DESIGNING A NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCE FROM CHILD CONSULTATION

DISSENY D'UNA EXPERIÈNCIA D'APRENENTATGE A PARTIR DE LA VEU
DE L'ALUMNAT

FINAL DEGREE PROJECT

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"There has never been a more motivating or driving

force than student voice."

Andrew Marcinek

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1. ABSTRACT

After identifying some negative results in introducing the project work approach to 6th-grade students in Aldric' school in the English class, the study aims to analyse students' needs regarding the development of this approach. It will be used to design a new learning experience and face these barriers. Thus, through child consultation, students will be provided with more meaningful learning experiences in the English classroom, enhancing their motivation, engagement, and self-confidence. Considering students' and teacher opinions, possibilities and challenges of creating a new learning experience from child consultation will be identified, analysing whether it could be implemented in this class.

Keywords: foreign language learning, project work approach, child consultation, students' needs, technology.

RESUM:

Després d'identificar resultats negatius en la introducció de la metodologia "Pla de treball" a l'aula d'anglès de sisè de primària de l'escola Aldric; la finalitat de l'estudi és analitzar les necessitats dels estudiants en relació amb el desenvolupament del pla de treball. A partir de la veu dels alumnes, es podrà oferir experiències més significatives a l'aula d'anglès, millorant la seva motivació i implicació en relació amb el procés d'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa. Considerant les opinions dels estudiants i de la mestra, les possibilitats i els reptes de la creació d'una nova experiència d'aprenentatge seran identificats, a més d'analitzar si pot implementar-se a l'aula.

Paraules clau: procés d'aprenentatge de llengua estrangera, pla de treball, veu de l'alumnat, necessitats dels estudiants, tecnologia.

2. INTRODUCTION

Considering the needs of this 21st century, how should a learning process be developed with the students? First, "...making meaning from and with the world around them." (Fielding, 2001, p.101). This statement refers to how this author understands the natural process of learning.

When this idea is considered in the language learning process, the term Language for Life appears. Miño-Garcés (2009) defines this learning perspective as the process of evaluating the student as a whole, locating them "in the centre of the class activity, and incorporates to his/her life everything that he/she has learned, and/or acquired" (p.82). Thus, students' needs acquire a lot of importance while designing learning experiences.

This research has grown from the concept of providing students with more meaningful English language learning experiences based on their needs.

Regarding the English language learning process, students' interest in learning should be considered, as it will be the starting point of this learning process (Yusimah, 2014, p.189). Suppose motivation comes from the identification of personal purposes in acquiring new learning experiences, students should be provided with learning experiences that let them develop students' thinking, and some abilities and capacities to reflect about their interests, and difficulties involved in their learning process (Pham, 2017).

Considering these aspects in my observation during the English classes in 6th - grade of Primary in Aldric' school, this paper presents a new learning experience that comes from students' needs. After identifying some negative results in the project work's development, my interest in going deeper and confront these barriers has been the starting point of this research. Considering the initial quote about the powerful force of student voice, this process will be done through child consultation. Therefore, **consulting pupils** will be the starting point of this new learning experience's creation, becoming an instrument to identify possible difficulties in the project work's development and possibilities and challenges of including this concept in the English classes (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concerning that English is one of the most used languages worldwide, learners should be aware of that and be provided with a meaningful language learning process. In this way, "teach and arouse students' interest in following the lesson in the classroom" (Yusimah, 2014, p.189), will be one of the most relevant objectives of English teaching practices. The same author adds that "Interest is one of the strongest motivations for learning English" (p.189). Thus, finding "purposes of getting personal pleasure and fun in acquiring new learning experiences'' (Hadriana y Arif, 2003, p.37-38, cited by Melina, 2017) known as intrinsic motivation, could be one of the starting points of this language learning process.

Letting students be responsible for their learning process, learning practices students are provided with, need to be well considered. Flutter and Rudduck (2004) add, "where the objective of the investigation is to improve teaching and learning, then it is only the testimony of pupils and teachers themselves that can provide essential, first-hand evidence"(p.4). Thus, this learning process through engagement will be possible with the **collaboration of both pupils and teachers**. Fielding (2001) added that "teachers cannot create new roles and realities without the support and encouragement of their students: students cannot construct more imaginative and fulfilling realities of learning without a reciprocal engagement with their teachers" (p.108). In this way, as teachers, there is the need to consider the students' needs to involve them more in their learning process.

But, how can this English language learning process be developed?

Following what Redchenko (2016) comments, including the **project work approach** in this language learning process has different benefits. This methodology "helps to strengthen individualization of the learning process, to search for optimal combination of theory and practice, to keep students' knowledge and skills up-to-date, and to encourage students to resolve their everyday issues themselves" (p.6203). However, first of all, this methodology needs to be known before applying it to the classroom. In this way, project work is defined as:

> a long-term (several weeks) activity that involves a variety of individual or cooperative tasks such as developing a research plan and questions, and implementing the plan through empirical or document research that includes collecting, analysing, and reporting data orally and/or inwriting.

> *(*Beckett, 2002, p.615, cited by Pham, 2017)

Concerning its benefits to the language learning process, it is crucial to stand out that project work includes different activities in which there are "integrated the **four language skills**, speaking, listening, reading and writing…" (Pham, 2017, p.617). In this way, if the project work's plan considers the students, they will work on them in a meaningful and transversal manner. Moreover, we should consider the opportunity to work through different types of groupings: individually, in pairs, small or big groups, organizing themselves. Thus, some communicative, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills will be developed through this sociocultural process between the students. Ebadi, Mohammad & Shabani (2010) comment, "individuals learn best when working together with others during collaboration, and it is through such collaborative endeavors with more skilled persons that learners learn and internalize new concepts, psychological tools, and skills" (p.238). This statement could be related to the concept known as **The Zone of Proximal Development**, which consist on:

> giving them interesting and culturally meaningful learning and problem-solving tasks that are slightly more difficult than what they do alone, such that they will need to work together either with another, more competent peer or with a teacher or adult to finish the task

> (Ebadi *et al.*, 2010, p.238)

In this way, talking about this learning and development process that comes from this social interaction between students, the **social constructivism** perspective of Vygotsky is introduced since it is focused on "social interaction in learning and development" (Ebadi *et al.*, 2010, p.241).

As a resume of these project work features, it is important to stand out the importance of the communication and the collaboration of both students and

teachers to create meaningful educational experiences. In this way, working through project work could be "potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering, and challenging" (Pham, 2017, p.616). However, the importance of dealing with the autonomy and the organization that this approach involves will be interesting to consider while applying this methodology.

Therefore, what should be done in class if teachers want to provide students with relevant learning experiences? Flutter and Rudduck (2004) comment that "consulting pupils is a good way of finding out 'what works' in the classroom" (p.14). **Child consultation** is defined as the "consultative wing of pupil participation. Consultation is about talking with pupils about things that matter in school" (Rudduck, 2005, p.1). Regarding this information, incorporating students' opinions while designing teaching practices will be a helpful resource to achieve a meaningful learning process.

But how could child consultation be developed? Considering what Halsey, Martin, and Murfield (2009) commented, there are different ways of consulting pupils, talking about the surveys and the face-to-face consultation, done individually and with small or big groups, among others. Moreover, it could be done through different tools. It is important to highlight this study's use of **post-its** and **technology**. Actually, Madden (2001) added that "the most effective strategies are likely to combine innovative technology with imaginative methods for engaging people in face-to-face settings, and/or by post or telephone" (p.76).

In this way, on the one hand, Madden (2001) commented that post-its "provide a very useful tool for exploring issues because everyone in the group has the opportunity to express their opinions and views" (p.88). On the other hand, **technology** is also part of this consultation process. It also offers multiple benefits while consulting students. In a class with younger and active participants, technological tools have "the potential to access a large number of children and young people who are very dispersed" (p.76) and "**enhanced participatory opportunities for student voice** in education research" (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013; Czerniawski & Kidd, 2011; Gosper, Malfoy, & McKenzie, 2013, cited by Hunter and O'Brien, 2018, n.p). In this way, technology provides students with

another alternative to express themselves, giving each a chance to make their voice visible. In this study, the **anonymous format of the Padlet** will favour this aspect. Related to this idea, it is said, "...how involving pupils in making decisions about teaching activities can encourage greater independence in learning" (Roller, 1999, p.11, cited by Flutter and Rudduck, 2004*). Considering students' opinions, teachers will be able to identify **students' needs**, and difficulties. Therefore, **inclusion** is also considered. Different authors talk about this fact referring to:

> Encouraging pupils to explicitly engage in [such] a self-questioning exercise helps them to begin to think about and take control of their own learning. It can also provide the teacher with the valuable information needed for differentiating work and developing effective support activities for individual learners who may have special needs.

> (Doran and Cameron, 1995: 17, cited by Flutter and Rudduck, 2004)

From this statement, it is also interesting to stand out what is mentioned about the self-questioning exercise that supposes consulting children. As long as they reflect on their learning process, they know how it is going, what should be improved, and find their motivation and reasons to learn this language. This statement is also related to the constructivism theory, but referring to the perspective of seeing "**learners as active constructors of their world view and discoverers of Knowledge**" (Ebadi *et al.*, 2010. p.241) and to the metacognition. This term refers to "the ability to think about one's own thinking and learning process" (Nisbet and Schucksmith, 1986, p.8, cited by Flutter and Rudduck, 2004).

This reflection about their learning process will **enhance self-esteem** and confidence, promote stronger **engagement** and **motivation** to learn, and encourage pupils to become more active members of the school community (Jelly *et al.,* 2000, p.7 cited by Flutter and Rudduck, 2004). In this way, looking for possible difficulties in this language learning process could also influence in the designing of educational practices. Therefore, pupils' voice contributes to "**solving problems** that affect the teacher's right to teach and the pupil's right to learn" (Rudduck, 2005, p.1). Thus, this study is focused on this specific objective. "...**pupils' perspectives can help teachers to reflect on their practice**, look at

ways of improving some aspects of their teaching and develop new ideas" (Cullingford, 1991:2, p.12, cited by Flutter and Rudduck, 2004).

However, it is important to highlight some possible challenges of including this pupil consultation in the class.

Firstly, in each course, teachers are supposed to work on some specific content, following the school methodology and including some activities or resources in which they could feel confident while teaching them. In this way, finding a balance between what students want and need and what they are asked to do could be a complex task. Also, considering what Black, Finneran, and Mayes (2019) expose, **engaging all the students become a real challenge**. Thus, different options and some supports should be incorporated after meeting the particular needs of that specific context.

Another relevant challenge refers to the **difficulty of using English to express themselves**. Roucciell (2021) defended that "one of the main issues to follow the communicative approach for English language teachers worldwide is the students' resistance to talking (Al Hosni, 2014; Arifin, 2017; Fauzan, 2016; Gebhard, 2006; Nunan, 1999; Savaşçi, 2014; p.4). Actually, in the English Language Learning process, it is seen how students mix the foreign language and their mother tongue language to express themselves. In fact, **code-switching** is also used for teachers as it "could help the students to understand the English lessons better" (Abdul and May, 2020, p.41). Brice (2000) added that teachers could include words from the two languages in a sentence or it could be used, as a repetition, to ensure everyone's comprehension. However, Abdul and May (2020) highlighted using it "only when necessary" (p.41).

Considering child consultation is about talking with students, this lack of confidence in expressing themselves using English should be considered. However, child consultation sessions could become an **opportunity to enhance their speaking** skills and feel progressively more secure while expressing their thoughts in this language. Thus, talking about problems that matter in their class could become an interesting opportunity for students to practice speaking.

Finally, considering all these issues and following what McIntyre, Pedder & Rudduck (2005) comment, **this consultation process devotes time**. Thus, this could be another challenge.

In conclusion, it is interesting to stand out what Fielding (2001):

> The student voice movement has within it the possibility of educational transformation: to achieve this potential we will have to discard the now moribund framework of school effectiveness and embrace a view of education which understands that the means of our engagement cannot sensibly be separated from the nature of our aspirations. *(*p.108)

Giving value to pupil's voices could be an interesting starting point of a meaningful learning process that makes sense for the students and engages them to learn and enhance their personal and professional abilities. Nevertheless, these possibilities and challenges of including child consultation in the class should be considered to identify whether it could be implemented in every context. Hereunder, different stages of the study are described.

4. METHOD

4.1. Type of investigation:

This research process comes from the necessity of identifying why the development of the project work in sixth-grade had negative results. Pupils were not engaged in its development during the English class and felt lost dealing with this methodology. Opinions and ideas emerged from **child consultation through a technological tool** (Padlet) and were analysed and validated considering theoretical references. In this way, as the study gives "emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of the participants" (Pope&Mays, 1995, cited by Nigatu, 2009, n.p), the method used to collect the data is a qualitative analysis. However, as during the project, some students' self-assessment was considered; there is also a brief implication of quantitative research. This study is based on the evidence of the sixth-grade pupils who, through student consultation, revealed their needs, and difficulties. Therefore, it exposes the procedure whereby this data was used to design a new educational experience for the English classroom based on students' needs. Afterwards, pupils were provided with a new educational practice that made their needs visible. The study **aims to identify the possibilities and challenges** of creating a new educational experience considering pupil voice by analysing and comparing the opinions of both students and teacher.

4.2. Research question:

- What are the possibilities and challenges of creating a new learning experience considering pupil voice?

4.3. Objectives:

- To design a new educational experience for the English classroom based on students' opinions.

- To meet children's learning needs in the English classroom environment.

- To identify the possibilities and challenges of creating a new educational experience through child consultation.

- To see if child consultation is a one-off thing or if it could be continued in the English classroom.

4.4. Participants

The participants of this research project are the sixth-grade primary' students from Aldric' school, located in Cassà de la Selva. There are students from P3 till 6th grade of Primary and they start studying English from the time they are three years old. The school wants to promote the autonomous work of the language in the last course of Upper Cycle. Thus, they introduce the project work approach in the English language learning process.

Participants	Total number of students	Girls	Boys	Number of students with methodological adaptations
6th grade students	50	23	27	11

Table 1. Participants

These students are distributed into three groups (6[th]A, 6[th]B and 6[th]C). However, as Table 1 shows, this study's sample includes the whole number of students, as they will develop the same project work. Different English levels are coexisting in these classes. However, it could be considered that the general level is medium.

4.5. Procedure:
● Contextualization:

Considering introducing project work's methodology in the last course of Upper Cycle, the English teacher included a "review project work". This work plan was the first contact of the students and the English teacher with this approach.

● Problem presentation:

Some **negative results and students' attitudes** towards the development of this project **were identified**. These refer to the lack of time, feeling lost with the content and the lack of support to deal with the tasks, autonomously. In addition, students' productions were unfinished, and the project work's guide was incomplete, as they have to highlight an activity when it was finished (*See Annex 1*).

- Inital consultation session:

Firstly, the announcement of the "review project work" closing was made. At that moment, most of the students of the different groups (58.8% in 6[th]A, 52.9% in 6[th]B, and 31.25% in 6[th]C) started to express their disapproval to this statement; as some of them did not complete the different tasks (*See Annex 2*). It should be considered that the rest of the students were feeling lost about how this project was done. Considering this situation, the necessity of considering all of these opinions was evident.

However, although most of the students' difficulties were quite evident, something more should be done to go deeper and modify the educational experience to obtain better results. Considering pupil voice was thought to be a valuable tool to evidence all the barriers, acquire data and create a new classroom experience. I decided to include a technological tool called "Padlet" in an assessment session to make the pupils' opinions visible (*See Annex 3*).

Students were distributed into different groups of four-five, and they were provided with some post-its and tablets (*See Annex 4*). In this way, **students were asked to describe their feelings towards the "review project work**" in some words, pictures or a short sentence. The question included in the Padlet that guides this process was *How did you feel doing Project work 1*?.

There were some strategies to help students express their thoughts in English, considering the difficulties that they may have. Firstly, as Walker (2001) commented, "presenting well-known quotations or phrases can be useful in encouraging strong opinions from children…" (p.10). In this way, before starting, we introduced some sentences to express their thoughts (*In my opinion, I think that..).* Moreover, it was seen that most of the students had a clear idea about what they wanted to express. However, some still had different doubts while expressing their thoughts or feelings. For this reason, the opportunity of thinking, firstly, on a specific picture that makes them think about their feelings was given to the students (*See Annex 5*). Afterwards, through collaborative work and the

support of some digital resources, students of both groups could write down some words or sentences (*See Annex 6*).

Then, this information was reflected on the Padlet. In this way, students could see how their views were projected, anonymously, on the screen (*See Annex 7*).

● Exchanging information:

Considering that a qualitative research "is more concerned with meaning" (Gibson and O'Connor, 2003, p.64), **interpreting the information** given from pupils' opinions was important. Moreover, as the author reflects on, the participants express themselves in a particular and different way. Thus, "the researcher needs to make sure they understand what is meant by certain expressions and also because it allows the researcher to look at the meaning and underlying implications of those expressions" (Gibson and O'Connor, 2003,p.69).

For this reason, we read the different statements of the Padlet and they started a group discussion.

• After the session:

We develop this procedure in each class, and the exchange of information was quite different. I read Padlet's information and I analysed the dialogues between the teacher and the students. It is important to consider how the **students mixed the two languages**, Catalan and English. Thus, while transcribing students' quotes of the initial and final consultation in the results stage, it is seen how their idea is reflected on these quotes, although everything is translated into English. However, these **different languages are differentiated** through **normal script** (what they expressed in English) and **italics** (Catalan words or expressions from the students that I translated into English). To organize all these data, it was important to consider which was the initial objective of this data collection, that was asking students *How did they feel doing Review Project work?.* This was thought to identify the possible barriers while developing the project work, to create a new learning experience.

- Implementation of the consultation' results:

After selecting which content students should deal with in the following project work, the next step was to think about different activities that could be included in the new work plan. Some **noteworthy changes were included in the new learning experience** (*See Annex 8*). Instead of ten activities, there were only six. Pictures on the work plan were maintained. More activities with technology were included. Self-assessment was taken off of this work plan. The new one considers their motivation, the difficulty, teamwork and the comprehension of the content; presented in a more dynamic format (*See Annex 9).*

- Putting into practice this new project work:

Considering that the research question aims to identify the possibilities and challenges of creating a new educational practice from child consultation; it was important to present the new activities to the students, with the instructions, assessment, materials and supports (*See Annex 10*).

The development of this project work lasted three weeks. Students could choose which activity they wanted to develop in each session (*See Annex 11*). While they were working on the different activities of the project plan, I did an **observation** of the development of these tasks and the self-assessment (*See Annex 12*). Some notes were taken (*See Annex 13*).

- Final assessment:

At the end of these three weeks, I did **a final consultation session** with the different groups. Firstly, I communicated to the students the ending of the project work plan, and they repeated the same process of the beginning. Firstly, I showed them some pictures of them developing the project. It makes "the interview process less 'abstract' and helps to embed it within a 'world' more familiar to children" (Payne, 2007, p.12).

Moreover, they were asked to remember their ideas about the review project work. In this way, **establishing the comparison between the two projects** would

be easier. Then, I asked them to think about *How did they feel doing "Project work 1"?.* They repeated the same procedure but, instead of writing their ideas firstly on a post-it; they wrote them down in the Padlet directly. In this way, different students' views were caught.

Moreover, they exchanged their ideas and opinions and the session ended up reflecting on how they wanted to work in the English classroom during the second term, thinking about the project work' development. The acquired data from the Padlet was analysed and these discussions were transcribed, following the same criteria in the initial consultation. In this way, the results came from **comparing the students' initial and final thoughts.** Moreover, I did an **interview with the English teacher** (*See Annex 14*).

4.6. Instruments of data collection:

For the **initial consultation**, the instrument used was **child consultation**. This process was done through the use of a technological tool called **Padlet**. The objective of including this application was to discover students' needs regarding the review project work. This app allowed the students to write down their ideas and then project them on the screen to favour the development of an exchange of views. Their answers were helpful to acquire data and design the new educational experience from what they said.

During the implementation of the consultation results, I observed how the students were developing the activities and which their attitudes were, referring to their participation and motivation. On the other side, there were the students' opinions in the self-assessment of each activity.

Finally, regarding the **final consultation**, I repeated the same process as the beginning, using Padlet. In this case, I had the **objective of identifying students' opinions after developing the new project work** created from their needs. Moreover, it was useful to identify the **possibilities and challenges of including this child consultation** in development of the project work. Thus, child consultation through a technological tool was the main instrument used in this stage of the study.

Moreover, a part of these instruments, an **interview with the English teacher** was done to identify her opinion about this study (*See Annex 14*). It was helpful to see the possibilities and challenges of creating a new learning experience from child consultation and whether it has been implemented in the English class.

5. RESULTS

In this section, there are the results obtained through the use of the instruments mentioned previously.

5.1. Initial consultation:

Firstly, initial needs of the pupils were identified through the question *How did you feel doing the "review project work"?* This data was used to meet students' needs in the development of the project work.

Here, there are some of the initial consultation results:

Pupils' opinions: HOW DID YOU FEEL DOING "REVIEW PROJECT WORK"?
I think the project work was long but funny. Because I don't finish.
More games
It was funny
Difficult activities, I don't like them.
I think the project work for me is so so because I don't like it that much.
The project work was very long.
I think the project work was funny because I like English.
I don't understand the project work.
No motivated.
It was good because is short and funny.
It was so-so, not too difficult.
I think the project work is boring. I like to use the computer.
I was no motivated.
In my opinion the project work was too long because I didn't have enough time.
It was fun
The project work was easy.
I like this project work.
I don't like this project work because I feel lost.
It was complicated but fun.
In my opinion, the project work was too long, but it was fun.
The project work was boring, but easy.
I think the project work is little long but funny.
Is boring

The project work is good, happy.
It's been different from last year but I really like it, not very short, almost perfect.
In my opinion, project work is very long and boring.
I think I need more time to do it.

Table 2. Initial consultation through Padlet.

As Table 2 shows, one of the most repeated ideas in the different groups was that **the project work was long** (41.17% in 6^{th}A, 52.94% in 6^{th}B and 25% in 6^{th}C), mentioning that they felt they did not have enough time to finish the activities. Another idea was that it **was complex** (23.52% in 6^{th}A, 47.05% in 6^{th}B and 18.75% in 6^{th}C). However, some students defined the project work as an easy, so-so or normal activity. They also included the fact whether the project work was or not an attractive experience for them. Some of them thought that it was a **funny activity** (17.64% in 6^{th}A, 23.52% in 6^{th}B and 18.75% in 6^{th}C), although most of them thought that **it was boring**, suggesting to use **more the computer or to add some games** (17.64% in 6^{th}A, 23.52% in 6^{th}B and 18.75% in 6^{th}C). Other opinions referred to **feeling lost and unmotivated** (11.76% in 6^{th}A, 11.76% in 6^{th}B, 12.5% in 6^{th}C). Nevertheless, few students were satisfied with the project work, defining it as good, normal or almost perfect (*See Annex 7*).

From the **group discussion**, the most repeated idea was the **brief period time** they had to develop the activities, saying that it **was too long**. Table 3 shows some of the pupils' voices regarding this issue.

Pupil voice:
"The project work *is too long.*"
"I need more time to do it."
"*I don't do anything,* because I *didn't have time*".
"*I only have two days, two sessions*".

Table 3. Students' voices.

Another opinion was thinking the project work **was difficult, feeling lost** or unmotivated to develop it (*See Annex 15*).

Pupil voice:

"Yes, because… *I don't really know how to say it*. I don't *know what we have to do, it was not easy to do.*
"we don't *understand* the project work".

Table 4. Students' voices.

Moreover, they mentioned a lot about **including fewer and funnier activities**. Some of them said they felt boring since they did not do what they were asked to do in each activity (*See Annex 16*).

Pupil voice:
"*We want* funny activities, for example board games or group work".

Table 5. Students' voices.

Students positively value the fact of including pictures in the project work guide (*See Annex 17*).

Pupil voice:
"*For me it was really useful to have the images, because, for example, I knew if I had to do the activity in groups or in pairs*".

Table 6. Students' voices.

5.2.   Implementation of the consultation results:

The self-assessment of each activity provides the study with some results about how the students dealt with the project. This tables show students' reactions towards this new learning (*See Annex 12*).

Ítem	Like/dislike	Difficulty	Teamwork	Learning
Maximum	82.35%	41.17%	88.23%	----
Medium	17.64%	------	11.77%	64.7%
Medium-less	--------	29.41%	-----	11.78%
Minimum	---------	23.52%	-----	23.52%

Table 7. Self-assessment results in 6thA.

Item	Like/dislike	Difficulty	Teamwork	Learning
Maximum	82.35%	23.52%	100%	35.29%
Medium	17.64%	58.82%	-----	52.94%
Medium less	--------	------	-----	----
Minimum	---------	17.64%	-----	-----

Table 8. Self-assessment results in 6thB.

Item	Like/dislike	Difficulty	Teamwork	Learning
Maximum	81.25%	25%	100%	75%
Medium	18.75%	---	----	----
Medium-less	--------	62.5%	-----	25%
Minimum	---------	18.75%	-----	----

Table 9. Self-assessment results in 6thC.

Regarding **whether students like the activities**, most of them give the maximum punctuation to this item, as shown in Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9; making reference to like a lot the activities, especially the kahoot and who is who...?.

Pupil voice:
"It is funny"
"*Can I play again who is who...?*"
"We love this Bingo"

Table 10. Students' voices.

Considering the **difficulty**, most of the students thought that the activities were not tricky. Most of them give the maximum punctuation to the teamwork, as Tables 8

and 9 show. However, Table 7 exposes how some (41.17%) thought the activities were quite difficult. Apart from the self-assessment's results, this was seen in the students' attitudes or comments during the development of the activities.

Pupil voice:
"I don't understand"
"How do you said "tenir" in English?"
"*What I have to do*?"

Table 11. Students' voices.

Concerning **teamwork**, what is seen in Table 7 is that a high percentage of students also give the maximum punctuation, but not all of them. Students verbalize the problems they may have with the group, giving a reason to value that item in this way, saying for example, "*he is a cheater*" in the Bingo.

Regarding **whether students think they learn the content**, Table 8 shows how more than half of the total number of students thought they did not learn a lot, but neither anything. Table 9 exposes how this fact was the case of more than half of the total number of the class students.

Pupil voice:
"I don't know *if I learnt*".
"I learn the adverbs of frequency."
"I don't *learn lots of things* here."

Table 12. Students' voices.

5.3. Final consultation:

With this **final consultation**, some possibilities and challenges of creating a new educational experience through child consultation will be considered. Students' opinions, in Padlet, were relevant in terms of identifying the contribution of this consultation in the development of this teaching practice.

Students' opinions: HOW DID YOU FEEL DOING "PROJECT WORK 1"?
I love the activities.
I like kahoot.
We have little time.

It was no difficult.
I like the games.
It was not so long.
We don't have many days to do it.
I like the activities a lot.
I want more Kahoots.
More short.
More interactive.
Shorter than the review project work.
The activities were fun.
Some activities were difficult.
I like the bingo and who is who?
We have more time.
The new project work was really different, easier, shorter and funnier.
I love the kahoot.
We need more time.
Activities very funny.
Shorter and easier.

Table 13. Students' voices in final consultation.

As it is seen, most of the opinions positively valued Project Work 1. The most repeated idea in the three groups was thinking that **the activities were funnier and more interactive** (70.58% in 6thA, 41.17% in 6thB and 43.75% in 6thC).

Another opinion was that the project work **was shorter** than the review project work. Actually, it was the case of the 6thA with 70.58% of the students, 17.64% in 6thB and 31.25% in 6thC. However, all the students believed **they need even more time** to complete the tasks. Finally, most of the students thought that it was **not so difficult or even easy** (41.17% in 6thA, 11.17% in 6thB and 25% in 6thC) (*See Annex 18*).

From the group discussion, the most repeated ideas were describing the activities as dynamic and funny tasks, and they positively valued the introduction of board games and the Kahoot. Moreover, they also said that this project work **was**

shorter than the previous project work. However, some students said that they **need even more time** to develop all the tasks (*See Annex 19 and 20*).

Pupil voice:
"I like this project work *because* it was no long."
"I like this project work because is more interactive for everyone."
"This project work is better than the review project work but we didn't have enough time to do it".
"I like this project work because I like the activities."
"I think this project work is *shorter* than the other project work, *but we didn't have time to finish it."*

Table 14. Students' voices.

However, when discussing the difficulty of developing the tasks autonomously, they expressed the feeling of going lost. Apart from this fact, most students verbalized they find it easier to solve their doubts with the content if the activities are done in a big group and not autonomously. Students prefer not to do project work in the next term, as they will learn more working in a big group (*See Annex 20*).

Pupil voice:
"When I am doing project work, *I feel lost.*"
"*I prefer to work together because if I don't understand something, I will solve my doubts faster."*
"Working with project work is funnier but difficult."
"I prefer to work together, *because I don't know how to do the activities alone.*"

Table 15. Students' voices.

Apart from students' results, **teacher's opinion** has been considered to identify her thoughts regarding creating a new learning experience from child consultation, and to see if child consultation could be implemented in the class, identifying whether students' opinions from Table 15 were considered (*See Annex 14*).

Regarding the **possibilities** of including child consultation, she talks about the importance of making students feel part of this learning process and making them aware of their interests and difficulties. Moreover, she sees child consultation as a

tool to see **what works** in the class and an opportunity to **reflect** on her actions. She also mentioned the **inclusion** as a possibility of this child consultation.

Teacher's opinion:
"The new learning experience meets with their needs…"
"…students can realize what they've been learning."
"Teacher is able to see if the activities were successful or not and rethink about them."

Table 16. Teacher's voice.

Concerning the **challenges**, she mentioned the **time**, and the difficulty of **finding a balance** between what students want and what she, as a teacher, thinks is better. Apart from these aspects, she also included **the language difficulties** students may have while developing a project in English autonomously.

Teacher's opinion:
"a process like this involves time to consult and discover students' needs, the creation of this learning experience and the evaluation."
"…students' needs and interests do not suit with your thoughts as a teacher."
"Most of the students have language difficulties. Thus, it is sometimes difficult to develop a fluid exchange of information and achieve that all the students express themselves…".

Table 17. Teacher's voice.

In addition, she highlights the fact of using child consultation to identify some students' difficulties that you, as a teacher, may not identify through observation. Moreover, she talked about whether students' opinions English could be considered or not in her classes.

Teacher's opinion:
"I believe it is important to find a balance between what they want and what am I supposed to develop during this course."
"In this way, according to what they said, I am going to do more small sessions where we are going to work more on the assembly and introducing the contents deeply, solving their doubts if it is needed."

Table 18. Teacher's voice.

Thus, in her English classes, she will combine students' opinions through the development of more dynamic activities in big groups, but including autonomous tasks in small groups to go deeper with the content.

6. DISCUSSION

This study has drawn attention to the research question *What are the possibilities and challenges of creating a new learning experience considering pupils' voices?,* considering sixth-grade students' and teacher opinions.

Students' opinions:

- Possibilities of including child consultation:

It should be considered that students' initial thoughts were mainly, negative; regarding the time, the difficulty, the motivation and the feeling of going lost. However self-assessment' results and the ones from the final consultation show a considerable evolution. Almost all students give the maximum punctuation to the motivation and the fact of liking the activities. Moreover, during the group discussion, they verbalise that the project work was better, funnier; emphasising the board games and the Kahoot. In the final discussions, more students were engaged in expressing their opinions. In addition, it was seen how the ones with some specific language or conduct difficulties felt more part of this educational experience, verbalizing the motivation with the use of the technology, especially the Kahoot (*See Annex 20*). In this way, it is seen how **students' motivation has increased** and, in consequence, **their engagement**, considering the number of finished activities and the quality of the submitted work. Therefore, the objectives of **meeting students' needs and designing a new learning experience from them have been achieved.** In addition, inclusion has also become a possibility of including child consultation in this educational practise.

Then, considering the number of reflections they provided the initial and final consultation with, a considerable evolution could be seen. Through the self-assessment and the final consultation, it is seen how students went deeper with the issues involved in this learning process. In the final consultation, they verbalize *"I think I learn more through big group activities since I can solve my doubts and write notes in my notebook"* and "*It is difficult to work autonomously because we do not know a lot of English*". I believe these reflections are deeper than those included in the initial consultation, "*Project work is long*". In this way, child consultation has become a **self-questioning exercise** from which they enhance

their ability to reflect on their learning process. Thus, the constructivism perspective about seeing "**learners as active constructors of their world view and discoverers of Knowledge**" (Ebadi *et al.,* 2010. p.241) acquires sense.

- Challenges of including child consultation:

Although there was an evolution between the initial and the final consultation sessions, consulting them through Padlet was more profitable since the amount of information was larger. Some students felt comfortable and confident enough to verbalize their thoughts but, others did not talk as much as the others did and felt insecure expressing their views in English and decided to speak in Catalan (*See Annexes 15 and 20*). In this way, this could be seen as a challenge of including child consultation in ELT classes, as it is about talking and, some students were not able to do it using the foreign language. Considering what was said in the literature review, Hour (2015) added that "those who have this problem usually have poor English skills, especially in speaking, and this is due to their limited English vocabulary bank" (p.1). Actually, it was seen how they only incorporated the general words we provided them with at the beginning and tent to mix the two languages. Therefore, these **language difficulties could be seen as a challenge**.

However, reflecting on this question of Manzano (2016), "Do we want individuals to be able to determine their own actions?" (p.95), another challenge is identified. I believe students need to have a clear idea of the purpose of this process and get used to it. **They need to know the huge potential of their opinions**. Although it was seen how they seem to feel more part of this process, it is difficult to pretend **students to reflect deeply on this learning process**. Therefore, maybe the teacher's role should be more relevant at the beginning to make them reflect on their options and allow them to do it by themselves progressively.

Teacher's opinion:
- Possibilities of including child consultation:

From the interview' results, it is seen how most of the initial barriers were quite evident after observing how the students developed the different tasks. However,

some of these previously identified problems did not appear in the Padlet, or there were other ideas apart from these. "This is where we learn new things or things we didn't expect to hear. It is important to always follow up when a participant seems to be going in a new or unexpected direction" (O'Connor and Gibson, 2003, p.69). Thus, some relevant changes have been introduced in the new learning practice. Sometimes, we are not aware of some problems students should deal with while developing an activity with a concrete objective. And, in this way, focusing a lot on this aspect, we may overlook some other important issues that students need. "These situations are called 'rich points' and are often very valuable" (Asar, 1998, p.70, cited by O'Connor and Gibson, 2003). Therefore, **consulting students contributes to identifying new issues** apart from those you have specified.

Moreover, inclusion is also considered in teacher' opinions. In the interview, she verbalized how some students who never were motivated in her class felt more motivated. Putting into practice consultation sessions, students had different ways of expressing themselves, helping them find a place where they could feel secure and listened. This is what Beltrán, Abbott & Jones (2013) refer to, saying that technologies can reach everyone's needs. However, as these authors commented, offering only one resource for the students is not enough to reach everyone's needs. "...new technology and other support is alone inadequate to promote real and sustainable change in effective inclusive practice…" (n.d). In this way, offering pupils the possibility of drawing, writing or using technology, was interesting to reach everyone's needs. Thus, **child consultation favours inclusion**.

Apart from these aspects, child consultation started to be implemented in this English class to provide students with more meaningful learning experiences. Thus, as Flutter and Rudduck (2004) commented "consulting pupils is a good way of finding out 'what works' in the classroom" (p.14) and, moreover, "...**pupils' perspectives can help teachers to reflect on their practice**, look at ways of improving some aspects of their teaching and develop new ideas" (Cullingford, 1991:2, p.12, cited by Flutter and Rudduck, 2004). In this way, **child consultation**

could be implemented in the English class. However, some challenges regarding this fact that are exposed below.

- Challenges of including child consultation:

Students' opinions in the final consultation were about not doing the project work. In this way, **English teacher considered their views** and, as it can be seen in the interview, she will try **to find a balance** between what students want and the fact of working autonomously in her English classes. This could be a real challenge of including child consultation.

Concerning **language difficulties**, it is important to highlight how the teacher dealt with them to enhance their participation in the consultation session. She applied some strategies to achieve the evolution with the students' involvement between the first and the final consultation session. It was important to encourage children to speak, positively value their contributions, and support them. Moreover, as it was seen, it is important to interpret students' opinions while consulting them, including strategies to understand the meaning of their contributions.

Moreover, **time is another challenge** of this process. Considering both students and teacher opinions, **designing a learning experience considering pupils' voices means setting aside the necessary time**. However, as the English teacher mentioned in the interview, time does not matter if this experience provides both parts with positive results. Referring to this, McIntyre, Pedder and Rudduck (2005) says "that teachers would be so motivated only if they believed that pupils' ideas could significantly enhance the quality of their teaching" (p.151).

In this way, a process like this is only worth it if both pupils and teachers believe in all the positive consequences that it has, and try to face up the challenges to achieve a better quality of this learning and teaching language learning process.

6.1. Conclusion and future recommendations:

After analysing the results of this study, I will mention some limitations of the research and some points to consider in similar future steps in this topic.

Firstly, **more time is needed** to go further with this study, designing learning experiences to work on the content after identifying students' needs. In addition, it would be interesting to **repeat the procedure** when students are more used to work with this approach in the English class since they would be more aware of their difficulties, and needs.

Moreover, it would be interesting to **use a different sample**, a larger number of participants with **different levels of English**. Thus, it would be seen how they dealt with this approach, autonomously. The results would be more general and meaningful.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to be **two English teachers per class**, in a situation like this, considering the language difficulties and classroom organization, materials and space.

From now on, **child consultation will be part of the English classes in sixth-grade,** as much as possible. However, it would be interesting to provide teachers with some training to acquire more knowledge and a wide ranging of resources to reach everyone's needs.

I would recommend continuing this project since students could become used to these consultation sessions, making the results more profitable. Moreover, despite all challenges, I **positively value introducing child consultation in designing learning practices**. I believe that including child consultation in the University would also be helpful since future teachers would have the possibility to be aware of the importance of reflecting on their learning process and identifying the challenges that they may need to face up in the school.

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8. ANNEXES

8.1. ANNEX 1. Review project work plan, unfinished.

Figure 1. Review project plan unfinished. Own elaboration.

8.2. ANNEX 2. Video: notebook with some unfinished tasks.

➢ Link to a video: https://youtu.be/zz4F03ZkpXs
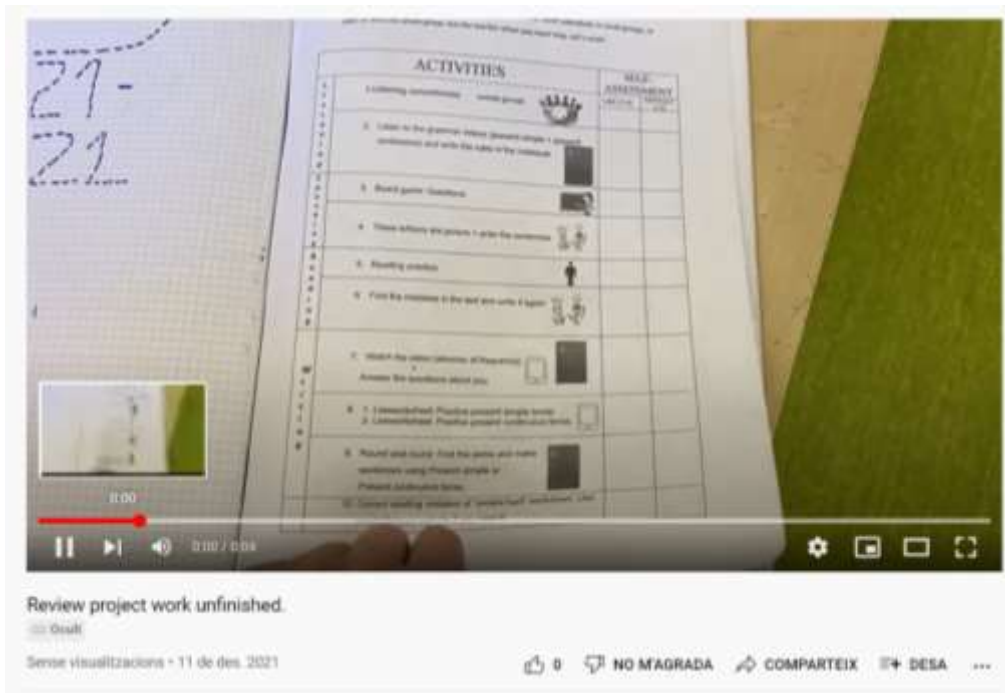
Figure 2. Screenshot of the Youtube video. Own elaboration.

8.3. ANNEX 3. Padlet screen
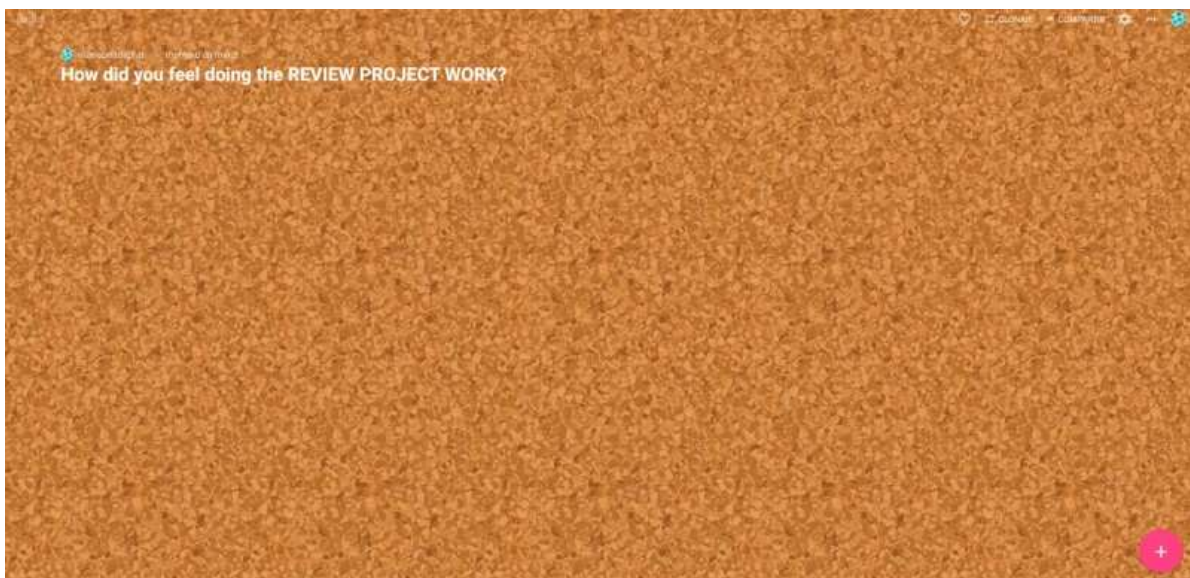
Figure 3. Padlet screen. Own elaboration.

8.4. ANNEX 4. Two students with post-its and a tablet.

Figure 4. Students with post-it's and a tablet. Own elaboration.

8.5. ANNEX 5. Post-it's with visual elements.
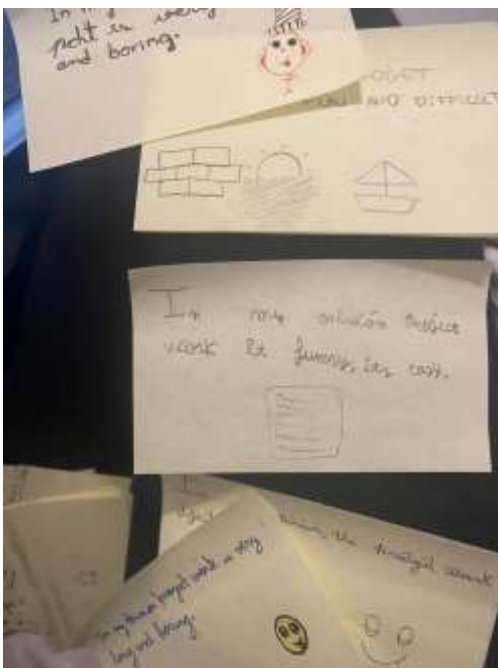
Figure 5. Post-it's with visual elements. Own elaboration.

8.6.   ANNEX 6. Post-it's from students of 6thA, 6thB and 6thC.

Figure 6. Post-it's from students. Own elaboration.

8.7.   ANNEX 7. Students' opinions on the screen.

Figure 7. Students' opinions on the screen. Own elaboration

8.8. ANNEX 8. Project work 1

<u>PROJECT WORK N°1</u>
Carry out the following activities. Some of them should be done individual, in small groups, in pairs or with the whole group. Ask the teacher when you need help. Let's work!

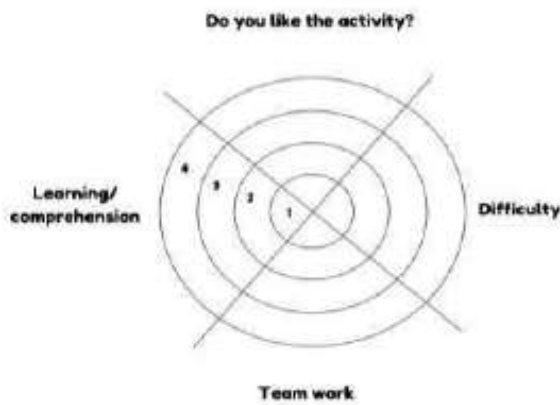| ACTIVITIES	
Listening	1.- Listening competencies bàsiques
Speaking	2.- Who is who...? Let's play!
	3.- Adverbs of frequency Bingo! - Play the Adverbs of frequency Bingo - Write down the sentences of the game
Reading	4.- Reading practice: - Match the sentences with the images. - Write two sentences about something about the school.
Writing	5.- Description of a classmate: Describe your classmate following the guide.
	6.- Comparatives *(kahoot)* - Complete the *kahoot*. - Write two comparisons

SELF ASSESSMENT:

When you finish an activity, you should evaluate your work using these dartboards:

Paint the space of the number you choose:

1: MAXIMUM 😎
2: MORE OR LESS 🙂 ⬆
3: MORE OR LESS 😟 ⬇
4: MINIMUM 🙁

Activity: WHO IS WHO?

Do you like the activity?

Learning/comprehension — Difficulty

Team work

Activity: DESCRIPTION OF A CLASSMATE

Do you like the activity?

Learning/comprehension — Difficulty

Team work

42

<u>Activity:</u> ADVERBS OF FREQUENCY BINGO

Do you like the activity?

<u>Activity:</u> READING PRACTICE

Do you like the activity?

<u>Activity:</u> THE COMPARATIVES KAHOOT

Do you like the activity?

Let's compare! Are you ready?

<u>Activity:</u> LISTENING

Do you like the activity?

avaluació
educació
primària
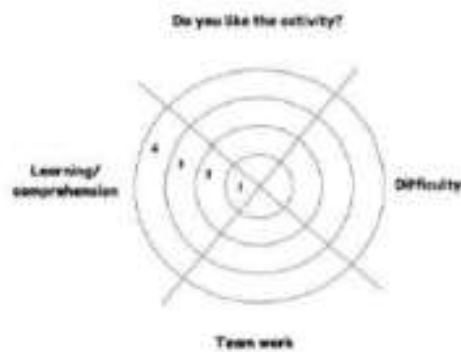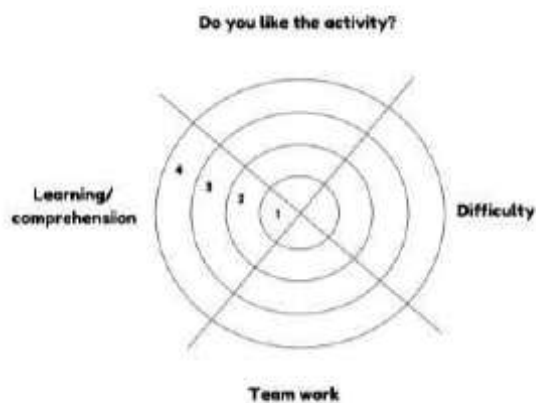
8.9. ANNEX 9. Comparison between the two project works.

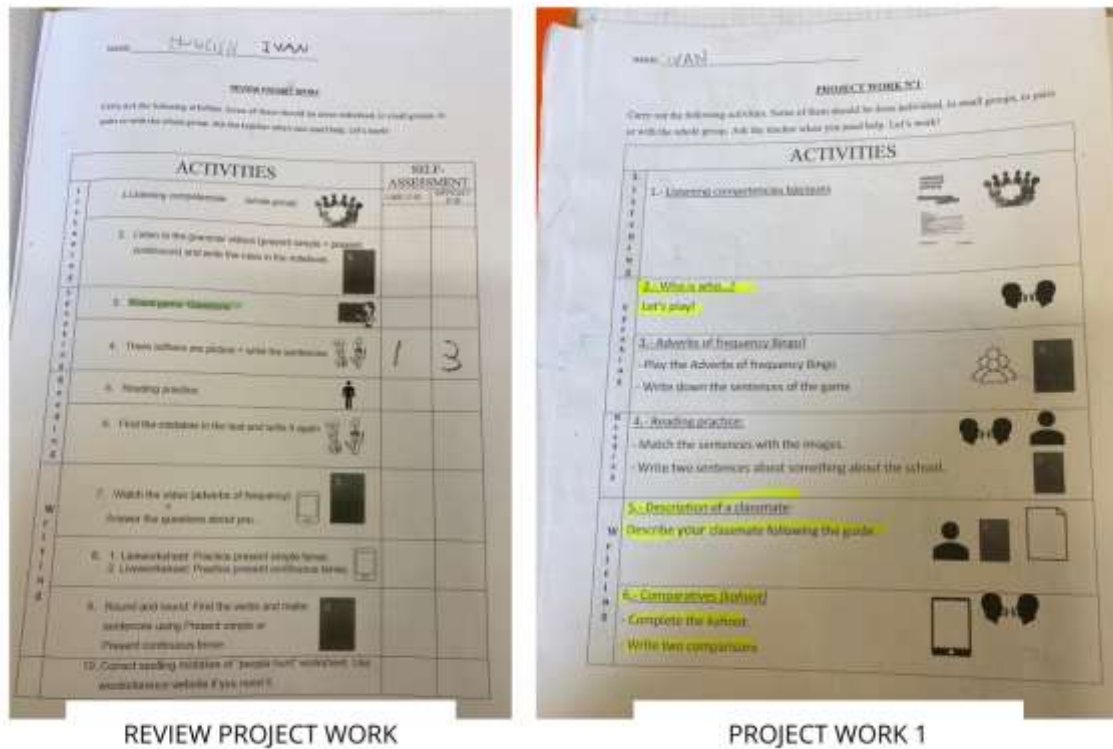REVIEW PROJECT WORK   PROJECT WORK 1

Figure 8. Comparison between two project works. Own elaboration.

8.10. ANNEX 10. Presentation of project work 1 + materials.

Figure 9. Project work presentation + materials. Own elaboration.

8.11. ANNEX 11. Development of project work 1.

Figure 10. Development of the project work 1. Own elaboration.
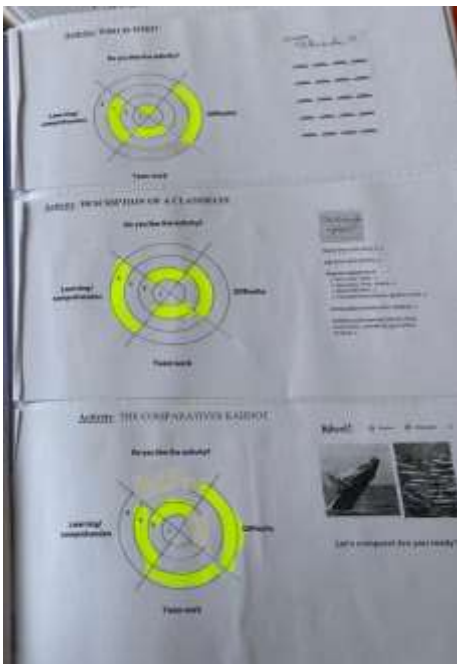
8.12. ANNEX 12. Self-assessment

Figure 11. Self-assessment. Own elaboration.

8.13. ANNEX 13. Observation notes.

Observation notes:

- The activities in which students are more motivated: **Who is who...?**, and **comparatives kahoot.**
- Have/has structure is an interesting support for the Who is who...? game.
- It is difficult for them to create the sentences in the Adverb of frequency bingo. It is useful to remember how a sentence is built.
- In some cases, in the reading practice, there is one member of the group that does most of the matches. To solve it, in the end, I can ask each of them to write down in their notebook some words they learnt.
- Special needs' students are sitting together, doing the activity together with Lídia or me.
- They are motivated with the self-assessment, but there is the need to remember how it works.
- All students seem to be more engaged in the activities, even the ones with more language difficulties are talking in English during the Who is who...?.
- Mostly, they work autonomously. I only have to be with them, especially at the beginning and end of each activity.
- With the kahoot, they are more focused on winning than learning how a comparative form is built.
- Need to remember that they should speak in English, mostly in Bingo.
- Some students feel lost while describing his or her classmate.
- They use a lot the supports.

8.14. ANNEX 14. Interview to the English teacher.

➢ F**or you, which are the benefits of working through project work in sixth grade of Primary?**

In my opinion, working through project work let students get autonomy and organize themselves by doing the activity that they want to do in each session according to the total time they have. Moreover, students are able to work deeply on the contents that they've been working on the small lessons in a more practical way. Also, they are more motivated rather than doing implant activities, because they tend to think that doing project work is funnier.

Finally, they learn how to work better in groups and get the ability to help each other, developing different abilities and skills to solve their daily life problems and situations.

➢ **For you, is the students' engagement important in the English language learning process? Why?**

It's very important because if they are motivated doing an activity they will achieve better the contents as they are going to be more involved in the development of that activity. Moreover, considering the difficulties that may appear in this language learning process, to be motivated will important as it will be easier to face their challenges.

➢ **Which was, for you, the starting point of including pupils' voices in your English lessons?**

From my point of view, the pupils' voices have to be part of the assessment and as teachers we have to take it in account. It's essential to listen to them and discover their weakness and work on them. In this way, after identifying some negative results on the development of the review project work and, after reflecting on them with Maria, we both believe that the best option was to meet with students' needs to provide them with better educational practices.

➢ **For you, which are the benefits of including pupils' voices in the creation of a learning experience? And the challenges?**

Benefits:

- *Students feel more part of their learning process and they can identify their strong point, as well as, their weaknesses.*

- *The new learning experience meets with their needs and includes some considerations taken from the students that can be interesting regarding learning.*

- *It allows doing self-assessment and students can realize what they've been learning.*

- *Teacher is able to see if the activities were successful or not and rethink about them.*

- *It favours inclusion, since all the class' students were more motivated.*

Challenges:

- *Including pupils 'voices in the creation of a learning experience takes time. In the classroom's daily life, you are always rushing to work with all the content you should include in this course. Thus, a process like this involves time to consult and discover students' needs, the creation of this learning experience and the evaluation.*
- *Sometimes, students' needs and interests do not suit with your thoughts as a teacher. You may need to find a balance.*
- *Most of the students have language difficulties. Thus, it is sometimes difficult to develop a fluid exchange of information and achieve that all the students express themselves. I think it is important to encourage them to talk and positively value when they do it.*

> ➢ **Did your initial thoughts about the possible difficulties or barriers of the "review project work" match with pupils' opinions?**

Mainly, yes. My opinion was similar to pupils' opinions, besides some specific ideas that I did not think about it before. This initial consultation helps me to realize about the things that I could plan differently while creating the first project work, and think about how I could fix them.

> ➢ **How did you feel during the development of the new project work?**

I feel much better than doing the previous project work. I observe the students more motivated by doing the activities where they were the protagonist of their learning. So, after that I realize the importance of doing something familiar for them, considering the importance of providing them with activities that could be developed by them, autonomously.

It is interesting to add that, as most of the students work autonomously, I had the opportunity to work with special needs' students with more time. This project work reaches all the students of the class!

> ➢ **For you, which are the most meaningful changes included in the new project work after discovering the pupils' opinions?**

- *Reduce the number of activities in the Project work plan.*

- *Consider the difficulty of these activities, thinking about the autonomous work students should develop. Lots of supports have been introduced.*

- *Including more games and technological tools.*

- *The possibility of working more through small group, helping each other a lot.*

> ➢ **Did you include some changes or present new activities in your programming after the first pupil voice' session?**

Yes, I did. I try to find activities where they are more involved. Moreover, this make me think about the importance of working on the real problems of the class. In this way, as we identified that they have some problems while expressing themselves in English, we developed a brief project in which they thought about the best way for them to review, learn and remember the basic expressions for the classroom language.

➢ **Which are your future plans in relation to English language teaching?**

After listening to the students and doing an assessment about how it works the new project work for them, I consider that it was necessary to discover their opinions to see how I should plan my English classes. In this way, according to what they said, I am going to do more small sessions where we are going to work more on the assembly and introducing the contents deeply, solving their doubts if it is needed. Also, I'm going to try to find activities as role playing in different situations (supermarket, restaurant, shop…) where they will able to apply all these contents and know how to face some problems like that in some possible daily life future problems. However, I believe it is important to find a balance between what they want and what am I supposed to develop during this course. Thus, child consultation will start to be implemented in the English classroom but there is a lot of work to do to learn how to take advantage of all its benefits.

8.15. ANNEX 15. Group discussion 1.
➢ https://youtu.be/3nmVPYgfYbE

Figure 12. Group discussion. Own elaboration.

8.16.   ANNEX 16.Group discussion opinions.

➢ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS_ofz-V1bk

Figure 13. Group discussion. Own elaboration.

8.17.   ANNEX 17. Group discussion opinions.

➢ https://youtu.be/HAL_K-eS3R8

Figure 14. Group discussion. Own elaboration.

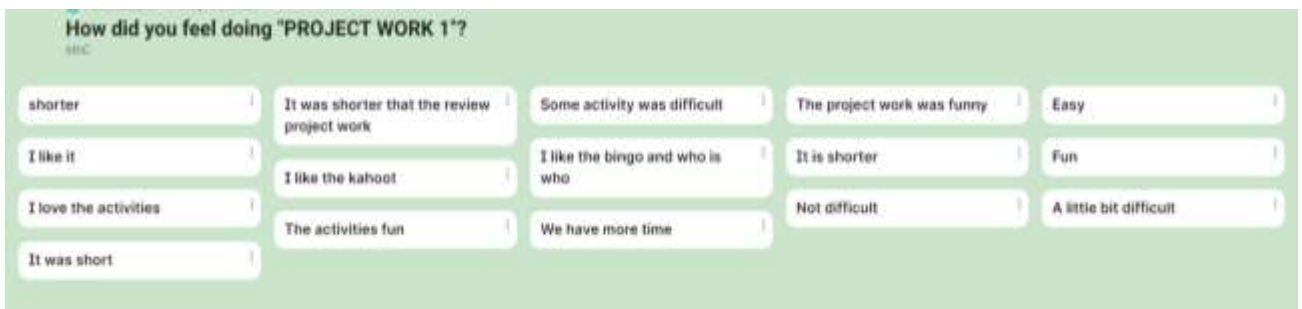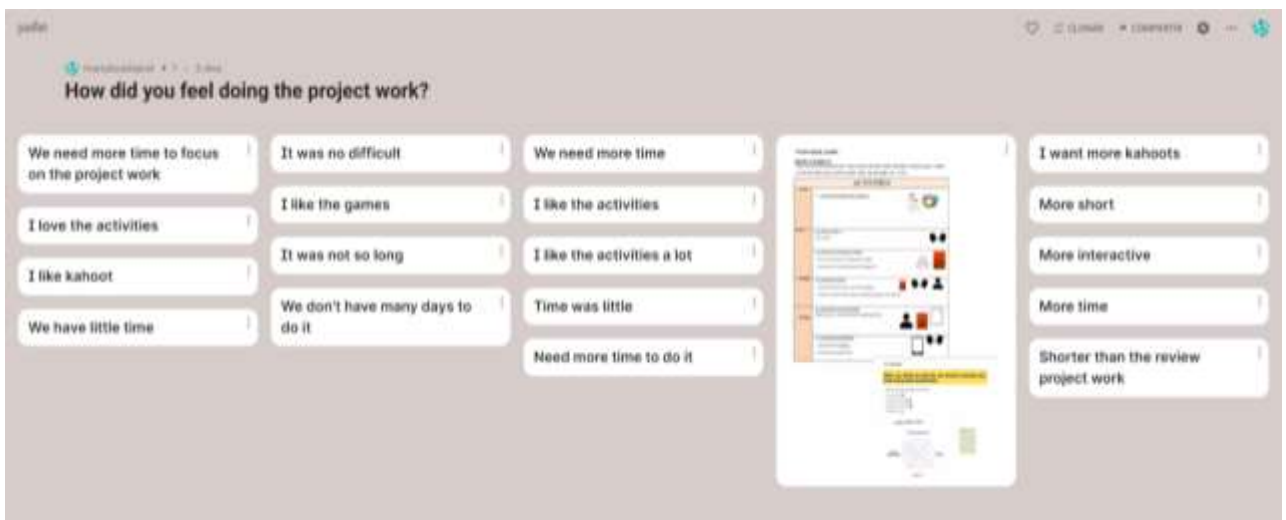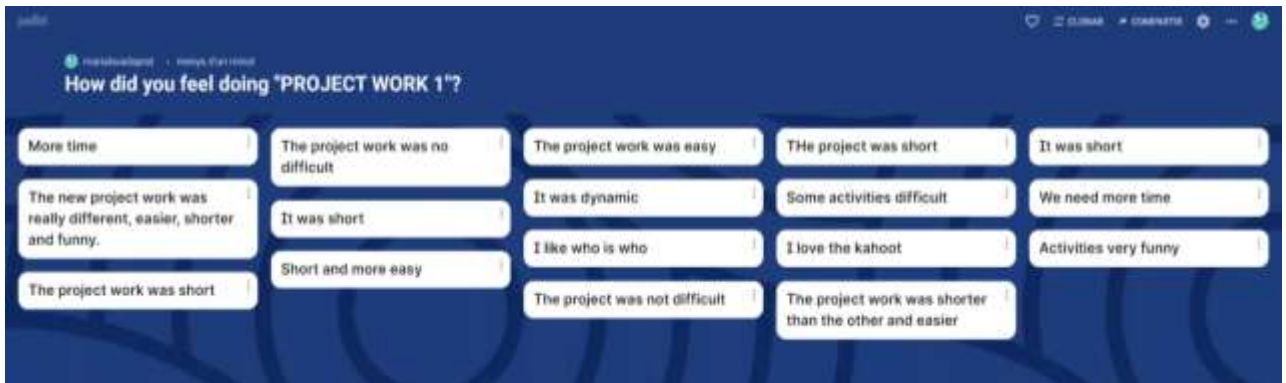### 8.18. ANNEX 18. Final consultation opinions in padlet.

Figure 15. Students' opinions. Own elaboration.

8.19. ANNEX 19. Final opinions in group discussions

➤ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wD5HaXWFjEc

Figure 16. Group discussion. Own elaboration.

8.20. ANNEX 20. Final consultation opinions

➤ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u66N0N7C9zk

Figure 17. Group discussion. Own elaboration.

8.21. ANNEX 21. Final consultation

➢ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjapZRulnz0

Figure 18. Group discussion. Own elaboration.