



## **The Occupations Post: A Learning Landscape Proposal for English as a Foreign Language in Secondary Education**

Resumen: One acknowledged challenge of teaching is the act of combining all elements needed and their alignment in a consistent project. This paper presents a unit plan for English in Secondary Education which conjoins some of the most relevant theoretical aspects in foreign language and general didactics (Communicative Language Teaching, Cooperative Learning and Project-Based Language Learning). It takes the form of a Learning Landscape where student groups immerse in a narrative/symbolic framework: they are a company which earns money by doing activities advertised on a real newspaper. These activities conform set itineraries designed to present variation across multiple intelligences, cognitive levels and, innovatively, the four macro-skills (listening, speaking, writing, reading). Moreover, the project makes use of digitalization and gamification theory.

Palabras clave: Learning Landscape, materials design, cooperative learning, CLLT, PBLL

### **1. Statement of purpose:**

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One of the usually acknowledged challenges of teaching is the act of combining all needed factors and elements and their alignment in a consistent project that can be carried out in a classroom (e.g. Brown, 2002). This communication has two objectives: presenting some of the most relevant theoretical elements in foreign language didactics; and proposing a specific unit plan around a Learning Landscape for English as a Foreign Language in secondary education.

### **2. Theoretical-methodological framework:**

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The unit I present was designed considering the principles of Cooperative Learning, Project-Based Language Learning and Communicative Language Teaching. The innovative element I introduced is a Learning Landscape, designed following Alfredo Hernando (2015) and Escuela 21 (Arrimadas *et al.*, 2015; Poyatos, 2016) and the five elements they propose:

1) Varied activities: Figure 1 shows a matrix based on the combination of the 8 multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2011) plus Bloom *et al.*'s (1956) 6 levels of cognition. Therefore, the activities are varied because they go from the lower levels of cognition to the higher ones while tackling the eight intelligences.

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<b>Create</b>	write a short story	Plan the steps to be successful in...	Poster on Google Slides to summarise the passive voice pictograms	Create a sign system for x of the vocabulary items.	Write a four-line song about ...	List of things that a company can do to be ecofriendly in the passive voice	Write a CV to convince your employer that your team is the best	Write a false CV to show how good qualities you have
<b>Evaluate</b>	Decide whether this is a good advertisement for the company			Argue why it is best to combine working and sports.	Give arguments for and against playing Classical music at the office/place of work	Justify why your company promotes ecofriendly practices.	Criticise one candidate's CV. whats good and bad	Criticise your own "CV"
<b>Analyze</b>	Advertise somebody's product	Google Sheets to process info.	Mind map to organise the vocabulary items		listen to these three songs. which one would you use in a videocurriculum?	Organize these practices between ecofriendly and harmful	compare two CV's of two people. who do you take on?	each member of the groups distinguishes his strengths and struggles
<b>Apply</b>	Write a tweet in the passive voice.	Solve a puzzle.	Draw pictograms of the items in sentences in the active and passive voice.	Perform a dialogue				Present your weak and strong areas to your groupmates.
<b>Understand</b>	Provide definitions for some of the vocabulary items.			Associate body movements to actions.	Provide rhymes for the words of vocabulary.	Paraphrase them using the passive voice.	Classify the following jobs according to your groupmates preferences.	Students make a list of which vocabulary words are most useful for them (5 each)
<b>Remember</b>	Read the explanation of the passive voice and state what the rule is with your own words.	Complete a crossword with the vocabulary items.	Link what's happening in the picture using the sentences in the passive voice.	Memorise some movements you will do when you earn money as seen in the video.	Sing the vocabulary items that start with CDEFGAB on the musical scale.	Identify the best practices the company in the text does to preserve the environment.	Listen to a conversation about jobs and decide who is speaking.	Jobs/tasks from the vocab that are done by you easily. One each.
	<b>Word</b>	<b>Logic</b>	<b>Picture</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>Nature</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Self</b>

Figure 1: Matrix showing activities with variation among cognitive levels (left) and multiple intelligences (bottom)

2) Itineraries: I devised cognitively-ascending itineraries of activities maintaining balance among the intelligences. The criteria for these were the four macro-skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing), so that each itinerary deals with one while integrating the others. Plus, they were designed so that two of them require reaching the creation level while the other two allow students to proceed no further than the evaluation level; in this way, students are free to follow an itinerary that is relatively demanding while at the same time working on the intelligences of their choice. Itineraries can be seen in Figure 2.

3) Narrative/symbolic framework: It is the story or excuse for the landscape, it is an imagined world that presents what students must do as if it were a real-life situation. Thus, their own imagination and potential is used to carry out engaging activities with a purpose beyond the classroom: this must provide the justification for the whole project, the reason why they do the activities.

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Create	write a short story	Plan the steps to be successful in...	S4 Poster on Google Slides to summarise the passive voice pictograms	Create a sign system for x of the vocabulary items.	Write a four-line song about ...	List of things that a company can do to be ecofriendly in the passive voice	Write a CV to convince your employer that your team is the best	W4 Write a false CV to show how good qualities you have
Evaluate	L4 Decide whether this is a good advertisement for the company			S3 Argue why it is best to combine working and sports.	W3 Give arguments for and against playing Classical music at the office/place of work	Justify why your company promotes ecofriendly practices.	R4 Criticise one candidate's CV, what's good and bad	Criticise your own "CV"
Analyze	Advertise somebody's product	L3 Google Sheets to process info.	Mind map to organise the vocabulary items		listen to these three songs, which one would you use in a videocurriculum?	R3 Organize these practices between ecofriendly and harmful	compare two CVs of two people, who do you take on?	each member of the groups distinguishes his strengths and struggles
Apply	Write a tweet in the passive voice.	Solve a puzzle.	Draw pictograms of the items in sentences in the active and passive voice.	R2 Perform a dialogue				S2 Present your weak and strong areas to your groupmates.
Understand	Provide definitions for some of the vocabulary items.			Associate body movements to actions.	L2 Provide rhymes for the words of vocabulary.	W2 Paraphrase them using the passive voice.	Classify the following jobs according to your groupmates preferences.	Students make a list of which vocabulary words are most useful for them (5 each)
Remember	R1 Read the explanation of the passive voice and state what the rule is with your own words.	W1 Complete a crossword with the vocabulary items.	S1 Link what's happening in the picture using the sentences in the passive voice.	Memorise some movements you will do when you earn money as seen in the video.	Sing the vocabulary items that start with CDEFGAB on the musical scale.	Identify the best practices the company in the text does to preserve the environment.	L1 Listen to a conversation about jobs and decide who is speaking.	Jobs/tasks from the vocab that are done by you easily. One each.
	Word	Logic	Picture	Body	Music	Nature	People	Self

Figure 2: Itineraries to be followed: purple is reading; green is writing; blue is speaking; and orange is listening.

4) Gamification: the introduction of game in the learning process is an element that increases students' motivation (Walz & Deterding, 2014) because the Learning Landscape is no longer just a compulsory project but also something students want to do to win the rewards (fake money and the badges in Figure 3).



Figure 3: Badges earned after completion of the itineraries.

5) Digitalization: Digital devices are still intrinsically motivating and teachers can make the most of this since it speeds up their learning process and promotes collaboration (Sheridan & Rowsell, 2011). My landscape is designed as a

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newspaper (see Appendix), so it is thought to be printed. However, it can also be a .pdf on their tablets and they have QR codes and other links because many activities are online.

The choice to design a Learning Landscape is also justified because it allows to integrate most concepts, topics and practices that are key to Second Language Acquisition, as mentioned above. As to Cooperative Learning (Kagan, 1994), students work in teams that contribute to create an effective and safe learning environment for students to maximize their potential. This small-group work makes it possible to provide students with a better source of input and more opportunities to produce output. Thus, students have a much more active role than in traditional classes and the teacher is the one in charge of modelling and guiding students' learning process.

Each itinerary deals with a skill although students do not necessarily know they are working on that skill. Moreover, each itinerary integrates the other skills so that students do not have to focus on one skill but several at once:

- Listening: mainly a top-down approach where what really matters is the meaning and the information that is being given (i.e. the students are active interpreters). Skills were integrated, avoiding too much writing and guiding decoding through several listenings. The prompt of the activity is the pre-listening and the product asked for is the post.

- Speaking: speaking activities are recorded because they are part of a job and thus have a specific purpose and audience. Interaction is always present, but the itinerary focuses on transaction of the information asked for and performances in front of the camera. The focus is on fluency, respecting CLT (Richards, 2006), and appropriate scaffolding is provided. Feedback can be given when the students ask for it as well as at the end of the unit.

- Reading: this itinerary is based on a top-down approach. Students have access to the content and context of the texts: as everything is related to the narrative or symbolic framework, the texts students must read have a real purpose and they must be understood to carry out the rest of the tasks. The readings were chosen according to students' level. Nevertheless, less proficient readers can benefit from better readers as the latter may help the former while completing the tasks (Cheng, Lam & Chan, 2008).

- Writing: writing is approached as a product (the result of the writing) but also as a process (awareness of steps needed to create a written text). Error correction is not a priority for these sessions since what matters is that students will develop writing skills while using the other three skills at the same time. Writing is a means to do some of the tasks and win the rewards.

The landscape is but a way to carry out a project after all. PBL has an outcome and the learning process is meaningful because students must get to that end. In addition, PBL activates previous knowledge so that students see connections between what they have already studied and what will be next and its application to other contexts (Bell, 2010). It has a communicative purpose and it is based on a problem/question that the teacher establishes, and students must get to solve it. The language and content needed are not worked on in isolation but integrated in

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different tasks and practicing the four skills. Everything that is presented to the learners is useful to interact with their classmates, process all the information and produce output. Plus, the driving question or problem is present throughout the project since they are always striving to make their company work and all they do serves that purpose.

Interestingly, the Learning Landscape allows students to learn at different paces as each group works on its own. It is also important to consider students' needs, interests and learning profiles, so the itineraries are for them to choose which they want to carry out and how they are going to proceed. The variety of tasks proposed (with the intelligences and cognitive levels) are adjusted to students' individual differences and diversity. Assessment is thus also differentiated since they can choose what of their productions to be published.

Thus, the Learning Landscape results in one of the best ways to present an engaging topic, deal with the curricular contents in a motivating way and allow students to be the masters of their own learning with the teacher as their companion/facilitator.

### 3. Discussion of materials:

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In what follows I discuss the materials designed according to the previous theoretical-methodological considerations. The main contents the unit tackles are part of the Aragonese curriculum (2016) for 4th Year of ESO, so that it is founded on specific teaching legislation: passive voice, vocabulary of jobs and occupations and production of short online written texts. It is designed for a class of 24 students in cooperative groups of 4 people. This means they know the structures and routines needed. Plus, they have tablets as their tools for working and learning.

The five 60'-long sessions are distributed as follows: the first is an introductory session to the Learning Landscape; the next three are devoted to the project of the landscape; and the last is a summing up of everything students have worked on.

#### INTRODUCTORY LESSON (SESSION 1)

This first session is not aimed at teaching contents but introducing the landscape, as well as monitoring behavior and encouraging team spirit.

Students are told each cooperative group is a company that has just started business. They must design a logo that represents them and give their company a name. Once this is done and shared, the teacher explains what they are going to do showing them a copy of the newspaper:

- They represent a new company.
- The company needs \$7000 to start working.
- The newspaper shows ads from four different sectors: transportation, healthcare, communications and restaurants.
- To earn at least that much money, they need to do the advertised jobs in the newspaper. Whenever they do a job, they will receive the announced amount of

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money. The front page displays internship jobs they need to acquire experience (= \$3000). Once they finish a sector from the front page they receive a badge and can move on to the jobs in that sector on the back page if they want. Students can also carry on working on internship jobs. Rewards are designed so that, to get \$7000, they must do all the front page plus at least two sectors of the back page. In this session, students talk among themselves and decide how they are going to do the landscape: they need to devise a plan of the activities they are going to do (it may be altered in the following lessons).

#### LEARNING LANDSCAPE (SESSIONS 2, 3 & 4)

All activities are explained in the Learning Landscape itself (see Appendix). The four macro-skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are integrated in the Learning Landscape as each of them is one itinerary: respectively transportation, communications, healthcare and restaurants. Each itinerary/sector is designed so it takes 30' to do the compulsory/internship activities and another 30' for optional/specialized ones. Since they are only required to carry out 4 of the latter, they will be doing 12 activities, i.e. 180' (three sessions of 60').

Students can manage their time how they consider, but they cannot move on to the optional/specialized activities unless they have completed the compulsory/internship ones and received a badge. Fast finishers are welcome to continue other itineraries.

For this project to work, it is crucial that the teacher is actively engaged in all their students are doing. He/she walks around the class and provides their students with any materials and gives them feedback as requested. Also, he/she must acknowledge the completion of activities, so it is essential that he/she is aware of what each activity consists of.

All materials are provided in the newspaper via QR codes or by indications that they must ask the teacher for the materials ("the newspaper office"). Tablets are the main tool, needed for virtually all the activities. No homework is planned but students might want to prepare their activities at home if they think they are going to need something.

#### FINAL LESSON (SESSION 5)

This final session is devoted to publication. Students are encouraged to compare in cooperative groups different modes of online publication like Twitter or Instagram and then plan how this is going to be done. Assessment will consist in the teacher's looking at the private account they create for the project and where they publish all the materials of the activities they have carried out.

#### 4. Conclusions:

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In this communication, I have presented a unit plan organized as a Learning Landscape. The proposal implementation shows that it is possible to integrate many concepts and theorizations of English as a Foreign Language teaching and

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learning and Second Language Acquisition, such as Cooperative Learning, Communicative Language Teaching, Project-Based Language Learning and so on. The special interest of this proposal is the application of Learning Landscape theory to the English classroom by taking advantage of the macro-skill division. Each skill can be set up as an itinerary within the narrative, so that there is great variation and attention to diversity and students' interests not only in terms of multiple intelligences and cognitive levels but also in terms of what skills are their fortes. Thus, the language classroom becomes an emotionally stimulating environment where learning can take place.

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## 6. Appendix:

This is the newspaper to be printed out, with the activities as explained above:

### The Occupations Post

Saragossa, California — Thursday, May 25, 2017 — 2 pages five cents

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#### TRANSPORTATION

**Interpreter needed for truck company**

The Transportation Department has issued 20 new traffic signs to comply with the 20 new laws about driving that are going to be incorporated to American roads next month. We need a group of experts that can help us understand the meanings of the signs by connecting them with the new rules so that our truck drivers can work in safe conditions. Please send us a picture of the signs and statements properly arranged.

**REWARD \$375**

Signs and statements: <https://www.google.com/maps/@33.4542444,111.9042594,15z>

**Job offer at JFK airport**

Staff 4-person team needed to assist passengers and create directions. Please send as a video curriculum in which each of the members state two reasons why he or she is a good option and one aspect where he or she needs improvement. We will be receiving lots of videos so please make it no longer than 2 minutes (30 seconds each candidate).

You can start your statements with the following sentences:

- I am a good candidate because I am good at...
- One of my strengths is...
- Something I am very good at is...
- I need some improvement when it comes to...
- An area I still need help in is...

**REWARD \$375**

do they all have in common? Pay attention to the verbs. Ask for the report at the newspaper office.

**REWARD \$200**

**Health Convention**

Winter is coming and the Health Department has organized a convention to raise medical staff's awareness of the flu's side effects on old people. A group of interns who would like to give some support is needed. Those interested should scan the QR code to fill in a Google Form. Once admitted, you will find a dialogue which you have to rehearse to see how you would perform. Please record it and send it to us.

**REWARD \$500**

Please for every job provide: name of the job, studies needed, and one fact from the video.

**REWARD \$450**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAVYU23GAA4>

#### RESTAURANTS

**People 5 food!**

New restaurant in the city. Opening soon. We have to advertise our place. For that, we need a group of experienced waiters that select the main food from our menu and complete the cross-word. These are the words you need: career, condition, wage, money, degree, assistant, manager, promotion, boss, intern, accountant, secretary.

**REWARD \$250**



**Eating up the world**

Do you know how to cook vegetarian meals? And cooking at the same time as you explain what you are doing? If so, you are perfect for the job. Balance and an appropriate use of hands and words will give you the job. Write down the steps you follow while cooking as evidence of your mastery. You should highlight the action, not the fact that you are doing it. Ask for the recipe at the newspaper office.

**REWARD \$500**

### NOTICE: EXPERIENCE IN THE SECTOR IS NEEDED BEFORE APPLYING FOR ANY JOB ON THIS PAGE

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#### TRANSPORTATION

**Help those who help you**

The Labor Union of Taxi Drivers is fighting for everybody's rights. Our workers spend too many hours sitting and we want to promote healthy habits. We are looking for a group of four people with experience in the transportation sector to help us fight and convince our bosses that we need one free hour everyday to practice sports in order to carry out our job properly. Please help our campaign with a video supporting the cause: one person explaining what the problem is, one person explaining the disadvantages of sitting all day, one person explaining the benefits of sport for work, and one person summarizing it all up and stating conclusions. The video will be broadcast on TV so please make it shorter than 2 minutes (30 seconds each speaker).

**REWARD \$450**

been fined by the government because it does not obey the law. We need some experienced medical staff who can tell which practices are ecofriendly and which are harmful in order to keep North Avenue's Hospital open. Ask for the handout at your newspaper office. You can use the following stickers to classify them.

**REWARD \$700**



**Treating and treated people**

South Avenue's Hospital is specialized in the treatment of tropical diseases. As more cases have been identified, the hospital is looking for medical staff that know how to treat the most candidates. Read the CV's provided by the newspaper office and decide which are the strong and weak areas of each of them.

**REWARD \$1300**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Out of ideas: inspiration needed!**

The Post's Guild of Asheville NC has enhanced the possibilities of creation. We are having trouble in finding words to rhyme with some other words; please send us an email with suggestions. You can hear how the words are pronounced and have a look at their definitions on [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com). You can also use it to check whether the words you choose actually rhyme. The words are: career, condition, wage, money, degree, assistant, manager, promotion, boss, intern, accountant, secretary.

**REWARD \$300**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Serious collaboration of radio experts**

GET THE BEST JOB! needs to publish all their contents online as a way to help people make the most of their stories and details, available in downloadable formats. In order to publish a summary of the video "10 Best Jobs in 2018 and How You Can Actually Get Them" (Word page of this newspaper), use a Google Sheets document to organize the information you gathered. Now add how much a year you can make and use the DSWL to calculate how much that means every month and every day of the year so that it is clearer for listeners of the program.

**REWARD \$600**

**Supporting Mexican transporters**

Renowned Mexican truck company EL CARGAVIENTO needs help understanding English. Our drivers need to deliver many loads in the United States and they struggle to make themselves understood. After carrying out a test we have found what they find most difficult: the passive voice. We need somebody to design a poster on Google Slides where we can see 8 examples of sentences in the active voice and their equivalents in the passive voice; please include pictures to represent the objects and actions expressed so that it is easier for our workers. Then record your voice over the poster explaining how the change from passive to active takes place.

**REWARD \$1350**

**HEALTHCARE**

**A hospital for the world**

North Avenue's Hospital is about to close. Its practices have proven to be damaging the environment and it has been low-quality. We are now considering re-using some of our best commercials but we need a group of experts in communications that can help us decide whether they are still good. Watch the 1571 commercial provided in the link and decide what are the positive aspects of this commercial: are there any reasons why it should not be used again? Can you think of a way to improve it? Write a very short report directly answering these questions.

**REWARDS \$1400**

**HEALTHCARE**

**Medical services required**

St. James Hospital needs a group of doctors and nurses to help control the great amount of injured people that the hospital has received in the last months. Please read the director's report and underline what needs to be done. What

**RESTAURANTS**

**Relaxing or not relaxing cup of coffee**

Restaurants are upside down. The owners of four restaurants have decided to play Classical music in the kitchens but cooks and waiters refuse to accept this source of distraction. If you want to collaborate to solve this problem, you can copy the following table and write down your arguments along a round table. Then, you can send it to our email.

**REWARD \$750**

FOR	AGAINST

**HEALTHCARE**

**Coca-Cola searches external reviewers**

Coca-Cola commercials have always

**HEALTHCARE**

**Don't worry, be working**

Working is no longer boring. We have the job you need in the city centre: fresh, varied, on time and extra paid. We are waiting for you, waiters. You are welcomed to send your CV via email if you think this is your dream job. A good presentation makes a good impression: include your name, your education, three positive and negative aspects about you and experience. Ask for the template at the newspaper office.

**REWARD \$1250**

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