



# ESCUELA NORMAL No. 1 DE TOLUCA

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## TESIS DE INVESTIGACIÓN

### **The use of Images and Principles of Universal Learning Design to Improve Understanding of Basic Instructions in English as a Foreign Language**

QUE PARA OBTENER EL TÍTULO DE

**LICENCIADA EN ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS EN EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA**

PRESENTA

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**Chapter 1**  
**Introduction**

## 1. Introduction

The current educational model "Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral" (ACEI) emphasizes the evident need to respond to the statement "why to learn?" on the basis of social needs, as stated in the third article of the Mexican Constitution. Such reasons guide and give substance to the curriculum and are concretized in the graduate profile of each level of compulsory education.

This answer emphasizes that education must not be static, understanding this term as the lack of movement, action, or change, especially in a way that is not engaging; where learning happens in short bursts and is often demonstrated in one-and-done activities (like worksheets), and are confined within the traditional bounds of the school system, school day and school walls. (Bell, 2017).

Education has to evolve and respond to the characteristics of the society it is immerse in. (SEP, 2017)

As maintained by Secretaría de Educación Pública (2018) the inclusive education is based on three principles:

- a) Exclusion is not a problem of the pupils but of the schools; consequently, it is the schools that must adapt to the pupils and their diverse needs.
- b) Students should be cared for inclusive settings so that they participate and interact on an equal footing with the rest of the school population. By promoting this form of coexistence, based on an appreciation of diversity, students and the whole school community are offered opportunities to learn to relate to each other with respect for difference and to value everyone equally.
- c) Differences in learners' abilities should not represent a barrier, but a source of learning, since *Barriers to Learning and Participation* (BLP) do not refer to inherent learner characteristics, but rather to organizational, policy, administrative, pedagogical, physical, and attitudinal conditions. (SEP 2017).

The presented thesis is focused on helping 2<sup>nd</sup> junior high school learners of *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL). Since students are different and have different skills, they must be attended in an inclusive environment. I have considered the use of the *Universal Learning Design* (ULD) that can be understood such as "...the design of materials and didactic activities that allow that the learning goals can be achieved by individuals with wide differences in their skills" (SEP, 2017, p. 29).

The ULD will be executed through the implementation of visual aids such as images to facilitate the understanding of basic instructions given in English language. The purpose is to avoid translations during the lesson.

The images work as a mediator between the student and the meaning of the phrase. An example of this is: T. says the instruction "Take one paper and pass the others" and shows the image of a guy with one paper in his hand and passing the others to the classmate behind him. In this way, the student does not feel the necessity to translate every word they listen to or elicit to the teacher to say it again but this time in their Mother tongue. With this, the student understands the meaning of the image, and relate the words take-one and past-the-others, the same action they saw in the image.

During my observation practices in different schools, I have noticed that when the teacher explains or gives instructions in English language, our students usually ask us for the meaning of the words but in Spanish, they do not want an explanation of the meaning, they want the same word but in Spanish or the translation of we have already said.

In this protocol I am considering the use of Action Research Methodology (ARM). Considering the need of helping our students to understand the topics and to learn new vocabulary without the necessity of a translator, these actions are means and ends oriented (Burns, 2010, p. 6) which indicate that I will develop an Action Research Plan (ARP) that pretends to improve my teaching practice and students' learning.

To develop the ARP, I use a critical approach of ARM that allow me to questioning and "problematizing" my teaching. This can be found in the section named identifying the problem. This is the most important part of my research protocol, to solve the problem. After the identification of the problem, I developed a research question, this was to look for that solution and start to plan the best way to implement it in the classroom and the creation of an action hypothesis.

The action hypothesis favored me to plan the solution and look for the general-purpose, this supported me to know why to solve that problem, and how it was going to help me and the students. As well, there is a theoretical and methodological background, which supports the research and helps me to find a better solution.

Then, there can be found the ARP divided into two cycles to put the project in practice. Every cycle is divided into four steps and written in a schedule of activities, as well, it was implicit to the lesson plan to the future practices for the training teacher.

This protocol research will also help me to develop these generic, professional and disciplinary competences of my graduate profile according to the study program for the bachelor's degree "Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés en Educación Secundaria" by Dirección General de Educación Superior para Profesionales de la Educación (DGSPE) in 2018.

Generic: solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking. Learns autonomously and shows initiative to self-regulate and strengthen their personal development. Collaborates with diverse actors to make innovator projects of social and educational impact. Uses information and communication technologies in a critical manner. Applies their linguistic and communicative skills in diverse contexts.

Professional: Identify theoretical and epistemological frameworks of the English language, its advances and didactic approaches for teaching and learning. Characterizes the student population to work with in order to make didactic transpositions congruent with the contexts and the plans and programs. Articulates the knowledge of English and its didactics to form effective explanatory and intervention frameworks. Uses the theoretical-methodological elements of research as part of their continuing education in English. Relates their knowledge of English with the contents of other disciplines from an integrative vision to promote the learning of their students.

Disciplinary: Identifies lexical-grammatical elements used to develop communication skills in different contexts. Discriminates segments and supra-segments of English for pronunciation and listening skill development. Articulates segments and supra-segments of English for pronunciation and speaking skill development. Distinguishes the meaning of phrases and structured sentences according to morph-syntactic principles in written and oral texts. Writes structured phrases and sentences according to morpho-syntactic principles. Interprets logical relationships of the English language in oral and written texts through application, linking, presupposition, implication, and inference of language uses and discursive form.

According to the kind of problem identified, and the focus that I choose for the research protocol, I consider that the option of the degree document that will be more accurate with the experience, will be thesis, which according with "Orientaciones académicas para la elaboración del documento recepcional. Plan 2012", is:

"La tesis es un texto sistemático y riguroso que se caracteriza por aportar conocimiento e información novedosa en algún área o campo de conocimiento. Su elaboración requiere de la utilización pertinente de referentes teóricos, metodológicos y técnicos que sean



congruentes, además, con alguna perspectiva, enfoque o tipo de investigación." (SEP, 2014).

This degree document has a similarity with this action research project, to make a thesis we need to develop all the competences (generic, professional and disciplinary), to make the project something useful at the moment of being working with secondary students and make a change that I would like to see in the schools.

Finally, the last part of the present document is focused on the conclusions and references. Based on the investigation, theoretical background and action research, I can conclude if the hypothesis was confirmed, how is it useful for my daily practice and the professional impact of the AR in my way of teaching.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Identifying the problem and question of action research**

## 2. Identifying the problem

To identify the problem, I did observations in different schools, specifically, on the English subject. In every secondary school that I visited (including my job in a private school), I saw the particularity that most of the teachers speak in Spanish to give instructions; when teaching the topic, for the feedback, among other problems, so my first question was "Why do they do that if we are teaching English?"

It is essential to remember that we – as teachers and trainee teachers – do not have "standard students" understanding that a standard student is the expression of what that student must know and do in a certain environment; in a certain age or academic level. (Touron, 2017). By contrast, we have students with different characteristics, like learning styles, English level or attitudes and skills.

I consulted the work of many expert authors in teaching with and I did not have an answer for that question, so I started to observe more aspects that are in an English Lesson. The first thing that I realized is that the study program "Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral (ACEI)" was elaborated for students in a level A2, and the real students in the different secondary schools did not have that level, most of them were A1 or PRE-A, only a few of them were A2 and a minority was B1.

The diagnostic test tends to show us the previous knowledge of our students, some of them are A1, A2 or even B1, and some others have not had their first contact with the language, that's the reason why some teacher prefer to go back in the content and topics, to make a review for the ones with a better level of English, and to present the language to the new ones. In this case, we are not attending all the necessities of our students, with diversity and inclusion.

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) at the end of Secondary school (3 levels of English) students should be able to understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They will be able to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. They should produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Students with level B1 should be able to describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans (Cambridge Assessment English, s.f.).

The ACEI (2018) explains that students should pass this level during the 3 years of secondary school – B1.1, B1.2 and B1.3 – in the first level, students just identify and comprehend the general meaning and main idea in different texts, spoken and written. Those texts must be simple, brief, clear and in standard language. For second level, students should comprehend and exchange opinions about the general meaning and main ideas about different texts, brief and clear in standard language. And finally, for the third level, students interpret and act in different unexpected situations.

The ACEI also considers that EFL must be taught from kindergarten (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) through primary school (1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade) and as it been said in secondary school. The teaching and learning of EFL it is planned on a four cycle pathway, the first one, from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of primary school is a stage that teachers should promote contact and familiarization with EFL; then the cycles 2 and 3 (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades of primary school), should be used to promote competence and basic domain of EFL.

Unfortunately, during kindergarten and primary school, students do not have almost any English language class, in consequence, they do not pass through the familiarization stage; however, some language knowledge they have

are from out-of-school situations, like social media, restaurants, songs, movies, etc. but this depends mainly on their families' socioeconomic status and cultural capital.

Based on a socioeconomic study made during November 2021 to a sample of second grade, – appendix number 1 – who represented more differences between activities, scholar grades and level of English according to the diagnostics made at the beginning of the year – fifteen students – where only eleven could answer the test (because of the authorization given to their parents or guardians – appendix 2) seven out of eleven students have taken additional EFL classes in private academies. The parents or guardians of three of these eleven students earn around \$10,000 per month, and according to the information given by them, they use it to deal with all expenses of their daily life. The rest of the parents have incomes that goes from \$6,500.00 to \$20,000.00 per month. Two of these eleven students do not go to any extracurricular activity, their parents earn respectively around \$6,200.00 and \$14,000.00 per month. Finally, nine students reported that they participate in other activities like dance classes, remedial classes in different subjects, sports activities, etc.

In relation to this socioeconomic study, I can say that the socioeconomic status is not what drives parents or guardians to take the students to private classes, sports activities or to learn another language. The real reason is the cultural capital.

Authors like Bourdieu (1986, quoted in Hassan & Abdelrahim, 2014, p. 66) defines the cultural capital as instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designed as worthy of being sought and possessed. In other words, is to search wealth in knowledge and learn more than what we have, in order to get ahead. This knowledge can be social roles, different language competences, general culture, or different skills.

It is worth recalling that this socio-economic test was made to understand the diversity in the classroom; we can find this diversity in the English level, the opportunities to study in extracurricular schedules, extra activities according to their interests or the activities they have designed in their family roles. Students from secondary school No. 0003 have a vast divergence in the levels of English, as well as interest and experiences using the language.

In the other side of the story, we find the majority of the students with Pre A and A1 English language level, whom belong to low income families that in not few cases have economic problems. These families are typically formed by 4 or 5 members, so they have 2, 3 or more sons/daughters which in some cases have to work or take care of their younger siblings, because both parents work long labor days or have to travel long distances from their homes to their workplaces, so they are absent at home during most part of the day, leaving alone to their sons or daughters. These students have not had the opportunity or learning English except in public schools only at the secondary school which is their first formal experience of learning EFL.

By the way, despite English language is present in many forms and practices among the technology devices that teenagers usually use to communicate and through music or other experiences; they have only learned some chunks of language that need to be mobilized to allow them construct more complex ideas and meanings.

It is necessary to mention that groups of the secondary school no. 00003 "Benito Juarez" are large generally with 40 to 50 students. Although during the current pandemic situation the sanitary requirements needed to have extreme measures. We were in a lockdown of 18 months, in which teachers gave around 1 hour of class per week and students watched on TV a program called "Aprende en casa I" and "Aprende en casa II" to cover all the curriculum for secondary school.

The program "Aprende en casa" had the main purpose of teaching the students the topics of each subject. In the English subject, it has the main purpose of help students to improve their level of English, but I could notice that the lessons broadcasted for secondary students were too advanced for the level of the students that I attend. Most learners needed more explanation, practice or support to understand the topics. Moreover, another characteristic of the program is that it was not linked to Key Learnings. In addition, the content was not adapted to each of the study grades or levels of English.

A clear example of this was the topic "Come to visit our gallery" (November, 2021) for second grade. During this unit, students had to create a gallery about famous people. Students commented to feel confused because the video had so much dialog and it was difficult for them to follow. It was given with isolated words (ex. Place of birth, abilities, occupations, etc.) but there was no vocabulary or grammar for them to start, the video was just about examples and dialogue about how could the project look like.

As a teacher in training, I could appreciate in the students that the program did not have the expected results. Students commented their experiences with the program with words like *difficult to follow*, *bored*, *not clear*, among others. As soon as we returned to the classrooms, I made a diagnostic tests were the results showed that most of the learners did not remember what they saw during the lockdown, and then, the institution SEP decided to create a program called "Aprendizajes Fundamentales" where teachers from secondary school could review basic topics of the subject to have a considerable English level before starting with the topics from the study program ACEI; it was adapted to the students' level of English, in order to start teaching a beginner level (A1).

As it has been mentioned, most students have Pre A or A1 English language level, then English language teachers have to make all kind of adaptations. For example, teachers should level the English language domain in

all the students; if the study program is created for students starting B1, but the students I was working with did not have their first contact with the language, the teacher should make an adaptation of it for helping the students with their learning process. Before introducing a specific action or strategy it is necessary to mention that the 2017 ACEI syllabus for compulsory education includes a strategy of equality and inclusion in basic education, and although it has been conceived for students with disability, outstanding students, or students with behavior, communication and learning difficulties; those recommendations must be used with all students, since schools must offer inclusive education.

According to chapter six, "the right not to be discriminated against", article 39 of the "Ley General de los Derechos de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes":

Children and adolescents have the right not to be subject to any discrimination or limitation or restriction of their rights on the basis of their ethnic, national or social origin, language or language, age, gender, sexual preference, marital status, religion, opinion, economic status, circumstances of birth, disability or health or any other condition attributable to themselves or to their mother, father, guardian or custodian, or to other members of their family. (Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión, 2021)

It is important to mention that in the different groups, there are students with different problems of communication developed through the pandemic situation they faced, like social anxiety because of not having contact with other people or not being able to go out for anything other than essential activities. Some others are shy to participate or socialize with others, which makes complicate for them to work in teams, pairs or even make friends.

The ACEI syllabus explains that inclusive education marks the need to foster educational communities where diversity is valued and appreciated as the



prevailing condition. It also recognizes that all children and teenagers have the same rights, without discrimination of any kind, and therefore seeks to generate equal opportunities for all by eliminating architectural, social, regulatory or cultural barriers that limit their participation or learning in the education system learning in the education system.

Considering that to have equality in resources and in the quality of the processes, which means having the material and pedagogical resources that help to include everyone in learning, I have incorporated as part of my proposal: improving the way I give instructions using images and extra resources during classes to promote EFL learning among students, taking into consideration that learners are different, some of them faced difficult situations during the pandemic situation, some of them have difficulties to speak because of the mask and some others developed problems to socialize, as we will see below.

Additionally, at the ending of the year 2019, in Wuhan, a Chinese province, it appeared a virus that disrupted the hole human activities. The virus called SARS CoV2, commonly named COVID19 or coronavirus, caused a pandemic situation around the globe. For March 2020, in Mexico were reported several cases of people infected with SARS CoV2, which causes a lockdown where food establishments, entertainment venues, supermarkets, schools, among others closed their doors, giving way to a new way of life, including educational services that stopped in face-to-face modality. This was the first step to online classes for all levels of education.

It was a tough time for basic education, classes were changing, it was necessary to look for Internet-based applications that allowed teachers to continue giving classes and helped students to learn, without realizing that some students did not have the possibility to connect, because they did not have internet, computer or other elements necessary to take those online classes. The

situation lasted until August of 2021, where gradually and slowly we could go back to the "normal life".

Once the lockdown finished and on-site classes were allowed the board of directors of the Secondary School No. 003 "Benito Juárez" took the decision of working on a hybrid model which combines face-to-face classes and online learning. Through hybrid learning, some students attend the class in person, while others join virtually remotely. Teachers and educators utilize various tools such as video conferencing to teach both of these student groups. (Otsimo Editorial, 2021).

As well, into the classrooms teachers and students have to save the recommended social distance (1.5 meters) which was recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), this to avoid infections of SARS CoV2; so they divided the groups of students into 3 subgroups that would take face-to-face classes one week every three weeks and would continue taking online classes during the other two weeks. For that reason, teachers faced the situation of not having more than 15 students per group. This organization allowed the students to come to the school one week and then taking classes at home during two weeks.

Working with each subgroup just once a week included that the teacher (in this case, myself as trainee teacher) have to make a lesson plan with just 3 classes for the three-week period. After the week, students must have activities for the two weeks they do not assist to school. For school management order, teachers could not assign more than one task per week, which made English language learning difficult because some students did not deliver the activities or they did them out of the due time.

Some of the main effects of the pandemic and the reorganization of school activities under the hybrid model were: teachers could not have communication

with some students; there were cases where teachers did not have any type of information of the students; in some others, students wanted to continue online, but they did not deliver homework, because of time, familiar loses or close people around them that got sick or died. In addition, the lockdown made students different, they could have more time at home to make a schedule for their own activities, going back to the classrooms moved the whole panorama of what they could do.

As claimed by the pedagogical principles of the ACEI syllabus, teachers should offer accompaniment to learning, enabling situated learning and modelling learning. Nevertheless, students cannot enable learning alone, they need the teachers' intervention and according to the groups organization, teachers should give face-to-face classes to 1 subgroup while the other 2 subgroups just make homework without teacher's accompaniment. Also, the way of modelling is not provided by the teacher, students just have an example of what to do.

To have a wider outlook of what happened on the Mexican educational system during and after the pandemic, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía applied several surveys and instruments and found that 33.6 million of people between 3 and 29 years old were enrolled in the 2019-2020 school year, 62.0% of the total population in Mexico. Of this, 2.2, around 740 thousand people, didn't finished the school year due to the social and economic consequences of the sanitary isolation because of the arrival of the SARS CoV2 virus (INEGI, 2021, pp. 1-2).

For the scholar year 2020-2021 around 32.9 million people between 3 and 29 years old came back to continue their studies, of the total of people in this range of age, 5.2 million did not enroll the current school year (2021-2022). Some of the reasons were: distance learning is not functional of the current school year (26.6%), parents or tutors had lost their job and could not afford the education

(25.3%), and do not have a computer or another device, or internet connection (21.9%), (INEGI, 2021, pp. 1-2).

Before the pandemic situation, in the Secondary School No. 003 "Benito Juárez" the enrolment was close to 60 students per group. Nowadays, during the school year 2021-2022, the enrolment is close to 40 or 43 students per group, divided into subgroups (March of 2022).

Finally, after the online classes, students went back to the classrooms feeling uncomfortable of do not have the visual input they had during the virtual classes (such as slides, images, videos, etc.) what could make my hypothesis more accurate to provide a possible solution for the difficulties that students had presented.

Important to reiterate that students are facing different types of BLP, this because of the social circumstances passed through the lockdown (there was no opportunity to socialize). Also, some of them had health issues, that put them in a deepest lockdown, taking them apart from their own family. All these situations made them shy, introverted and having problems to socialize.

Taking into count the different skills that we had and the situation showed by several students, in the sense of not having so much oral participation, we delimited the instructions as a part of listening, and the British Council (2015, pp. 2-8) explain us why listening is important:

It should not be difficult to realize the importance of listening when we consider that it occupies about 45% of the time adults spend in communication. This is significantly more than speaking, which accounts for 30%, and reading and writing, which make up 16% and 9% respectively. Yet, for all its importance, students (and even teachers) often fail to give

listening the attention it needs. This is all the more remarkable as learners often say that listening is the most challenging of all the skills in English.

If listening occupies the 45 per cent of the communication, it is necessary to ask why don't we start to use this per cent beginning with the basic instructions? Talking with some English teachers about why they usually give the instructions in Spanish instead giving them in English and promoting its learning with other supports different from translation, we obtain different answers about this situation.

One of the teachers said:

Giving instructions in English is a complex ability that the teacher needs to do. It involves a capacity to analyze and synthesize that most of the teachers do not like. Giving an instruction is not only talk, it involves plan and act according to the students (Teacher interviewed, 10/11/2020).

A teacher from a public school said "Most of the teachers give the instructions in Spanish to feel comfortable with themselves and their students; and also to be sure that they will do the task correctly" (Teacher interviewed, 10/11/2020).

And finally, a teacher from a private school where all the communication is done in English said:

I believe that an English teacher always have to speak to the students in English, but some of the teachers speak in L1 because they feel the students are not understanding, and they have to 'find a way' to make them understand what they will do. Also, I think that the teacher has to find other ways to make them understand, the teacher has to be very creative (Teacher interview 10/11/2020).

Using this information, we can see that teachers usually talk in Spanish because they feel that the students do not understand clearly what they are saying and also, they do not follow the instructions as they are told. I can assume that these teachers are more worried about a good task than the learning of the topic and most important, learning the language. They want a good task which means zero mistakes in the worksheet, and good results in the exams before the understanding of the meaning of the messages given.

To address diversity, schools and teachers must engage in inclusive educational practices that eliminate or reduce these BLP at attitudinal, pedagogical and organizational levels. To achieve the above, the Strategy for Equality and Inclusion in Basic Education that is part of the 2017 Curriculum and Program of Studies (PyPE2017 ACEI), suggests that teachers incorporate Universal Design for Learning, which is defined as the "...creation of products and environments designed so that they can be usable by all people as far as possible, without the need for further adaptation for a specific audience..." (SEP(b), 2017, p. 28).

Research in the United States (Rose and Meyer s.f. cited by SEP(a), 2017) found that:

...technologies designed for students with disabilities were also used by students without disabilities, leading to better academic outcomes. This showed that the difficulties in accessing learning were due not so much to the abilities or skills of the learners, but to the very nature of the teaching materials and methods used by teachers, which could not cater for the diversity of learners (p. 2).

Going back to a secondary school English class, I have observed that many teachers give the instructions in English, and few moments later, the teacher starts to explain in Spanish, the same instruction, but this time in Spanish. The

second questions that I had was, why the first option to make the students understand the question is translating it?

Let's see an example, in a public secondary, the teacher come in the classroom saying "Good morning, students" all the students stand up and say "Good morning, teacher", once they sit down, the teacher starts the class, everything is ok at this point; then, the teacher gives a worksheet and says the instruction "read the instructions carefully, you have 5 questions of multiple choice, circle the correct answer"; it is observed that the students do not understand but no one says nothing, then the teacher ask "is it clear?" and all the students answer "yes, teacher" and start to do the exercise. This is what I have pointed out as difficulties to accede to learning.

When the class finishes and the students give back their worksheets, the teacher realizes that the students did the activity in the last minute, they did not chose only one option, some of them chose two or more, and they did not circle, some of them crossed the answer, underlined or highlighted the answer. Here the teacher asks them "What wasn't clear of my instructions?"

As the teachers already mentioned, is easier to give instructions in L1 because the students understand immediately; however, giving instructions is not merely the act of saying something that others have to do; it involves research about the more efficient way of conveying a message for our listeners, and at the same time, it is not only important that students understand the instructions just to complete the task. It's also important for them to develop their cognitive skills.

According to National Research University Higher School of Economics, bilinguals and multilinguals are better equipped to deal with multiple tasks and that they have a better attention than those who only speak one language. In this case, develop this foreign language in secondary school will be beneficial in

multiple ways, such as academic and employment opportunities, as well as cognitive. (National Research University Higher Schools of Economics, 2020).

Rhalmi, (2017) give us two recommendations for giving instructions. The first one is instructions must be kept as simple as possible, this means, give a short instruction and, as well, give it with familiar words that students are related with. We cannot use technical words for an instruction in a classroom where the level is A1, we must adapt it with familiar words, also, it has to be short and in case to be necessary, repeat the instruction twice, more times or use different resources.

And the second recommendation is "it must be logical", we cannot include anything else during the instruction. As well, we cannot say "write" when we only have activities of reading, the instruction must make sense with the material with the task to do.

But here, we have another questions:

- What happen if a clear and logical instruction is not enough for my students?
- What happen if students still have difficulties to understand what they have to do in the English class – instructions of each activity – and to reach the learning goals?

If we did these steps and are not enough to make our students understand the instructions, we have another tip, this time, I'm going to talk about my own hypothesis, the other tip is the use of images to represent what the students have to do in the task.

By the way, according to Delancer (2013) images – or visual images – encourage the learner to predict, infer, and deduce information from a variety of sources. We plan to use images as a strategy to eliminate or reduce BLP and



help students to infer the meaning of the instructions and avoid the necessity of being translating words and oral instructions during the class. As well, this can help them to acquire more vocabulary and understand more phrases, not just instructions or imperatives.

By the way, the pedagogical focus of the study program (ACEI), establishes that the development of schoolwork requires conceiving the student as a social and active agent in the building of learning, which implies that based on its knowledge and experiences can:

Develop ideas and questions about the basic skills and the linguistic and cultural resources needed in communicative exchanges. One of the most important things is how the students use English and how do they participate in different social environments.

Be aware of the skills, knowledge, attitudes, emotions learned and strategies to achieve it.

Develop, expand, and use the knowledge, strategies, attitudes, behaviors and values needed to interact successfully with others.

Analyze their communicative practices and of other speakers of English, in order to understand, explain, question, adapt and correct them according to the social environment in which they are situated and the purposes they pursue (SEP(b), 2017, p. 172).

To mention some examples, and according to the study plan, students would be able to be in contact with the language, at the same time they will be familiarizing with it and as a consequence, improving EFL learning.

With that said, next it is presented the research question, the action hypothesis that will guide the research, and the purpose of the present. Then will

be presented the theoretical background, where there can be found all the main concepts to understand the hypothesis. Next the methodological background will be presented. This is going to help us to understand how the use of images and principles of ULD are going to help us to make our students understand basic instruction only by listening and visualizing images.

## **2.2 Question of Research**

From my point of view, my students need to understand basic instructions to improve their learning of EFL, then I get this research question:

*How understanding of instructions can be improved among 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Secondary School students through the use of images to give basic instructions and the use of principles of Universal Learning Design?*

## **2.3 Action Hypothesis**

According to what has been exposed and with the intention of attending the problem an Action Hypothesis is set:

*Giving instructions using images and principles of Universal Learning Design may help 2<sup>nd</sup> grade secondary school students to improve understanding of basic instructions in English as a Foreign Language.*

In my experience, the students usually receive instructions in the mother tongue, this is the way they understand what they must do, but this prevent them to take part of the social practices of the language and the communicative activities, so what I would like to improve is that they can understand the instruction with the mediation of images that represent the instruction.

The use of mediation is to work as an intermediary between an environmental stimulus and the individual's response to that stimulus. According

to Vygotsky's work, a mediator facilitates the learners' development by making given behavior easy to perform. According to Vygotsky's theory, mediators become tools of the mind when the child incorporates them into his or her activity (Bodrova, E. & Leong, D.J. 2004).

For example, if the instruction is "you've to write your name on the top of the page", if the students do not understand what they have to do, then the teacher shows the picture with a person writing a name on the top of the page. In this way, the picture is the mediation to make the students understand the instruction, they do not have to translate, only relate the picture with the instruction.

## **2.4 Purpose of the Action Research**

*To improve 2<sup>nd</sup> grade secondary school students' understanding of basic instructions in English as a Foreign Language with the use of images and principles of Universal Learning Design.*

## **Chapter 3**

### **Theoretical background**

### **3. Theoretical background**

#### **3.1 Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education refers to the creation of cross-cutting and inter-sectoral education policies that address diversity in accordance with the needs, interests, characteristics, learning styles and rhythms of students, in which all areas of the where all spheres of the education system are involved, (SEP 2018).

All classrooms must be inclusive, even so, sometimes we do not know how to make them, in this case the document "Estrategias de equidad e inclusión" help us pointing the importance of the interest, needs, learning styles among other topics about our students, that we must take into consideration at the moment of making lesson plans and to design the strategies according to the different students we have.

#### **3.2 Barriers to learning and participation (BLP)**

The term BLP is adopted in place of 'special educational needs' to refer to all the difficulties experienced by any learner. BLP is seen as arising from the interaction between learners and the contexts; the people, policies, institutions, cultures, social and economic circumstances that affect their lives, (SEP, 2018).

It is necessary to point that a BLP is not referred to students with disabilities. The BLP's usually come from the interaction of the student with the context and its different situations and problematics.

#### **3.3 Universal Learning Design (ULD)**

The DLU means taking preventive measures to avoid, as much as possible, that some students do not fit in with the model of the school or class

being taught. Also, the creation of products and environments designed in such a way that they can be used by as many people as possible, without the need for further adaptation for a specific audience, i.e. designing and building spaces that take into account the diverse people's needs, (SEP 2018).

In this case, the use of images to help students to understand basic instructions can take different uses. Ex. A student who do not like to talk in public, can show their classmates some images to help them understand their ideas. It is an adaptation for a specific audience.

### **3.4 Reasonable adjustments**

[...] means necessary and appropriate modifications and adaptations that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Organización de las Naciones Unidas, 1989, en SEP, 2018, pp. 34-35).

Also, reasonable adjustments are made because it will not always be possible to design or make products or services in such a way that they can be used by everyone, so there will be some that require specific modifications or adaptations to make them usable by an individual. (SEP 2018).

According to English Teaching as a Foreign Language, a reasonable adjustment could be using the different materials given by the State to make the class (and the language) usable for our students. If the material is designed for students with B2 but our students are A1 or A2, we can make these adjustments to guarantee that all our students will learn.

### **3.5 Language**

Mother tongue, first language (L1), second language (L2), English as a Foreign language (EFL) First language and mother tongue will be deemed, for purposes of this study, simply to mean the language a child acquires from his parents, family and immediate environment from the moment of birth; L1 will be used to denote either mother-tongue or first language. Second language will be deemed to mean any language that is learnt subsequent to the acquisition of the mother-tongue and EFL will be used to denote second language that it is not used or spoken in the full context of the learner, it is only used in a specific time (English classes at secondary school). SLA will mean second language acquisition, involving both the unconscious and conscious inculcation of EFL knowledge in both naturalistic and formal language situations (Basel, 1995).

### **3.6 Listening**

Listening is an active operation. With this in mind I would like to emphasize: The teacher would support children's understanding more effectively, if they direct their pupils' attention to specific points that have to be listened for 'using activities that actively support learners' understanding and guide their attention to specific parts of the spoken text' (Arnold, s.f).

In the ACEI study program, there is a transition period between cycles 2 and 3 in which the teachers must promote the approaching and then the development of understanding of English. In order to do this, the CEFR common reference (A1.1, A1.2) indicates that: "... [the learner] recognizes and uses every day and commonly used expressions in basic and personal exchanges to satisfy routine needs. Their reactions demonstrate understanding of the communicative situation" (SEP, 2017, p. 183).

While at the level A2:

... [the learner] recognizes the general meaning and some of the main ideas of a variety of spoken and written texts from familiar, relevant and close context. Can interact in some transactions using verbal and nonverbal strategies in very simple and direct exchanges of information on familiar, routine matters of personal interest (p. 184).

According to this, and as I already mention, listening is not a passive operation. Some examples are the following expected learnings from 5th grade of primary school (level A2.1):

- Explore and listen to exchanges of expressions to organize meetings.
- Interprets expressions used by interlocutors.
- Assumes the role of interlocutor in an exchange.
- Listens to and explores new items related to familiar context.
- Understands news (and instructions) in audio.
- Exchange opinions.

In the same way, we can observe in 6th grade expected learnings such as:

- Listens and explore suggestions in dialogues.
- Can understand expressions used by interlocutors.
- Understands general information and some details of interviews.

The use of images is going to promote expected learnings like those. As well, is going to help to familiarize with the language and it's use. By the way, "familiarization is a language learning method applicable only to languages that are not closely related to a language I already know, especially if they use a writing system I am not familiar with..." (Marian, s.f.). The purpose of familiarization is to provide the learner, of some pieces of the foreign language (vocabulary, typical expressions, common



phrases) as well as some basic grammar rules and principles of the language that will allow him or her, to understand more complex ideas. The vocabulary and chunks of language learned by students through the familiarization which can be applied to listening as well as writing, become prior experience in language acquisition.

In her dissertation Lany, J., (2006) which is based on an experimental research, she demonstrated that “prior experience [or familiarization] can bootstrap acquisition of more complex language structure” (p. 8), “...and, more broadly, that prior experience has a significant impact on learners and the structure they are able to acquire” (p. 61).

For this reason, I decided to use expected learnings from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade because we have to take into consideration the level of English A1 and A2 – the level that most of our students have – and those levels are in primary school. Students could not have English classes during scholar years, so here they are having their first contact and familiarization with the language.

### **3.7 Instructions (for Activity Interestingly)**

Teachers were very familiar and frequent to use some instructions when they were giving a task to do in the classroom. Some instructions were related to content and some were not. There were some grammatical mistakes as well. Involving students in an individual work or a pair work or a group, they were using instructions (Khan, Md., S., H., Ashrafuzzaman, Md. & Begum, M. 2014).

Instructions must be present in different aspects for teaching, one of the most relevant example is the framework into the lesson plan. It helps us to guide the class and do not hesitate while giving instructions into the real class.

### **3.8 Framework**

A lesson framework is basically a set pattern of stages for you to follow in your lesson. Different types of lessons have different frameworks. Each framework is essentially an outline; it informs what kind of activity to start with, then what kind of activity to do next, and then how to progress from there- all depending on the type of your lesson you want to teach. (Felt, 2019).

When the teacher includes the framework to the lesson plans, instructions could be based on the level of English of the students. In addition, it could help the teacher to avoid mistakes, hesitation and clarify question at the moment.

### **3.9 Pre-planning instructions**

Harmer (1998, p. 4) raises general rules for giving “logical” instructions; he argues that teachers “must ask the following questions: What is the important information I am trying to convey? What must the students know if they are to complete this activity successfully? Which information do they need first? Which should come next?” Consequently, designing the lesson without knowing what instructions to give at each step is useless because planning them in advance is the key to success in teaching.

Additionally, when we pre-plan the instructions we could identify complex instructions (that could be more difficult for students to understand) and simplify or use extra input (like images or body language) to explain the activity without translating to Spanish.

### **3.10 While-giving-instructions**

The while-giving-instructions phase is characterized by careful consideration of the precise details revolving around it. This stage is so important in the sense that the students’ understanding of what to do in any activity takes

place here. If students miss this phase, they will be lost, and nothing will be achieved. As a matter of fact, its difficulty lies in putting its instructions' steps in a specific order. Also, being long in giving instructions does not help students catch the message which is covered by so many unnecessary words (Abderrazak, 2019).

When giving instructions, it is noticeable which words are unfamiliar to the learners, here the teacher can use extra devices and other forms to express the instruction, making them significant and relevant to the students. In this way, students will appropriate the word to their own vocabulary, and in a future lesson, if the instruction is repeated, they will understand.

### **3.11 Post-giving-instructions**

It is common among teachers that checking students' understanding after delivering instructions is indispensable. Observing so many classes in the high school, I made sure of the existence of two types of ineffective teachers' practices which dominate the situation at this stage, i.e. being lazy and misusing the 'individualizing instructions' technique (Abderrazak, 2019).

From a personal point of view, post-giving instructions is one of the most important steps, because is here when we notice and evaluate if our instructions were clear enough. Here, if the learners cannot understand the instruction, we could use different strategies to help them. For example, using images for explaining instructions (as it will be mentioned before in this research) help the students to understand instructions and to avoid this individual explanation mentioned by Abderrazak.

### **3.12 Supporting the instructions**

It can be supported by non-verbal language and then learning may take place effortlessly. In this respect, the teacher should carefully choose the teaching

aids that are suitable for both the students and the activity. It is common knowledge in the research literature that instructions can be very effective if supported by images, realia, gestures, facial expressions, voice and key words instructions on the board (Abderrazak, 2019).

Non-verbal language could be used and interpreted in different forms, as body language or the use of images. In the case of the current action research, images will be our principal resource and those will be supported with body language, which is useful to point the instruction when it is needed, or to give the learners a real example of what they have to do.

### **3.13 Giving instructions in the-L2**

Salaberri (1995) and Gardner and Gardner (2000) assert that students should be introduced to the use of English from the first class; doing so helps students understand that foreign languages are not just subjects to be studied but are also, and more importantly, a means of communication. Therefore, teachers should strive to incorporate the L2 needed for instruction-giving right from the beginning of a course (Salaberri 1995).

The ACEI study program also incorporates this idea, for that reason, considers that the teachers should be competent in several aspects such as: domain of the English language, knowledge related to the different students' development stages, and knowledge related to the foreign language didactic. Teachers must have these three aspects focused on the development of the class, to teach as much as possible and in the best way.

### **3.14 The importance of instruction giving**

Instruction-giving is one of the most important parts in the process of teaching and learning. A lesson could fail if the students do not understand what they are supposed to do. Using images, we can help to make instructions

untestable for our nonnative English learners by giving a hint or letting the students infer the meaning in an optimum's way. (Sowell, 2017 p. 10).

As it will be developed in this action research, images help to infer meaning, but it also works as a static resource, that is going to be available for students to check as much as they need to complete an activity.

### **3.15 The role of the teacher**

When teachers teach, they seem to take charge of everything. They select input, design and sequence activities, determine tasks, and decide what constitutes a correct response. When several students give the desired answer, the teacher acknowledges their effort and moves on, never pausing to think if everyone in the class understood the text, and if not, what caused their confusion (ELTD, s.f).

Teachers must take care of the responsibility of the class, when the teacher plans the class, he or she should cover the different aspects, like strategies for the different activities, plan the framework about which instructions are going to be given, among other important aspects.

### **3.16 Give an example or demonstration**

While you are giving the instructions, demonstrate them with hand gestures or even do the instructions yourself as you are saying them. Once you have completed your instructions, your students should have a verbal as well as a visual idea of what is expected of them. It can also help to use a student to model the activity. This will give the students even more time to process the information. This will also give them a linguistic model of what they need to do (TEFL Academy. 2020).

It is important to emphasize the aspect that students usually need more information to understand the topic or to complete a task. Commonly, oral instructions are the most difficult to understand by students (aspect that will be deepened during the action research), so implementing images, body language, examples or models of what they have to do, is a good strategy to help them to infer meanings and process the information.

### **3.17 Demonstrating or modeling**

Almost all teachers' practitioners agree upon the fact that babbling without modeling is useless. There are several ways of demonstration that teachers should highlight; they have to show their students how to do things rather than telling only. Accordingly, Scrivener (2005, p. 91) advises teachers to "demonstrate rather than explain whenever possible." Ur (1996) calls this situation "actual demonstration"; that is, the teacher models the activity either with one of the students or with the whole class: When giving instructions for an activity, it often helps to do a 'dry run': an actual demonstration of the activity yourself with the full class or with a volunteer student before inviting learners to tackle the task on their own (p. 17).

### **3.18 Instruction-giving order**

Research shows that though teachers prepare their activities beforehand, the order of steps they usually follow to give classroom instructions would result in different outcomes. It is likely to have very high achievers in a certain class whose teacher knows the right order of steps they follow before starting a particular activity (Abderrazak, 2019).

As a matter of fact, when we are giving long and complex instructions (for example, read the information of the following table, read the questions and answer according to what you read and your guesses) and our students have A1

or A2 in their level of English, we can divide the instruction and give them in order, so they will follow the instruction in the most accurate form.

### **3.19 Checking understanding**

Checking students' understanding has also taken its value in the research literature. It has been made evidence that teachers should make sure, through several ways, that their students really understand the instructions. With respect to how my informants check their students' understanding, the overwhelming majority say that they usually ask questions such as 'Have you understood?', 'Is it OK?' and such like. Of course, using questions to check students' understanding is a possibility, but it is not an effective technique as students usually, please their teachers, saying that they have grasped everything (Abderrazak, 2019).

Based on my own experience, when we ask "is it clear?" or related questions, students tend to answer automatically in an affirmative way. Sometimes we have to make this questions in a hidden way like "could you explain what you have to do?" "could you clarify me what I just said? I forget it" or different strategies that sound different from the basic questions, but give us the same result, check if the students understood the assignment.

### **3.20 Additional input while giving instructions**

During the preparation stage, think about support mechanisms that might facilitate understanding: gestures, pictures, drawings, or written instructions. Your choice will depend on the context you are working in, your students' proficiency levels, and their backgrounds (Sowell, 2017).

As I already mentioned, I will be using images to facilitate the understanding of basic instructions in English. According to Sowell, the choice of the mechanism will depend on the context. We have to remember that the students just came back from a pandemic situation, where they had 18 months of

virtual classes, full of images, slides, and other materials to help them to continue learning. Nowadays, during the classrooms (face-to-face) students need more input as they have during these virtual classes, as well as visual support.

### **3.21 Speak simply but clearly**

Giving instructions could be something challenging for a teacher. We have to remember that our students have levels of English around A1 or A2, so we have to model our own level of English (as some teachers have B2 or C1) and we have to speak simply and clearly, using familiar words.

When you give instructions, the point is to make sure your students know what they are expected to do. This can best be accomplished by using simplified language common in instruction-giving, which often includes imperatives and short sentences. According to Doff (1988, p. 227), "most of the language we need for organizing the class consists of simple expressions which can be used again and again." (Sowell, 2017, p. 14).

In this case, the images need to be about instructions we constantly use during our lesson (like, write your name, circle the correct word, choose the right answer). At the same time, our instructions need to be short and highlighting the key words.

### **3.22 Model your instructions**

Meaning is made clearer through demonstration. After you give instructions, whenever possible, model what you want your students to do (Scrivener 2012; Ur 1996). Here, once again, we reference the model with the use of images. Using an image while you're giving an instruction may help you to make your students understand, as well, it took less time than act the whole instruction by yourself or to pass a student in front of the group to act what they have to do.



On the other hand, in case the image is not enough for your students (or your instruction is too complex to understand) you can mix the use of the image and modeling the instruction may help your students to understand the instructions.

### **3.23 Extra-linguistic devices to aid meaning**

Extra-linguistic devices—gestures, facial expressions, voice, and visuals—facilitate the understanding of your instructions. These could be the extra-linguistic devices you thought about during the preparation stage, or they could be devices you decide to use as you give your instructions (Sowell, 2017).

Using this voice changes could help you at the moment of being using the images in your instructions. For example, if you are saying the instruction “circle the correct answer” and you show the image of a student circling answers and you raise your voice at the moment of saying the word “circle” your students will focus their attention to these key words and infer what they have to do.

### **3.24 Break down instructions when there are several steps**

In my experience, when we have to give instructions that are too long (for example, listen to the audio, highlight the unknown words and then answer the question with the information) students tend to be confused of what they have to do.

For this kind of activities that have several steps, give instructions after each step rather than giving all instructions at once. The task itself is not particularly complicated, but when the instructions are given all at once, they seem long-winded – as in the example I provided – and have the potential to confuse students. In this case, it would be better to give one part of the instructions at a time. After students complete each step of the activity, announce the next step.

Breaking the instructions down step by step enhances comprehension and allows more opportunities to demonstrate what is expected (Sowell, 2017).

As well, it will be more difficult to use the images with long instructions. If we break those instructions into several steps, we could use an image per step and it may help to understand better what to do in each part of the task.

### **3.25 Methods for enhancing instruction-giving skills**

A part of reflective teaching is developing an awareness of your classroom behavior. Ur (1996) suggests that immediately after a lesson, in-service teachers make notes of the in-class instructions they gave and, when possible, have a colleague observe them and give feedback. Scrivener (2011) suggests that teachers listen to themselves, record themselves, and get feedback from others. To become aware of our instruction-giving practices, ideally, we need to incorporate self-oriented methods, such as self-reflection and self-observation, and outside-oriented methods, such as peer observation.

### **3.26 Self-evaluation instructions**

Sowell (2017) suggest that make a self-evaluation about our instructions into the classroom could help us to give it better and clear for our students. In the next table, it can be seen Sowell's Check list self-evaluation instructions that I will be using as part of my proposal. Although, I will adapt it to a specific learning situation considered in the study program.

As far as I am concerned, Sowell's proposal is useful. However, I must take into consideration that working in secondary school with the task base method (TBM) and the expected learning we have in the ACEI may not coincide with some aspects of reflections in the self-evaluation.

In other words, ACEI have didactic suggestions which are very concrete, and according to follow and complete the study plan, teachers cannot change them. For example, one of these suggestions are to show several examples, so that students understand how to value dialogue and language. Or, describe and explain to your students the various ways of anticipating the general meaning and main ideas, among others.

Self-evaluation reflection			
Did I ...	Yes	No	Comments
1. Prepare how I will deliver instructions when lesson planning?			
2. Arrange student groups and furniture before giving instructions?			
3. Make sure I have my students' attention before I start to give instructions?			
4. Hand out materials at appropriate times?			
5. Speak clearly and pause appropriately when giving instructions?			
6. Use language at or below my students' current level of understanding?			
7. Use extra-linguistic devices to aid meaning?			
8. Check for understanding before letting students start an activity?			
9. Monitor students after they start their activity?			
10. Check if my students need further help with instructions after an activity has started?			

Table 1. Check list self-evaluation instructions (Sowell, 2017, p. 18).

### 3.27 Use of pictures in the classroom

Instructors have reported that their use of images in the classroom has led to increased student interactivity and discussion. Teaching with images can also

help develop students' visual literacy skills, which contributes to their overall critical thinking skills and lifelong learning (Hall, 2013).

Approaching the previous idea, ACEI points out that the teacher should:

"Choose or elaborate printed resources and multimedia that guaranty the permanent contact with diverse models and styles of English uses" (p.174)

One example we can found is in the Social Practice of Language (SPL) "register information to elaborate a report about a job or profession" in 6<sup>th</sup> grade (p.266). This SPL points out that the teacher should model for the students how to answer to texts to show their comprehension through images, questions or draws.

### **3.28 Visual learning style**

The visual learning style is self-explanatory. It's all about seeing things to learn them. This can take many forms, from spatial awareness, colors and tones, brightness and contrast, and other visual information. Visual learning examples include watching a video or in-person demonstration of cooking a meal, following a diagram to build furniture, looking at a graph to understand statistics, writing instructions on a white board for people to follow, and more. Visual learning focuses on what we can see, so anything that is looked at or watched is part of visual learning (Western Governors University. 2020).

It should be recalled that after two years of online classes where students just watched at the screens and slides prepared for the teachers, the levels of visual learning increased among the students of secondary school.

### **3.29 How to use pictures in class**

Using pictures in the classroom can make speaking in English fun. Pictures can be successful study aids during lessons, and they can act as useful prompts to help students when they are practicing speaking. For this, you've to think in these 7 steps: predict, interact, create, talk, understand, reflect and enact (Mohammad, K., & Mohammad, H. 2015).

### **3.30 Visual learning strategies for teachers**

Teachers can work to implement many visual learning strategies in their classrooms to help visual learners thrive. It's vital for teachers to work to implement these kinds of visual techniques into their classroom so students have many opportunities for learning. Some of these strategies include:

- Using visual aids like images, diagrams, videos, etc.
- Grouping visual learners together during group projects so they can harness their strengths.
- Allowing reflection time after lessons so visual learners can visualize their work.
- Encourage visual learners to color code their notes.
- Incorporating color into presentations and assignments (Western Governors University. 2020).

**Chapter 4**  
**Methodological background**

## **4. Methodological background**

Many teachers have been put off research, and the theories about teaching they were taught in teacher training courses, because they find out that when they get into the classroom the theory does not match the reality.

AR can also seem like a 'scary' thing to do if you are more used to classroom teaching; it takes time and it might mean making changes that take us out of our comfort zone. However, for a teacher who is reflective, and committed to developing as thinking professional, AR is an appealing way to look more closely at puzzling classroom issues or to delve into teaching dilemmas (Burns, 2010).

In this way, the use of AR will help me to improve my English teaching by virtue of four steps that it uses. Into the first step is planning, that is going to help me to upgrade my way to create lesson plans bearing in mind the multifariousness of learners.

In addition, the second and third steps (action and observation) help to develop the lesson plan. As well, to observe the reaction and understanding of the students facing the reasonable adjustments.

Finally, and mostly important, the reflection. This is going to help me to improve (in general terms) my teaching. Toward this step I can analyze my own practice and identify weaknesses and treats of my lesson plan and strategies used during the teaching practice.

### **4.1 Steps for an Action Research (AR)**

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), who are major authors in this field, AR typically involves four broad phases in a cycle of research. The first cycle

may become a continuing, or iterative, spiral of cycles which recur until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop.

1. Planning: this phase you identify a problem or issue and develop a plan of action to bring about improvements in a specific area of the research context.
2. Action: The plan is a carefully considered one which involves some deliberate interventions into your teaching situation that you put into action over an agreed period of time.
3. Observation: This phase involves you in observing systematically the effects of the action and documenting the context, actions and opinions of those involved.
4. Reflection: At this point, you reflect on, evaluate and describe the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue you have explored more clearly (Burns, 2010).



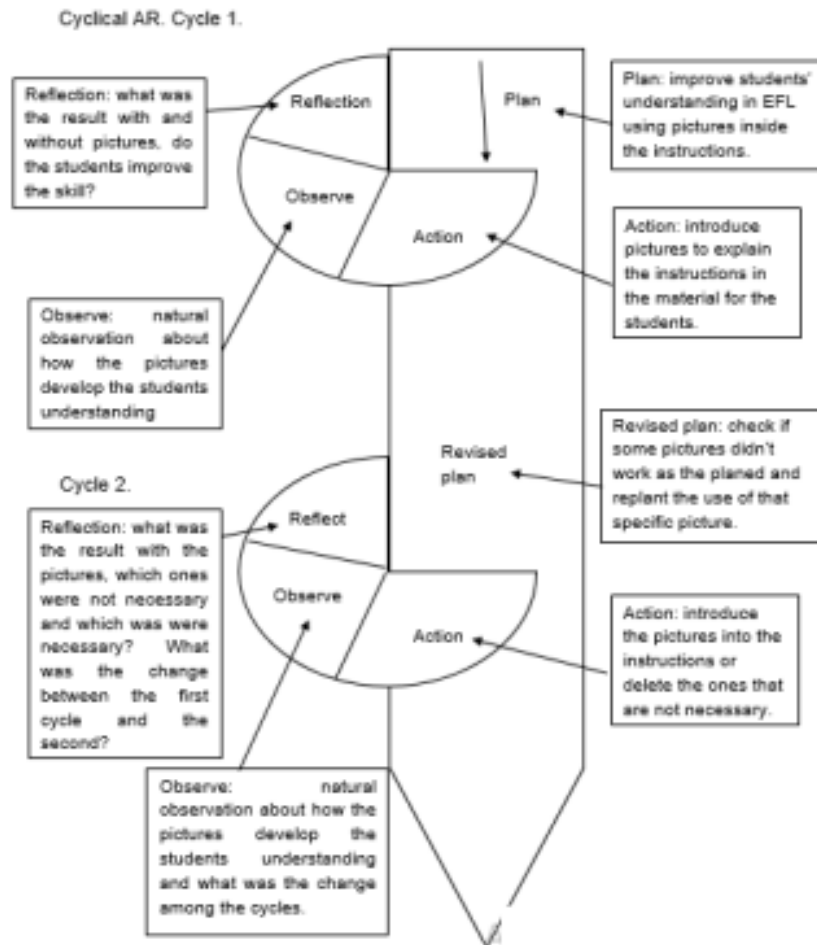


Fig. 1. Cycle of Action Research according to Kemmis and McTaggart, (1988).

#### 4.1.1 Tips for collecting data

Teaching lends itself naturally to data collection. As we have already pointed out, for this thesis we have to collect data to make group profiles, make research for the theoretical basis, and finally, at the moment of being collecting the results of the application of the proposal. Burns (2010) gave some tips for collecting data, she said:

For example, surveys conducted by your students about their views on various aspects of language learning can provide you with good sources of information. Asking students to note in a journal what they feel or think

during a new kind of activity is another rich data source (Burns, 2010. p. 62).

#### **4.1.2 Instruments that you can use**

Observation sheets: Observation sheets are used in what is sometimes called systematic or structured observation. This type of observation involves using a coding system or checklist prepared before the lesson begins. The observer records the things he or she observes as categories of events.

#### **4.1.3 Events checklist**

Another instrument we can use is the event checklist. This is an instrument I started to use in first grade of the career, specifically in the course "herramientas para la observación y análisis de la escuela y comunidad".

Anne Burns mentions that an event checklist is similar to the observations sheets, but this time focuses on recording specific phases or activities in a lesson. This type of checklist gives you an objective picture of the patterns of activities occurring in a classroom and to identify how well they relate to a particular, or desired, teaching approach (Burns, 2010. pp. 64-65).

Those are just a few instruments that could help me during the process of action-research. From my point of view, the most accurate instrument is the checklist, with the checklist I will be able to evaluate the instructions, the use of images and the use of English (if my level of English is adapted to my students) Also, the observation sheet is going to help me to check the successfulness of the instructions and images with the students.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Action Research Plan**

## 5. Action Research Plan (ARP)

### 5.1 First cycle

The *first cycle* of this action research plan was to identify the problem, as I already explained, this problem was the translation from the English to the Spanish in the classes, instead of the implement of a technique to help the understanding and learning of the students. An example of the situations I was facing during this first cycle is illustrated next.

During a class, when I used to say the instruction “raise your hand once you finish” that I commonly use to see who has finished any of the planned activities, students showed confusion or lack of understanding as it can be seen through the next extract of my practice diary (López 09/03/2022):

Teacher:	Let's see. Raise your hand if you finish
Student 1:	¡Miss, yo ya acabé!
Teacher:	Please, raise your hand.
Student 2:	¿Qué está diciendo?
Student 1:	No sé.

Table 2. Extract from the practice diary. (López, 09 March, 2022).

As it is noticeable in this first instruction and what students say after it, the instruction given was not clear enough for my students.

Even though, in past observations I could notice that some teachers use the same strategies or techniques (such as choral drills or listen and repeat), even if the learning styles or students' needs are different from just listen to or repeat. As part of the experience given by this training period, I have learned that as a teacher I have to implement changes in my classes to link up my expected learning to the students' needs. Those changes need to be justified in the adjustments to the lesson plan.

During my first intervention practice and lesson plan (28/05/2021-04/06/2021) using images, I implemented the use of images to explain meanings, as can be observable in the following table:

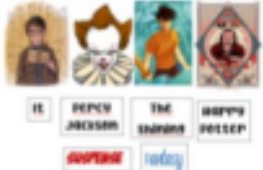


Moment of the class	Image	Purpose
Warm up	<p>Time: 5 min Interaction: Ss. - T.</p> <p>Warm up: T. presents 4 pictures of different movies (2 fantasy stories and 2 suspense stories) Ss. have only 1 minute to put the names of the movie under the picture. Once they finish, the group check the answers and then decide the genre, suspense or fantasy. T. comments "Do you know that those movies are based on books called with the same name?" and show the cover of the book.</p> <p>Appendix 1 'movies'</p> 	The images were planned to explain the meaning of the different genres we have for literature and movies.
Development	<p>tick the character who has that adjective. They could tick more than one character.</p> <p>Appendix 12 'characters and chart'</p>  <p><a href="https://app.wizer.me/review/95TM6R">https://app.wizer.me/review/95TM6R</a></p>	In this case, images where used to make descriptions of the characters.
Closing	<p>To close the class, T. shows again the picture of 'It' and students have 1 minute to describe the character. Once they finish, Ss. share their answers.</p> <p>Appendix 6 'It'</p> 	Finally, to close the class, Ss. Had another image where they could see clearly the character and describe it, using the words learned in the class.

Table 3. Description of images used in a Lesson Plan (López, 2020).

The lesson plan was made during the year 2020 for the fourth semester of the career. The aim of this lesson was to read fantastic literature to evaluate cultural differences. The expected learning was to describe characters of different

books of suspense and fantasy literature. Furthermore, the lesson was given during the first lockdown in Mexico, where secondary schools just give one class per week, and this classes could last just 40 minutes and not 50 minutes, as in a face-to-face lesson.

During the online classes, it was difficult to implement images to give instructions and to explain meanings. For that reason, images were not useful and did not help to engage my students, then there was a need to implement a different strategy to make them practical into the lesson.

About the instructions, during the third year of career (and during pandemic) I created a lesson plan with the topic “likes and dislikes” for unique class for second grade, group B. I would like to point out this lesson plan because of the way I gave and planned instructions, that could be observable in the following table.


Moment of the class	Image	Purpose
Warm up	<p>Warm up: To start the class about like and dislike, Ss. take a piece of paper (could be from their notebook) and fold it in a half. Then, write in one side 'I like...' and in the other 'I don't like'. T. gives them 4 categories (food, animals, candies and activities) and Ss. have to make a draw about which things they like - T. shows an example in the slide, one by one - Once they finish the likes, they do the same with the 'dislikes' making a draw about what they don't like about the same categories.</p> <p>"Ok, let's start by knowing what do you like and what you don't like. Take a piece of paper like this - show the paper - and fold it in a half - show it - and in one side write 'I like...'" - T. antes it - and in the other side write 'I don't like...'" - T. antes it - Now, I'll show you some categories and think about what do you like, then you will draw it. For example, 'food' / like pizza, so I draw it [.] Now, animals, I like dogs, so I draw a dog [.] The next one is 'candies' / like gummies, so I draw one [.] and the last one, activities, I like to read, so I draw it [.] Now, let's do the same with the side of 'I don't like'."</p> <p>Appendix 1 "Likes and dislikes"</p> 	The warm up included a deep explanation about the activity and how to explain it to the students.

Table 4. Description of instructions used in a Lesson Plan (López, 2021).

Acknowledging Sowell's recommendations for evaluating instructions, in this lesson plan I added a framework but it was made as a request from the head teacher, so it was not planned taking into consideration the student's level or the number of instructions I had.

As well, it included the mention of body language, but from the perspective of the teacher who applied it, those were a block to give the instructions, there was not clear which part was an instruction for the students and which one was for the teacher, and at the end, the trainee teacher finished saying "T. shows it" instead of just doing it as a dimension.

It is necessary to emphasize that during online classes, most of the students did not open the camera and microphones (2 of 35 students opened the camera), for this situation Sowell's recommendation about being sure that I have my students' attention became difficult to achieve.

Moment of the class	Image	Purpose															
Development	<p>Finally, T. delivers a chart, where Ss. Write the items they can find on each room (Ex. <i>There is a bed, a rug, a lamp, a dresser, and a closet on my room</i>) and write if we have to use <i>there is</i> or <i>there are</i>. They can search for more words on a dictionary.</p> <p>Appendix 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THERE IS / THERE ARE</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ROOM</th> <th>ITEMS</th> <th>THERE IS / ARE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>bedroom</td> <td>bed...</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>living room</td> <td>sofa...</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>bathroom</td> <td>toilet...</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>kitchen</td> <td>microwave...</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ROOM	ITEMS	THERE IS / ARE	bedroom	bed...		living room	sofa...		bathroom	toilet...		kitchen	microwave...		<p>During the development, I delivered a worksheet where they have to add more items (from the house) and make sentences using "there is" and "there are" as a consolidation of the topic.</p>
ROOM	ITEMS	THERE IS / ARE															
bedroom	bed...																
living room	sofa...																
bathroom	toilet...																
kitchen	microwave...																

Table 5. Description of the activities used in a Lesson Plan (López, 2021).

For this case, I did not plan the instructions as recommended by Sowell neither used the three basic principles of the ULD. My first difficulty was not hand out the material in appropriate times. I explained the instructions first, and then students helped me to deliver the worksheets.

At the moment of answering the exercise worksheet shown in table 6, students forgot the instructions, or they did not understand the activity. Then I observed that some students started to answer in Spanish like in the following example:

Room	Items we have	Phrase There is/ are
<b>Bedroom</b>	Sofa, bed	Yo tengo una alfombra en mi cuarto. También
	Sillon, cama, alfombra	hay un sillón pequeño y la cama en el centro.

Table 6. Example of answers in Spanish. (López, 2022).

Others did not realize the activity, waiting for the moment until I showed the answers, some others realized the activity in a different way; for example, a student answered the worksheet using present continuous, making sentences like “I’m sitting on the rug”, I mean they did not make a sentence using “there is” or “there are”, maybe because they were not able to use “there is” or “there are”, and others did not use items from the house, they used places in town like the police office, school, hospital, etc. This was the moment where I had to explain each one of the students what was expected from them.

Once again, I faced the situation that the language I was using for giving the instructions was not at my students’ level of English, so I had to repeat them



many times, translate and modeling more than the necessary. The activity was planned for being a free activity and it ended being a semi-control activity.

The referred experienced showed me the importance to take into account Sowell's recommendations in relation with preparing how I will deliver instructions and make my own self-assessment, as it is observable in Appendix 3. This will take any teacher to anticipate the rest of the actions recommended, particularly planning to use language at or below student's current level of understanding.

This implies a deep reflection, planning and practice process since, we as teachers must think about our students who have low English level proficiency and then adequate the instructions we are going to give. But this also makes us think about the other resources that we can use to provide scaffolding for the understanding of instructions, such as materials, the use of our voice, the rhythm or speed of our speaking, as well as the need to break down instructions when there are several steps that students need to do into an activity.

Another example of what happened during this first cycle of ARP is the showed in table number 7. It was supposed that students were going to make a complaint about streaming services or digital applications they did not like and the problems they had. In this case, instructions where not planned, but the use of extra linguistic devices was helpful for students to understand the activity and made their own complaint.

When I checked for understanding students elicited to have an example with empty spaces or extra vocabulary to use for their own sentences. Because of the implementation of the hybrid model in the secondary school during that period, groups were divided into 3 subgroups and the number of students was around 8 to 15 students. Then, it was easier for me to monitor students and check if they needed further help with vocabulary; but I also noticed that there were present some Barriers for Learning and Participation (BLP) which are situations

that impede students' access to learning. I wanted to help them to overcome those BLP, but at first I did not know how. By the way BLP include:

- Social and cultural barriers, for example: peer pressure and family background.
- Practical and personal barriers, for example: transport, caring responsibilities, childcare, cost, age, language, and lack of access to information.
- Emotional barriers, such as: lack of self-esteem or confidence due to low skills levels, negative personal experience of learning, previously undetected or unaddressed learning disabilities, abuse or bullying.
- Workplace barriers, such as: time off, access, discrimination, isolation, unsupportive teachers or classmates, etc.

Moment of the class	Image	Purpose
Development	<p>Then, students make sentences using phrases for giving complaints, the reasons and suggestions. (Ex. I want to complaint about ... It's not what I was looking for ... Why don't you ...?) They make their complaints about the apps they put in the red side during the warm up.</p> <p>Appendix 9</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>I want to complaint about Disney Plus. It's freezing all the time. Maybe you should delete the advertisements.</p> </div>	<p>During the development, students had to make their own paragraph using what they learned during the week. This exercise was made in their notebook.</p>

Table 7. Description of the activities used in a Lesson Plan (López, 2021).

Students of secondary schools usually face a lot of peer pressure because during the adolescence they are looking to develop their own personality, some of their classmates abuse and then bullying is frequent. As I explained in the identifying problem section, some students have studied English language at

private academies, so they have a better domain of it and they sometimes make the others feel uncomfortably due to their low English language skill level.

Another example is the showed in table number 8. In this lesson plan is just marked the activities to realize without a framework or preparation for instructions or use of the material.

Moment of the class	Image	Purpose
Development	<p>Once Ss. finish, T. delivers a worksheet to fill the gaps. Ss. Listen to the audio and complete the conversation.</p> <p>Appendix 5</p> <p><i>Ask about cultural aspects</i></p> <p>A. Listen to the audio and complete the questions about cultural aspects.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>A. Hello! I'm Alejandro from <u>Madrid</u>.</p> <p>B. Hello, Alejandro! I'm <u>Joan</u> from Arabia. I have a question for you. _____ language do you _____?</p> <p>A. Oh! _____ in Spanish.</p> <p>B. Awesome! And _____ type of _____ do you eat?</p> <p>A. We usually eat _____ food, like <u>hacón</u>, <u>ensalada</u> or <u>chicken</u>.</p> <p>B. That's incredible! Really different from Arabia!</p> <p>A. It is!</p> <p>B. We are close to New Year's eve! _____ do you usually do in _____?</p> <p>A. <u>Grapes</u> — it depends. But we always _____ 12 grapes at 12:00 of the New Year.</p> <p>B. 12 grapes? For what?</p> <p>A. They are wishes, we want a great night!</p> </div>	<p>During the development, students had to listen to the audio about cultural aspects and complete the empty spaces with the information given in the conversation.</p>

Table 8. Description of the activities used in a Lesson Plan (López, 2021).

When I do not pre-plan my instructions and take in consideration de basic principles of the ULD or the correct use of the didactic material, the class tend to be improvised, where the instructions are just given and thought in the moment, making errors or needing a translation. Also, students need more explanations (say the instructions more than once) or more modeling than what could be useful to bring students to the Zone of Proximal Development. In the specific case of table number 7, I just gave the instruction “listen to the audio and fill the gaps” but I was not specific enough for my students, I did not emphasize the vocabulary they will be using to fill the gaps or which parts where about the cultural habits we were working on.

In addition, since the material was not into the ZPD of the students, it was difficult to answer (around 3 students could answer it without help) the rest of the

group needed more help, so I had to repeat the sentences for them and use a different intonation for those words they needed to write in the worksheet.

To organize the activities and divide the cycles, I made a schedule which is divided in three weeks – appendix 4 –; those weeks represent the practices we have during a semester. The teacher has three classes (50 minutes each one) to start the practice of the project and check the advantages and disadvantages of the action research. After the first week, the teacher has the opportunity of make the action research better, implement more (or less) material to make a success learning environment, for the teacher and for the students.

## **5.2 Second cycle**

Into the *second cycle* we must research the methodology to do the observation. In this case I chose the naturalistic method, this is commonly used by psychologist and social scientists. This technique involves observing and studying the spontaneous behavior of participants in natural surroundings. The researcher simply records what they see in whatever way they can (McLeod, 2015).

As we already mention, the use of the natural method is to see the behavior of the students, how they will react with the use of images in the instructions, if it will be clearly for them or it will be more complicated. Like case studies, naturalistic observation is often used to generate new ideas. Because it gives the researcher the opportunity to study the total situation it often suggests avenues of inquiry not thought of before (McLeod, 2015).

For the reflection we have to compare, which ones are the results without the use of images, if the students understand the instruction just in English or they have to translate the instruction from English to the mother tongue. And the other way, what are the results with the use of images in the instructions.

In this way, we can clearly see the results of what happened with these two different instructions, as well, we will see if the method needs any changes, and the behavior of the students confronting the different situation of the use of images.

We already have the organizer about the project, this includes 4 steps in two separated cycles, those steps are: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Now, we must put this information in action, for this, we create a schedule of activities, where the trainee teacher needs to mark all the spaces of the activities that were done and check which activities are missing.

During the *second cycle* of my ARP, the classes at the Secondary School No. 0003 "Lic. Benito Juárez" were in presential way. For that reason, I started to plan for three sessions in a week, that is the regular rhythm of work of the subject English as a Foreign Language.

The plan was about the topic "Read fantasy and suspense literature to identify culture aspects", in this lesson plan I needed to identify different aspects. First the methodology, this was "Task-based learning" in this way, the goal of teachers is to facilitate students' language learning by engaging them in a variety of tasks that have a clear outcome" (Larsen-Freeman, 2012, p. 200).

The activities and sequence were planned with the task-based learning approach. On this respect Larsen-Freeman, (2012, p. 200) points out that the teacher's role is to choose tasks, based on an analysis of students' needs, that are appropriate to the level of the students and to create pre-task and task follow-up phases that are in line with the abilities and needs of the students. The teacher also monitors the students' performance and intervenes as necessary. The role of the students is to communicate and collaborate with their peers to complete a task.

It is worth highlighting that in this second cycle I also incorporated the pedagogical principles contained in the ACEI syllabus that "...are part of the Educational Model 2017 and must be put in practice by teachers if they want to transform their practice and fully accomplish their role in the educational process..." (SEP, 2017, p. 118).

One of these principles (p. 119) which is aligned to Larsen-Freeman previous recommendation, marks that teachers must offer accompaniment to learning (3<sup>rd</sup> principle). This accompaniment to learning means that teacher must claim that learning activities (or tasks) are organized in a variety of ways so that all learners can access knowledge. And just like Larsen-Freeman considers that teacher monitors and intervenes as necessary, this pedagogical principle marks that teacher must do this accompaniment to the diversity of needs and learning styles of the students. If teachers do this, they would be reducing or removing the BLP already explained.

The ninth pedagogical principle of the educational model is modeling learning. In this stage teachers are models of behavior for the students –from my point of view, not only behavior, also knowledge-, teachers need to be seen to be performing the behaviors they want to encourage among themselves, both in front of students and when sharing activities with them. This pedagogical principle (modeling learning) coincides with the principles of the Universal Learning Design (ULD) which recommend to promote among students, multiple forms of representation, action, expression, and motivation.

In addition, teachers will also execute the learning strategies by identifying aloud the procedures they will perform and will be aware of the "thinking scaffolding" function that language plays in this modelling.

By addressing these points, I hereby emphasize the significance of shaping an inclusive environment – based on students' needs – where students that deal

with BLP's can work to acquire the expected learnings. Here, I point the special case of two students of second grade group A with different barriers, they usually do not participate into the class, and do not socialize with their classmates.

I would like to point out that into the classrooms is not worthy to force students to participate or to talk with other classmates. It is necessary to create a friendly environment where they can feel confident to use the language in different contexts.

Taking back the diversity in the classroom, the implementation of images as part of the ULD calls for the promotion and care of pupils in the most normalized contexts possible (SEP, 2018). This is the basis to make adjustments to attend the students that face BLP's.

In relation with that being said, the document "Estrategia de equidad e inclusión en la educación básica: para alumnos con discapacidad, aptitudes sobresalientes y dificultades severas para el aprendizaje, conducta o comunicación" (SEP, 2018) stipulates that, barriers to learning and participation (BLP) do not refer to inherent learner characteristics, but rather to organizational, policy, administrative, pedagogical, physical, and attitudinal conditions. In this document, I will only focus on attitudinal and pedagogical BLP's since those are in the range of my responsibility as a teacher.

On the first hand, we have the attitudinal BLP's refer to actions, such as refusal of enrolment or non-inclusion in activities because they are not planned taking into consideration the characteristics and needs of learners. Likewise, when families or peers engage in overprotective, aggressive, or rejecting behavior, students' participation in the classroom or schools is limited (SEP, 2017 pp. 26).

On the other hand, the pedagogical BLP's refers to when there is a homogeneous teaching, that is, not providing the required support for diverse needs and interest of learners and it is thought that if adjustments are made, this could hold back the rest of the group or did not identify in advance the needs of the group and the learners as individual beings.

According to the different BLP's pointed out, the materials in the lesson plan should be made with the intention of being graphic and interactive, in this way it will be unequivocal for the students. Also, to help them to interact with their peers and to cover the different needs in the group in a pedagogical way. The images will help them to understand the topic in English without translating to the mother tongue. Images and interactive material are the "additional input while giving instructions" pointed out before.

I must specify that images designed for this second cycle were not used alone but mixed with different items of interaction into the classroom. In summary, what I did is to take into consideration the suggestions given by Sowell for giving instructions as well as the current pedagogical principles of the educational model, and the basic principles of the ULD.

Following the situation seen from the extract of the practice diary (09/03/2022) I planned the same instruction but this time for the second cycle of my ARP where I had to implement an image to help them to understand in a better way the instruction and also to reduce the BLP. These images were planned to show themselves doing the actions. In this specific case, the image shows three persons that represent students, these three "students" are raising one hand that is the action that I was looking students will do.

It is important to say that the image must be clear, simple and convey the meaning that matches with the instruction that is going to be given in the context of the planned activity. The image by itself incorporates one of the basic principles



of the ULD which promotes multiple forms of representation of the information, this, in order to reduce or eliminate BLP.



Image 1. Example of instruction used in the classroom. (López, 2021)

This time (in the second cycle or the ARP), I gave the instruction “Ok, once you finish ...” and I pointed the image without saying the instruction “raise your hand” so my students – before finishing the activity – raised their hand. What I observed that day and register in my practice diary, was different but did not produce the expected result (López, 23/03/2022).

Teacher:	Did you finish?
Student:	No miss. Aún no.
Teacher:	¿Entonces por qué levantaste la mano, tienes alguna duda?
Student:	No miss, pero ahí dice que levantemos la mano.

Table 9. Extract from the practice diary. (López, 23 March, 2022).

Even so, it was clear that most students understood that they were required to “raise their hand”, although they did not listen or understood the first part of the instruction: “...once you finish...”. This made me reflect in my practice diary about the importance of changing of explaining some of the words or expressions that we usually use that we consider that all understand just because we use them frequently.

Fortunately for me, during that period, I was practicing with groups divided in three, so next week when I taught the same class to the other part of the group, I was prepared to do it differently. When I gave the instruction, I mixed the oral instruction with more emphasis in some words and the use of the image and body language which is a way of behavioral modeling (López, 24/03/2022).


Teacher:	Once you finish (I emphasized the pronunciation of "finish"), please (teacher points the image) raise your hand (teacher raises her hand). Is it clear?
Student 1:	Si miss, que cuando terminemos levantemos la mano.
Student 2:	Miss, yo ya terminé (levantando la mano).

Table 10. Extract from the practice diary. (López, 24 March, 2022).

As it can be observed in this extract of my practice diary (24/03/2022) in which I registered the tiny changes done in the way to give an instruction, I also registered the profound changes that can be achieved among students' willingness. This way can be demonstrated that pedagogical BLP can be overcome when teachers research their own practice and make reasonable adjustments to it. Most of the times, teachers blame on students about the lack of learning results, or the low performance showed by them, and there is little or almost any space for self-criticism.

As it's seen in the theoretical background, Sowell recommends thinking about the mechanism that might facilitate understanding, like gestures, images, drawings, or written instructions. In addition, comments that our choice will depend on the context we are working in (Sowell, 2017, p. 4). In the previous example, I applied a mix of those recommendations, the use of images helped my students when it was properly planned and combined with oral instruction and body language. In addition, the images in the board helped them to remember what they must do and they could watch the images in the board as many times they needed them, but also they could use the images to express their self (multiple forms of expression, ULD principles).

During February, 2022, face-to-face classes started again alternating with online classes (hybrid model) as I already explained. For this reason, lesson plans were made in a different way, as it can be noticeable in table 11 where an important change was made in order to include the pedagogical principles of the ACEI syllabus as well as the descriptors of the domain level of the language, this in order to have present the different needs of the students in every group, but also, what they will be able to do with my support:

Planning section	Image	Purpose
Students' English level.	English level of Students	A1 (acceso)
	How many students?	8
	What can they do according to the CEFR?	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and simple sentences aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others, ask for and give basic personal information about home, personal possessions and people he/she knows. Can interact in a basic way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to cooperate.
	ZPD	Students will be able to identify expressions and simple sentences into their real context, according to the plan y <i>programa de estudios</i> . Also, they will be able to introduce themselves, ask and give information and identify basic vocabulary that the teacher provides with images and different strategies of modeling.
Warm up	<p>To start, each Ss. take out their sheet on emotions, the T. describes some situations (Ex. you are watching a movie and a puppy dies or You are watching a TV show and the character you dislike the most doesn't get what he/she wants) and the Ss. draw on the face in the middle how that would make them feel.</p> <p>Appendix 1</p> 	<p>The purpose is to mediate the communication with the use of images to help my students to participate. In this case, I was talking about emotions, as some of my students feel embarrassed to participate, the image was a great mediator to help them.</p>

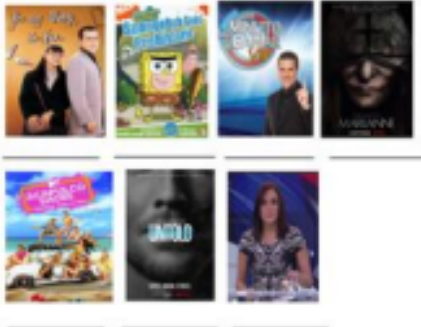
Planning section	Image	Purpose
Development	<p style="text-align: center;">Appendix 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TV SHOWS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A. Look at the TV shows and write on the line the type of show. You can use each answer just once.</p> <div style="background-color: #92d050; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-size: small;"> <span>game show</span>   <span>documentary</span>   <span>drama</span>   <span> sitcom</span>  <span>cartoon</span>   <span>horror</span>   <span>reality show</span> </div> 	<p>During the development of the lesson, images were presented to help them to identify the different meaning of the words, in this case about TV shows. Images served also to allow them express their answers (ULD principles).</p>

Table 11. Description of the activities used in a Lesson Plan (López, 2022)

This lesson plan had the aim of exchange emotions and reactions provoked by a television program, for January 2022 in the third period of practices for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of the career. In this case, as it was explained in the purpose, images helped me to explain meaning without translation. Students with BLP's were able to participate using the flashcards to say the different categories. This is one of the principles from the ULD allowing students to have multiple forms of action and representation, where if they find it difficult to express something orally, they can socialize it through images provided by the teacher or made by themselves.


As I stated before, as a teacher I only attended attitudinal and pedagogical BLP's. It is important to point out that when a teacher plans the use of multiple forms of action and representation, he or she is attending the BLP's from a pedagogical and attitudinal perspective that will help to reduce the anxiousness that participation causes to some students. In other cases, this form of action and

representations helps students to recognize and develop other forms of communication that are valid and necessary for life.

For a more complex instruction in the same level of my students, I took another image to help me to explain the instruction "Open your book on page ..." as it is expressed in table number 12, this strategy was based on my daily observations, where I could notice that the instruction in English was followed just for a certain number of students (around 10 of 22).

This new resource was having different appliances, it was an extra input for a better understanding for students that could not understand the instruction orally; as well, it was a static resource, it was on the board most of the time of the class, so a student who did not pay attention, or the one that went to the bathroom, look at the board and understand immediately what the rest of the students were doing.

It was mixed with gestures and hand out at certain times to highlight the meaning of the instruction, as Sowell mentioned in the check list to evaluate instructions.

Planning section	Image	Purpose
<p>Extra Material</p>	<p>Open your book...</p>  <p>On page...</p>	<p>This image is a static resource where I can write the number of page we are working on. Following the principles of ULD, this element is useful for students that have to face different types of barriers and for those who need to remember the instructions for situations out of the class.</p>


Planning section	Image	Purpose
Development	<p>Then, T. delivers a worksheet where Ss. Have to read what to do in case of a Fire, they have to order the sentences and add the sequence connectors.  <i>"First, let's READ the instructions.</i>  <i>Now, put a little number to GUESS the order.</i>  <i>Now that you have the order, add the SEQUENCY CONNECTORS."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Appendix 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A FIRE</b></p> <p>A small table with columns for 'What to do', 'Sequence connector', and 'Order'. Below it are several blank lines for writing.</p>	<p>The purpose is to create a framework dividing instructions, so students are not going to feel saturated of activities, do not forget the instructions and complete the activities as they should be answered.</p>
Project		<p>Students make their own representations about different words or phrases.</p>

Table 12. Description of the activities used in a Lesson Plan and into the classroom (López, 2022)

In the examples listed above, we have different ways to help students to understand instructions. During the development, the teacher creates the framework making different steps to follow just one instruction, as well, a didactic notebook is useful for the teacher to make the activities, have the answers and notes about how to deliver the different instructions.

A different example is the project, where the students created their own representations. The topic was about natural disasters, and the final project was to create their own poster with instructions to react in different emergencies.

Students used imperatives (instructions) and made a draw to represent the instruction, this way they had the opportunity to express what they have learned through words but also images.

In the process I observed that while some students were drawing some others were trying to write the imperatives. This allowed the collaborative learning immediate feedback to those students than did not know how to express something in written or oral English or that had not structured their answers completely or correctly. Students that wrote or pronounced their answers allowed the others that did not take the risk to participate to compare what they knew and later, to express it. In other words, this kind of activities based on ULD principles allow students that face BLP to overcome their fears and insecurity.

Another example for improving instruction is the creation of a framework to use as a guide as it is presented in table 13.

Moment of the class	Image	Purpose
Development	<p>Framework Segundo año.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lesson Plan 1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Greetings, Day 1:            ¿Hello students, how are you?" - "Today we are going to learn about Natural Disasters"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Warm Up:  <u>Math Thinking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Let's start. Write the TITLE in your notebook. MATHS"</li> <li>• Now, draw a chart like this.</li> <li>• Divide it to have 9 squares ...</li> <li>• You have the number 7, 1 and 4 ...</li> <li>• Now, use numbers from 1 to 9...</li> <li>• All the sides of the square must be equal to 15.</li> </ul> </div>	For the whole class, T. can use a framework as a guide of what to say and how to drive the class.

Table 13. Framework for professional practices. (López, 2022)

As it has been mentioned, the framework is a guide for the teacher, instead of having the full lesson plan, the teacher can have the framework and be reading and marking what already happened in the class, as well as observe and register the reaction of the students before the instructions.

This type of framework is really useful when the trainee teacher is starting with practices into real contexts (not simulations) because it avoids the teacher to make mistakes and to trainee the brain for future instructions and development of the classes.

A different way to present the Framework is the represented in table number 14 which I created in order to attend my own difficulties, like being reading my script for the class, which made me difficult to hand out all the materials I usually take into consideration for the class (like the didactic notebook, flashcards, markers, masking tape, tag, stamps, among other elements that are useful for my classes).




Moment of the class	Image	Purpose	
Warm up and development	Greetings, Day 2: "Good morning students, today we are going to continue with the topic <i>Natural Disasters</i> "	The framework is a guide for the teacher about the correct ways and moments to give instructions and hand out materials.	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Warm Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's start with MATHS</li> <li>• Your first number is <math>36 + 36</math></li> <li>• Now that number /8</li> <li>• Then the result +51</li> <li>• That result -63</li> <li>• And finally, x2 and there you have the result</li> </ul>		
	<p style="text-align: center;">Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's read the instructions</li> <li>• Now, with a PENCIL write numbers from 1 to 9 according to the order</li> <li>• Write the SEQUENCE CONNECTORS</li> <li>• Finally, write the sentences in order, let's check them.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's read the instructions</li> <li>• Now, let's decide what is IMPORTANT and what is DANGEROUS</li> <li>• For example, Stock food during a hurricane, is important or dangerous?</li> </ul>			

Table 14. Framework with images and dialogues. (López, 2021)

In this example, the framework relates both sides, the dialogue about the instructions that the teacher needs to deliver during the class, and the image of the activity the dialogue is referring about. I decided to design the framework in this way because I used to have problems at the moment of give instructions, because I did not have the visual element of which material I was using at the



moment of read the framework, it tend to makes me feel confused. This new design helped me to see the instruction, the material and the times to hand it out.

As well, into the framework I emphasized the key words that helped me to follow the instruction and not being reading my paper during the class. I could just look at the highlights I made and remember the following steps.

All these techniques were though based on Sowell's table and principles of ULD, those elements to evaluate the instructions helped me to think about different ways to improve my own instructions, in the lesson plan, during the class and at the moment of the reflection.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusions**

## 6. Conclusions

As we see in this action research, one of the most common problems in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language come from the activities that no one sees. We can make a change in our students if we start to analyze and reflect each one of the things, even the simplest things. This reflection and analysis can be approachable through the practice diary or other elements as we saw with Sowell self-assessment checklist.

Teachers can make a self-assessment technique about the performance into the class, like the time to hand out materials, how many time students can spend doing an activity, etc. This self-assessment helps us to make a reflection and to identify the main aspects we must improve in our daily practice, including the use of pedagogical principles of the KLCE syllabus and the basic principles of ULD.

The images are powerful mediators, their implementation in the English Language Teaching and Learning processes facilitate significantly student's understanding of oral and written instructions. At the same time, images work as a reminder that help students to keep focused on the instructions, because they can have it all the necessary time and go back to the instructions to remember what to do in the activity. So, images also work as a pedagogical resource that help students to overcome their BLP's.

Although, it is important to remember that not all the elements of the self-assessment checklist are achievable in just one class. A clear example of this is the monitoring into the classroom, as I explained in the identification of the problem, during the first half of the scholar year, the Secondary School No. 0003 "Benito Juarez" divided one group (45 students) into 3 subgroups (15 students), teachers worked with groups of 15 or less students, which makes easier the monitoring and individual tutoring. Nowadays, monitoring with 45 students in a

thin classroom is really difficult, we cannot walk through the rows because there is not enough space.

As well, the use of images is not a permanent resource, the teacher needs to be a pendant on when the images already serve their purpose. In this way, at the beginning of the year, we will have images on every instructions and model for the most complex instructions, over the months, we will be capable to know which instructions are already understood and change the picture or do not use any other picture. Also, we can change the instruction for one to a higher level and implement the picture again, explaining the new instruction.

Teachers need to include the basic principles of ULD in its work since diversity is becoming increasingly present in the groups of students at secondary school. BLP's can appear and change every day in every activity at any level (attitudinal, pedagogical or organizational), so teachers must reflect and act by themselves or in collaboration with their peers to reduce or eliminate them.

According to the ULD, images are not just for the teacher, to implement them to give instructions. Images are also for students, to help students with any specific situation of comprehension. Also, students who have problems in communication or expression, can use images, following the principle of *multiple forms of expression*.

The instructions are something in our day to day as teachers, we are guides of our students, and we can improve their skills with simple things, like the implements of images in the instructions or model the new vocabulary. We help the students without breaking the learning or the language understanding.

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## **Appendixes**

## 8. Appendixes

### 8.1 Appendix 1

Socioeconomic tests. (November, 2021).

#### CUESTIONARIO DE DATOS SOCIOECONÓMICOS

INSTRUCCIONES: Lee cuidadosamente cada pregunta y marca con una X la o las opciones que reflejan tu situación actual. La información que proporcionas será manejada en forma confidencial y únicamente con fines estadísticos. En caso de alguna duda acude a la persona que te proporcionó el cuestionario.

##### I. DATOS ECONÓMICOS

¿ El estudiante trabaja actualmente?	SI ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )	No ( )
Si trabaja ¿Cuánto es su ingreso mensual?	\$	
Si vives con tu familia	¿Cuál es el ingreso mensual de tu familia incluyendo en su caso tus ingresos \$ 6500	
¿Depende económicamente alguna (s) persona(s) de ti?	SI ( )	No ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )

##### II. DATOS FAMILIARES

¿Actualmente vives: con tu familia ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ) solo ( ) con familiares ( ) con amigos ( ) otro ( )
Vives con: padre ( ) madre ( ) ambos ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )
¿Cuántos hermanos tienes? 3
¿Qué lugar ocupas entre tus hermanos? 3
¿Cuántos de tus hermanos que dependen del ingreso familiar asisten a la escuela? 2
La casa donde vives es propia: ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ) rentada ( ) prestada ( ) se está pagando ( )
¿Cuántos cuartos tiene la casa donde vives? 8
¿Cuántas personas habitan en la casa donde vives? 5
¿Tienes hijos? SI ( ) No ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )
¿Para llegar al Plantel: caminas ( ) utilizas vehículo propio ( ) público ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )
¿Cuánto tiempo inviertes para llegar al Plantel? 40 minutos

##### III. CONDICIONES SOCIALES

¿Con cuáles de los siguientes servicios cuenta la zona dónde vives?:	SI	No
a) Agua Potable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b) Alumbrado público	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Calles pavimentadas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
d) Drenaje	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
e) Mercado	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
f) Teléfono público	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
g) Vigilancia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

La casa donde vives cuenta con:	SI	No
a) Baño	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b) Luz eléctrica	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
c) Agua potable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
d) Muros de tabique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Techo de concreto ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ) lámina ( ) madera ( )		
Piso de concreto ( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ) tierra ( ) mosaico ( ) madera ( )		

##### VI. ACTIVIDADES EXTRACURRICULARES

¿A cuáles de las siguientes actividades tienes acceso?	SI	No
a) Clases particulares	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b) Regularización	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
c) Clases de inglés o algún otro idioma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
d) Academia de baile		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Actividades deportivas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
f) OTRO (escribir cual)		
g) OTRO (escribir cual)		

## 8.2 Appendix 2

Authorization to answer the socioeconomic tests (November, 2021).

Noviembre 22, 2021. Toluca, Estado de México.

Estimado Participante:

La Escuela Normal Número 1 de Toluca se encuentra haciendo una investigación titulada *"The use of images to understand basic instructions"* desarrollada por López Sosa Rosa María, docente en formación, en el marco de su tesis de investigación para obtener el título de Licenciado en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés en Educación Secundaria. El presente documento tiene como finalidad hacerle conocer los detalles del estudio y solicitarle su consentimiento informado para participar en él.

### 1. Objetivo de la recopilación de datos

El objetivo de recopilar datos del estado socio-económico de los alumnos es con la finalidad de dar un panorama general de la investigación, sobre los alumnos con posibilidades de estudiar en escuelas privadas de inglés, así como también las oportunidades y apoyos brindados por los padres de familia.

### 2. Cuestionario socio-económico

El cuestionario tiene la principal finalidad de conocer el estado socioeconómico de los alumnos. Los datos se mantienen en anonimato – no es necesario incluir nombres, tanto de alumnos y padres de familia – así como también son utilizados con la única finalidad de proporcionar herramientas a la investigación, para la mejora de la calidad educativa en la materia de Lengua Extranjera. Inglés.

En caso de estar de acuerdo, favor de colocar nombre y firma del padre o tutor que autoriza el llenado del cuestionario socioeconómico.

En caso de no estar de acuerdo, favor de NO firmar y colocar en un costado los motivos por los que no se autoriza el proceso de llenado del cuestionario de recolección de datos socioeconómicos.



FIRMA DE AUTORIZACIÓN



Atte.  
Rosa María López Sosa  
Docente en formación

### 8.3 Appendix 3

Sowell's Self-assessment answered by the trainee teacher (Sowell, 2017.  
Adapted by López, R. M.)

Self-evaluation reflection				
Did I ...	YES	NO	1 <sup>st</sup> MOMENT	2 <sup>nd</sup> MOMENT
1. Prepare how I will deliver instructions when lesson planning?		X	No, I did not take the instructions into consideration. I was improvising.	
2. Arrange student groups and furniture before giving instructions?		X	No, I cannot move groups.	
3. Make sure I have my students' attention before I start to give instructions?	X		Yes, I always make sure I have my students attention.	
4. Hand out materials at appropriate times?		X	Sometimes, I get confused and I deliver the material when I am giving instructions.	
5. Speak clearly and pause appropriately when giving instructions?		X	No, I tend to speak fast.	
6. Use language at or below my students' current level of understanding?		X	As I improvise my instructions, my English level is higher.	
7. Use extra-linguistic devices to aid meaning?		X	No, I usually just use the board or my material is not significant.	
8. Check for understanding before letting students start an activity?	X		Sometimes, I elicit them to tell me what they have to do.	
9. Monitor students after they start their activity?	X		Yes, but it's not easy.	
10. Check if my students need further help with instructions after an activity has started?	X		Yes, they always call me when they need something.	

## 8.4 Appendix 4

Schedule for activities and practices (López, 2022).

Activity	October				November				December				January				February				March				April				May				June			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Realize a diagnostic for each group	█	█	█																																	
Identify and characterize groups			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Make lesson plans			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Design materials			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Complete teaching journal			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Reflection / analysis			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
First period of teaching practices			█	█	█	█	█																													
Second period of practices									█	█	█	█																								
Third period of practices													█	█	█	█																				
Fourth period of practices																	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█								
Fifth period of practices																																	█	█	█	█

**Asunto:** Se asume responsabilidad.

Toluca, Méx., 30 de junio de 2022

**H. CUERPO DE SINODALES  
P R E S E N T E**

Quien suscribe C. LOPEZ SOSA ROSA MARIA, estudiante del octavo semestre de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés en Educación Secundaria, por este conducto, asume de manera total la responsabilidad de haber estructurado y elaborado el documento titulado: The use of Images and Principles of Universal Learning Design to Improve Understanding of Basic Instructions in English as a Foreign Language, conforme a las Orientaciones Académicas para la Elaboración del Trabajo de Titulación. Con la supervisión del director de trabajo de titulación fue estructurado en la modalidad de: Tesis de Investigación; así como de haberlo adecuado a las observaciones hechas por la Comisión de Titulación. Finalmente, defenderlo suficiente y de manera argumentada ante los sinodales, de tal forma que demuestre mis saberes categóricamente ante ellos, a través del diálogo académico que tenga lugar durante el desarrollo del examen profesional.

Agradece ampliamente el interés y el apoyo que siempre se me brindó como estudiante.

**ATENTAMENTE**



**C. LOPEZ SOSA ROSA MARIA**





Toluca, Méx., 15 de julio de 2022.

**DR. SERGIO DOTOR FERNÁNDEZ**  
**PRESIDENTE DE LA COMISIÓN DE TITULACIÓN**  
**PRESENTE**

El que suscribe Mtro. Roberto González Rodríguez, Asesor del(a) estudiante ROSA MARIA LOPEZ SOSA, matrícula 181517850000 de 8° semestre de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés en Educación Secundaria quien desarrolló el Trabajo de Titulación denominado "The use of Images and Principles of Universal Learning Design to Improve Understanding of Basic Instructions in English as a Foreign Language" en la modalidad de Tesis de investigación; se dirige a esta Comisión a su digno cargo para informar que este documento ha sido concluido satisfactoriamente de acuerdo con lo establecido en los documentos del Plan de Estudios 2018 rectores del proceso de titulación.

Sin otro particular, le envío un atento y cordial saludo.

**ATENTAMENTE**

**Mtro. Roberto González Rodríguez**


Toluca, Méx., 1 de julio de 2022

**C. LOPEZ SOSA ROSA MARIA  
ESTUDIANTE DEL OCTAVO SEMESTRE (LEAIES)  
P R E S E N T E.**

La Dirección de esta casa de estudios, a través de la Comisión de Titulación de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés en Educación Secundaria del Ciclo Escolar 2021–2022, comunica a usted que una vez revisado el trabajo de titulación intitulado: *The use of Images and Principles of Universal Learning Design to Improve Understanding of Basic Instructions in English as a Foreign Language*, presentado en la modalidad de Tesis de investigación fue **Dictaminado Favorablemente**. Ello significa que a partir de la fecha podrá realizar los trámites correspondientes en el Área de Exámenes Profesionales para sustentar su Examen Profesional.

Sabedor de su alto sentido de responsabilidad, le envío un cordial saludo.

ATENTAMENTE

  
**DR. SERGIO DOTOR FERNÁNDEZ  
PRESIDENTE DE LA COMISIÓN DE TITULACIÓN**



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