and idioms.
- To memorise and use the acquired vocabulary.
- To memorise and reproduce texts.
- To know the characteristic features of English behaviour and traditions.
- To make a constant effort to produce and comprehend messages and communicative acts.

***WRITTEN COMPREHENSION AND EXPRESSION**

- To read different kinds of texts being able to apply the suitable intonation, rhythm and pronunciation to words.
- To relate words with their orthography.
- To understand texts globally.
- To produce messages related to pupils' environment and social life.
- To produce functional texts using the given models.
- To write narrations, descriptions, anecdotes, ...
- To express feelings, ideas, sensations, ...
- To use correctly the grammatical categories in a sentence.
- To know the orthography of acquired words used in written communication.
- To apply the grammatical rules of the English language to their written productions.

- To be tolerant and respectful in front of the others' productions.
- To use the resources to understand and express themselves: dictionaries, audio-visual help, computers, ...

DIDACTIC OBJECTIVES

- To ask somebody about his/her address.
- To give the personal address.
- To ask a person if he/she knows someone else.
- To identify the Saxon Genitive.
- To collect personal details about oneself and about other people.
- To show global understanding of a text by answering questions about it.
- To ask orally and in a written way if something belongs to someone.
- To differentiate between *his/her*.
- To ask and tell the time.
- To ask and say one's job.
- To write sentences distinguishing between habitual and now-actions.
- To write a letter telling the plans for a given day.
- To ask and give permission using the verb *can*.
- To ask somebody to repeat an action by using the adverb *again*.
- To offer something to somebody using the verb *to want* + countable and uncountable nouns with the suitable quantifier (*some, any, a piece of...*)
- To accept and refuse an offer.
- To memorise, play and record a text.
- To express in an oral and written way what somebody did in the past and in which order this action was carried out.
- To write a letter about what was done in the class in the past and what is being done at present.
- To use the different technological resources at school to communicate with other pupils.
- To create sentences in order to contrast present and past tenses.
- To talk about the weather.
- To make questions in past and present using the suitable auxiliary verb.
- To show understanding of a text (letter) with some unknown words and be able to answer questions about it.
- To write a letter and explain the reasons to do something.
- To create sentences that express or question about actions done in a specific future moment.
- To give information about what their personal future plans and also about other people's.
- To express the frequency of an action.
- To answer questions using known vocabulary and expressions.

- To read received letters with the suitable pronunciation, rhythm and intonation.
- To say where and when someone was born in a written and oral way.
- To show comprehension of the received letters and tell if they agree or not with these.
- To ask and answer questions about place and date of birth in a written and oral way.
- To ask about possession using *whose*.
- To answer about possession using possessive pronouns and Saxon Genitive.
- To express opinions using the verb *to think*.
- To ask and answer about a specific moment in the past.
- To express something done in the past.
- To say and write sentences comparing objects, animals and persons.
- To create sentences to express what someone wants to do and give reasons for it.
- To tell if something was done in the past using *ago*.
- To ask whose and for whom is something.
- To notice known irregular past forms.
- Write letters using conjunctions such as *but, so, because*.
- To create sentences using *can/cannot* in a written and oral way.
- To use adverbs of manner.
- To ask questions with *can* and give short and long answers.
- To use the prepositions *in, on, at* and time expressions correctly.
- To practise the use of *Let's*.
- To use place and time phrases correctly.
- To express obligation in a written and oral way.
- To answer questions about frequency.
- To practise superlative adjectives.
- To practise the structure *What's.....like?*
- To use compound pronouns with *-thing/-body* correctly.

SOME REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

This activity has been lately carried out with pupils from 1st and 2nd year of ESO in The Foreign Language Area. The chosen schools for the cultural interchange were Foreign ones, though we had before worked with other schools from our country.

At first, our computer and audio-visual resources were scarce, but they became progressively better.

We have included different applications of the activities and other data transmission projects such as IRC (Internet Relay Chat) and video conferences in order to exchange information at a real time and in a funny and educational way for the participant students. Our pupils have visited their penfriends for one week and have received their partners' visit for another.

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

- An active methodology will be used in order to:
- use new technologies of information in the development of the communicative process.
- to reach pupil's leading role in the learning process.
- to develop abilities in the communication process.
- to use a varied, active and participating methodology.
- to further interdisciplinary and social interaction and group work.
- to further personal autonomy through a personal and diversified treatment.
- to give a unified vision of reality.
- to work on motivating activities.
- to learn to learn and to communicate.
- to provide the figure of the teacher with an orientating, facilitating, helping and stimulating character to make pupils discover learning strategies by themselves and also facilitate them the access to different resources and help to create the suitable work atmosphere for them to learn and interact.

SPECIFIC USED RESOURCES

- Multimedia PC computers with Internet connection.
- A multimedia Apple Macintosh Performa 630 computer.
- As far as software: Word text-processor with included English dictionary. Different software teaching programmes have also been used in order to improve competence in the acquisition of specific vocabulary in different themes of interest. For the Videoconferencing activity we have used NetMeeting, I-visit and Messenger.
- Two animating programmes for Performa 630: *Amazing Animation and Avid Video Shop*.
- Three portable language laboratories with amplifier, tuner and double track cassette.
- A Sony video-camera.
- A digital Sony Mavica MVC-FD5 photo-camera.

VALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY. CONCLUSIONS

Pupils learn to establish relationships with other students of their age using a foreign language and with the help of new technologies.

The inner motivation that the use of new technologies has in the development of the experience has been positively valued. Pupils carried out the activities with enthusiasm and they use them interactively. In this way, these new technologies play an important role in the school experience of pupils.

At the same time, pupils learn to work both individually and in group activities in a suitable way to attain the aimed abilities, techniques, attitudes and habits in general.

Pupils put different communicative activities into practice and make an effort to understand and be understood. During the self-evaluating process, pupils become aware of their own progression and, on the whole, they feel interest, motivation and responsibility towards their work in an effective and autonomous way. They also learn to develop self-confidence.

By developing this kind of activity, pupils become aware of the communicative usefulness of new technologies, thanks to the suitable teaching application. It must be taken into account that our social environment demands pupils –and population in general- to be habitual users of these new technologies.