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Master's Dissertation/

**FEMALE EMPOWERMENT:
A DIDACTIC PROPOSAL FOR STUDENTS
OF ENGLISH IN SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

It is well-known that some teenagers begin to show chauvinist attitudes when they approach the female gender. An underlying reason behind this kind of behaviour could be interconnected to the attitude shown by some of their inspiring models in society, models teenagers tend to look up to. Curiously enough, as children, our students consider both sexes in an equal manner but, as they grow up, their thinking patterns evolve and change. We sometimes witness wrong attitudes and opinions in class, and, as teachers, we have a moral duty in our society: to try and change those views.

This dissertation focuses on the importance of teaching gender equality. Being acquainted with some relevant female figures from different fields —medicine, chemistry, art, philosophy, etc.—, but mainly from English literature can be particularly helpful in this sense. Our didactic proposal —conceived for Secondary Education students— will make use of different passages from some graded novels to appreciate how different female writers reflected their struggle on their writings. In our English lessons, students will be allowed to express their opinions about these specific topics.

As teachers of English, we will also try to improve our learners' communicative competence by employing the four skills and using different texts, videos, electronic resources and other and pieces of information. Various topics will be introduced in class in order to let students focus their attention on some crucial facts related to equality between both sexes. Thus, apart from dealing with such a relevant and interesting issue, students will improve their linguistic skills thanks to the great number of activities they will face in the different tasks.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the role of women in different social spheres has been increasing over time. In particular, from the 1780s, more and more female writers have started to show how different women focused on and reconsidered their position in society. In that period, some relevant female writers like Emily Brontë, Charlotte Brontë, Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing, Mary Anne Evans, and Mary Wollstonecraft —among others— left their mark in the literary world.

Although these female writers probably had different personal concerns, they have something in common: the need to demonstrate through their masterpieces how they felt.

From the 1790s, the role of women started to strengthen its importance and visibility with a slow and firm step, since many women who belonged to different spheres did not accept the role they had been obliged to play in their society. They started to raise their voices and struggled together to achieve their dreams. Women needed to feel equal to men, respected and valued for them. Many of them wished to change their lives and that strong feeling made them achieve their dreams.

Nowadays, the visibility of women is greater, but, even so, many teenage girls show self-esteem problems due to the influence of certain men's beliefs that still claim the inferiority of women. This work aims to develop their self-confidence. Female teenagers should consider themselves as equally worthy and able as their male counterparts to carry out and achieve different goals.

For that purpose, it is necessary to devote more time to the discovery and study of different women in history. On the other hand, we could state that the presence of male figures has always been part of subjects such as Literature, History, Science, and Mathematics. Not in vain, in the last decades, the presence of crucial women in different textbooks has been highlighted and it has become a growing tendency in all the subjects that our children study at school. For instance, they can study the figures of Marie Curie and Frida Kahlo in Natural Science and Art, respectively.

Nowadays, it is essential to approach different female role models and their implications in order to deal with different topics such as intolerance, gender-based violence, and the growth of male chauvinism that develops throughout teenagers' growth. Furthermore, those attitudes can also increase when they are adults.

All these reasons lead us to conclude that our students need to be exposed to a great variety of activities in several subjects like English and Spanish language, Literature, Art, and History, among others. From our point of view, those activities should seek to promote tolerant and sympathetic attitudes and cooperative work thanks to the study of different women's masterpieces that have contributed to the development of the visibility and respect for the role of women in society.

This didactic proposal is born precisely with this purpose. Students need to know how many women have written masterpieces, have done different discoveries and have contributed to the development of our society.

1.1. Theoretical framework

If, as a starting point, we focused our attention on the eighteenth-century society, we could observe that there is evidence of women's activism in Europe in that period. Feminism, the social and political movement that strives for gender equality, originated in this century. For instance, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) is considered to be the founder of feminism. On the webpage called *Edurbie*, this previous statement is explained with the following words:

The primary focus of Wollstonecraft's literary career was to envision and propose a social and political order in which women were treated as rational, autonomous being capable of independence and virtue. For that reason, many feminists consider Mary Wollstonecraft to be a foundation figure in feminist thought. (*Mary Wollstonecraft: Liberation of Women - Free Essay Example*, 2021, September 21)

Wollstonecraft was a writer and philosopher. In 1792, she published a pamphlet entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which is still considered the first feminist work. It is one of the earliest works of feminist literature or philosophy. In it, Wollstonecraft responds to the educational and political theorists of the eighteenth century who wanted to deny women an education. She argues that women ought to have appropriate education in order to gain their position in society. She redefines that position, claiming that women are essential to the nation because they educate its children and because they should be "companions" to their husbands, rather than mere wives. Instead of viewing women as ornaments to society or property to be traded-in, Wollstonecraft maintains that they are human beings deserving the same fundamental rights as men have.

In other words, she explains that a woman needs to have the same education as a man, since both of them belong to the same society, must understand the different facts that are happening, take decisions and give opinions to improve the world around them.

In her pamphlet, some interesting and powerful quotes emphasize the role of women, as she attempts to make women realize that they have the same capacities and abilities as men. She intends to make women believe in themselves and regard themselves as different and equal members of society: "I do not wish [women] to have power over men; but over themselves" (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 133).

Many different important women followed Wollstonecraft's ideas and some of them will be taken into account at the time of introducing our selected texts to our students. Thus, several significant feminist women will be analysed throughout the next sections: Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Maria Montessori, Marie Curie, Alice Munro, Frida Kahlo, Simone de Beauvoir, and Ada Lovelace. With activities relating to this group, students will be able to consider a great variety of women who have struggled to reach gender equality. In other words, they will be given the opportunity to appreciate different essential women who have fought and achieved many goals in different periods and situations.

To begin with, it would be interesting to consider the figure of Geena Dunne Anderson. She was born in 1993. She is an Australian feminist writer and founder of Australian charity, The Cova Project. Nowadays, her figure is crucial and, in one of her famous quotes, she stated that “[f]eminism isn't about making women stronger, women are already strong, it's about changing the way the world perceives that strength” (March 8, 2021). This powerful statement went viral on International Women's Day 2014, after being quoted on websites like *Vogue UK*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Buzzfeed*, *HuffPost*, *Grazia*, *Marie Claire*, and many more.

In any scientific research on feminism, it could be observed that these kinds of movements seek changes on women's behalf, with a focus on the promotion of a conception of women as a group in our society. This promotion should attend their needs, values, and different perspectives related to their role and the position they hold in society. Consequently, a possible set of feminist features that characterise feminist leaders could be the following one:

- **Self-awareness:**

They are usually individuals who are open-minded and totally sympathetic. They value their strengths and encourage other women to become better versions of themselves.

- **Self-care and caring for others:**

They take care of themselves in order to be able to care for others. They need to feel good. Only in this way will they be able to contribute to the cause by taking actions in different fields in society.

- **Dismantling bias:**

Our society gives women certain privileges that they did not request. They will try to uncover different forms of discrimination in our current workplaces. Actually, those advantages make women feel inferior. For that reason, they will react, trying to change any unfair behaviours and treat the others as equals.

- **Inclusion:**

They will try to create inclusive and diverse teams in order to give the right answer to different barriers that are still present in our current era.

- **Sharing power:**

These leaders know the importance of working together to achieve their goals. They share some concerns and ideas seeking a common objective: having the same rights as men.

These four previous features of feminism belong to a series of ten principles that are considered significant to be a feminist leader. (*ActionAid's Ten Principles of Feminist Leadership, n.d.*).

Taking into account those features of feminist leaders who struggle to reach equality, four types of feminist movements that have emerged throughout history have to be taken into account, too. (*Kinds of Feminism, 2019*). They are the following ones:

a) **Radical Feminism.** It blames men for the exploitation of women. It is primarily men that have benefitted from the subordination of women. Women are regarded as an oppressed group. Some well-known radical feminists are Andrew Dworkin, Catharine Mackinnon and Valerie Solanas, among others.

This type of feminism began when a movement called “New Radical Women” reacted against male patriarchy. They did not tolerate that men ignored them in all significant fields of society. They felt unhappy and they did not tolerate being confined within their domestic sphere, but, instead, they wished to be part of society. Concerning this previous idea, Mary Daly expressed the following words:

The fact is that we live in a profoundly anti-female society, a misogynistic “civilization” in which men collectively victimize women, attacking us as personifications of their own paranoid fears, as The Enemy. Within this society it is men who rape, who sap women’s energy, who deny women economic and political power. (2017, p. 157)

b) **Marxist feminism.** In this movement, capitalism, rather than patriarchy, is the principal source of women's oppression and capitalists are the main beneficiaries. This movement fosters that patriarchy begins in the family nucleus, where men rule.

c) **Liberal feminism.** Within this movement, it is believed that nobody benefits from existing inequalities: both men and women are harmed. The explanation for gender inequality lies not so much in structures and institutions of society, but in its culture and values. Some remarkable writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), among others, belong to this movement.

d) **Difference feminism/ Postmodern feminism.** They do not see women as a single homogenous group. They had been criticised by preceding feminist theory for claiming a "false universality" (white, western heterosexual, middle class). Helen Cixous (1937), Luna Irigaray (1930), and Julia Kristeva (1941) are some remarkable figures from this movement.

Nowadays, it seems that equality between women and men does exist, although this is proved especially in the educational framework. However, things are different at the time of analysing the labour framework. Indeed, sometimes, even if many women study difficult subjects or work hard, they find difficulties in achieving a superior position in some concrete jobs. For that reason and a few others, the feminist position should be introduced at school, in class. From our point of view, girls and boys should know how many different women have struggled against those old beliefs according to which men were considered more important than women. Furthermore, this pattern is sometimes reflected in different social areas. For that reason, we need to spread new ideas in our teenagers with regard to their behaviour towards the other sex. They should be aware of equality and should fight against archaizing ideas about the inferiority of women.

Teaching feminism at school would let students become more aware of some issues related to gender. It will give them the information and ability to fight back against any kind of gender-based discrimination they could witness.

By having a look into secondary education books, and in particular, at Literature, History, and Philosophy books, we could retrace a little female presence in these resources. From our perspective, women should be present in those books, since students need to know how women's visibility developed throughout history.

More often than not, however, the opposite occurs. In 1995, Sandra Acker, who is currently a Professor in Emerita in the Department of Social Justice Education,

University of Toronto, investigated how there could be an intention of erasing women in teaching. This fact could be considered absolutely surprising and call our attention, but if we observed different textbooks, we could find a confirmation. Curiously though, textbooks seem to constitute a patriarchal system where women are less present than men. Thus, many sexist stereotypes will remain unless some patterns change. For instance, researching about the female presence in textbooks, the next statement is mentioned:

Male characters are much more presented than females in all textbooks. What is more, in all textbooks males present more active and females present quiet, socially approved roles. (*Gender Stereotype Analysis of The Textbooks for Young Learners, 2015*).

On the other hand, López Navajas provided the scientific community with further research on the topic with her Doctoral Dissertation *Las mujeres que nos faltan. Análisis de la ausencia de mujeres en los manuales escolares* (2016). In this Ph.D. dissertation, the scholar analysed how certain didactic resources do not seem to contribute to the visibility of women since they are excluded from their contents. Instead, they impede both women's and men's equal development.

In short, by considering several textbooks, we can verify how those patterns are repeated. There is a great presence of male and female figures, but, on the other hand, their roles are clearly limited. Thus, the article titled "Gender Representation in EFL textbooks in Basic Education in Mexico" (2021) explains that there is an equitable representation of male and female characters in textbooks which is not reflected in the work labour. To illustrate this idea, it could be said that women appear as nurses and men as policemen.

To put it in a nutshell, textbooks should be updated with regard to their contents, as they currently help to reinforce gender as a social division, and perpetuate inequalities between men and women. Since not many of them provide the students with a great number of significant resources where the role of women is emphasized, different teachers can employ different activities taken from different websites. When doing this, women could be introduced as remarkable figures committed to the society they belonged to.

How could teachers work and improve relations among boys and girls who are developing their personalities and affective relations with the other sex? A possible

answer could be related to the fact that students tend to copy their teachers' attitudes, behaviours, and patterns, since teenagers consider them role models to be followed. Teachers and students need to work in a positive and relaxed environment where they feel free to cooperate and explain their ideas. Of course, they can be judged, but teachers should try to make them think about which attitudes are appropriate and should be followed.

This research could be positive and useful, because teachers involved would try to work on different important female figures to arise their learners' curiosity and interest in how different female figures have struggled to reach their different goals. Of course, those first women who started to appear wanted to achieve gender equality. They wanted to have the same rights and be part of our society. They wished to belong to different spheres, not only the domestic one. Some decades ago, they felt totally excluded from society since they needed to receive men's approval for taking action. That situation was unfair and some women decided to pursue different actions to change them.

In this research, not only female writers will be introduced to girls and boys students, but also different significant women from different areas. We consider that our learners need to be aware of how different women from different social status have struggled to change their history achieving an important position on their own. It will help to enhance comparison among students, as they will reflect and question those situations in class.

In other words, teachers will have the opportunity to introduce different female figures, give some pieces of advice and help to create a relaxed atmosphere where different resources could be introduced and analysed without disrespectful commentaries and confrontations.

As far as this topic is concerned, the important female figures that will be presented in class are the following ones: Frida Kahlo, Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë (who were highly creative ones), Mary Wollstonecraft, Ada Lovelace and Marie Curie (who were immense fighters), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (who wanted to explain another view in history), Simone de Beauvoir, Alice Munro and Maria Montessori (who were attracted to reflect and think about different facts).

2. LITERARY REVIEW

On the webpage *Britannica*, we can read this statement: "Aphra Behn was the first English woman to earn her living solely by her pen". (Todd.J, 2017.)

Related to this idea, we could mention the quote taken from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* that states: "All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn [...] for it was she who earned them the right to speak them" (Woolf, 1929).

Aphra Behn was born in 1640, in Canterbury (England) and died in 1689. She was a crucial playwright, prose writer, poet, and translator from the Restoration Era. As stated, she was one of the first women who earned a living thanks to her writing. She helped to overcome some cultural barriers and served as a model for many women writers.

Curiously enough, very few events are known about Behn's life. One of her masterpieces is entitled *Oroonoko* (1688), which deals with slavery. Probably, she moved to that place, where she met a black slave who became the source of inspiration for this novel. Her writing depicts the slaves' horrible life. After that, she came back to England and started to work for the King's Company, where many of her works were published in an anonymous way.

With regard to an eighteenth-century figure, we can mention Mary Wollstonecraft. She was born in 1759 and died in 1797. She was a revolutionist thinker who sought to become "the first of a new genus, a new kind of woman" (Wollstonecraft, n. d.).

During that age, women lacked education, mainly because men did not let them study. It allowed men and women to question the role of women in our society. Wollstonecraft helped to establish the basis of the feminist movement.

A bit further ahead, we could refer to some writers from the Victorian Age. They are Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, and Jane Austen, among others. In this period of history, many women were professional writers and wanted to hold a position among men in the literary world. One of their strategies was to use male pseudonyms in order to be recognised and admitted as authors.

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816 and died in 1855. She is the author of the novel entitled *Jane Eyre*. She used the pseudonym "Currer Bell", which gave her male identity to succeed when she was writing actively. This novel is important because it portrays the inner life of a woman who fights against her natural desires and social condition. She wrote this novel in the first person, and she addressed it to the reader, creating great expectations. Jane was an unconventional heroine, an independent and self-reliant woman who overcomes both adversity and societal norms. Those current topics helped many

women feel identified and started to express their opinions and likes in ordinary life. It resulted in many different men's opinions about the role of women in society.

A crucial quote from Charlotte Brontë that invites us to reflect on her role in the world of letters is the following one:

To you I am neither man nor woman. I come before you as an author only. It is the sole standard by which you have a right to judge me—the sole ground on which I accept your judgment. (Brontë, 1847).

On the other hand, Emily Brontë, who also used a pseudonym, “Ellis Bell” wrote just one novel called *Wuthering Heights* (1847). It was published after *Jane Eyre* became a best seller, but it received negative feedback. Many critics regarded this novel as too violent and aggressive with some brutal characters who were not passionate. Definitely, it was tagged as an amoral story. It was not the typical Victorian novel. The critics considered Ellis Bell cruel, insane and savage at the time of writing. When she died, her sister Charlotte Brontë added a preface to this novel revealing the identity of its writer. Some years later, *Wuthering Heights* was considered one of the most important novels in English Literature.

In this period, the figure of Jane Austen cannot be forgotten. She was a female writer. She was born in 1775 and died in 1817. She wrote some masterpieces such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Emma* (1815) and *Persuasion* (1818) among others.

Finally, Virginia Woolf and Doris Lessing are two of the most brilliant female writers of the twentieth century. Virginia Woolf was born in 1882 and died in 1941. She is known as one of the most innovative writers of the twenty century as she employed the stream of consciousness narrative mode¹ to emphasize the psychological aspects of her characters. She wrote some extensive novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), and *A Room of One's Own* (1929), where we can appreciate the next quote: “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is

¹ “Stream of consciousness is a style or technique of writing that tries to capture the natural flow of a character's extended thought process, often by incorporating sensory impressions, incomplete ideas, unusual syntax, and rough grammar”. (*Stream of Consciousness - Definition and Examples | LitCharts*, 2017)

to write fiction” (Woolf, 1973, p. 6). This quote invites us to consider the battles that had to face each of those previous women writers to write or be considered legitimate authors.

Woolf wrote in a difficult historical period for women, as the difference between public and private sphere was quite evident. The male gender was the dominant role who ruled that society. On the other hand, women had a passive function, as they belonged to the domestic sphere. In other words, they were confined to the domestic circle and they were devoted to all the different household chores. Women were considered decorative objects who had to look after their husbands and provide them with a comfortable and sweet home. Woolf’s novels enhanced the promotion of the feminist movement and focused on supporting women’s access to the professional world.

Last but not least, we will mention Doris Lessing, whose figure is symbolic. She was born in 1919 and died in 2013. She was a significant British novelist who wrote some crucial novels such as *The Grass is Singing* (1950), a sequence of five novels called *Children of Violence* (1952-1969), *The Golden Notebook* (1962), and *The Good Terrorist* (1985), among others.

Lessing wrote about different issues such as racism, communism, and feminism. She tried to show the different social injustices that existed in that period. Her female characters struggled against their conventional roles and the division between their emotional and intellectual needs. In an interview conducted in 2001, Lessing stated the following idea:

And this is a disease of the mind, the way I see it. Because in actual fact, men and women have much more in common than they are separate. (Lessing, 2001).

What Lessing attempted to claim through these words could be that men and women are very similar, but our society and, concretely, male citizens create and underline the differences between both sexes due to differences in education and upbringing.

To end with, it is common knowledge that the presence of major female writers is more extensive, but we have made reference to some of the most important ones in the history of female writers. All these authors mentioned previously emphasised another point of view on the role of women in helping to consolidate a new image according to which women think, choose, take decisions and struggle in order to have the same rights as men own by simple virtue of being men.

Conversely, women were already born confined to their private sphere: the house seemed to be the only appropriate place in which they had to grow up following the appropriate rules created by men, who, in turn, were able to exclude them from education to keep their social status and emotional concerns.

3. METHODOLOGY

After having introduced some major women writers, we will now focus on the didactic proposal addressed to the fourth year of Secondary Education, although it could be adapted to students of the third year of Secondary Education if their level allowed to.

The proposal consists in bringing different crucial female writers or female figures from other spheres to the English class, then introducing several texts from different novels or short stories to our students and giving them the opportunity to express their ideas and feelings.

For the activity to be successful, all the excerpts provided will be built around carefully graded English, and an extensive vocabulary bank will make their work easier and will help them develop their confidence in the language. Apart from that, they will not always be exposed to the reading skill firstly, but they will be able to start working on other skills in order to add variety to the English class.

As we have suggested in previous pages, nowadays, our students seem to be exposed to the knowledge of different significant women only on the Woman's Day. It is our purpose to widen that exposure by carrying out activities that deal with women explaining how they feel, tasks which, in turn, can widen our learners' attitudes toward the role of women. It is a fact that many male teenagers do need to read and understand how different women felt during the social situation that they endured. Students will have the opportunity to delve into different women writers and their intentions in the conventional society.

We will start from the eighteenth century to our current era. In each unit, a different didactic task will be proposed and the teacher will adapt it to their students' interests and needs. These didactic units could be developed in more or less sessions depending exclusively on the teacher's criterium: he or she will decide the exact time devoted to each task.

In relation to the creation of those different didactic units, we have taken into account different objectives, contents, approaches, learning styles, evaluation criteria, and sequencing of activities that are explained below.

3.1 Learning methods and strategies

Firstly, we will base our tasks and activities on some specific learning methods and strategies. The use of these strategies will let our students achieve integral education where they could appreciate the evolution of different significant women throughout history.

In this section, we will first focus on the Feminist Pedagogy, with regard to our students. On a website called *Jstor*, where many articles about different concepts can be analysed, we can read the following definition of “Feminist Pedagogy”:

Feminist pedagogy is a theory about the teaching/learning process that guides our choice of classroom practices by providing criteria to evaluate specific educational strategies and techniques in terms of the desired course goals or outcomes. These evaluative criteria include the extent to which a community of learners is empowered to act responsibly one another and the subject matter and to apply that learning to social action. (Shrewsbury, 1987, p. 6)

In other words, feminist pedagogy focuses on giving visibility to how different social movements have emerged to struggle and achieve the equality of social rights. For that reason, it could be interesting and appealing to emphasize such important topics in our classes.

3.1.1 Cooperative learning

Cooperative Learning consists on working on small groups where each member of the group contributes with his/her ideas. Of course, the group’s success depends on their work as a group. (*Cooperative Learning*, 2018).

From our point of view, this kind of learning is necessary for the topic that we want to introduce. We will give our learners the opportunity to work in small groups or in boy-girl pairs, when possible. This arrangement of the class is, in our eyes, essential, since the aim is to promote respectful and cooperative attitudes where the different members of a group work together in order to achieve a common goal. In this way, as teachers, we are also avoiding discrimination.

In this kind of learning, they should also learn to listen to and value different opinions. On the other hand, there are two more kinds of learning which are competitive

and individual one, respectively. In these two types of learning, we evaluate our pupils' efforts to achieve their highest level.

All these types of learning mentioned previously will be taken into account in the development of the different didactic units, where students will be exposed to different kinds of activities. In other words, depending on the activity, they will have to work with one or another type of learning.

Some positive aspects of working in small groups, are the following ones:

- Listening to and respecting others' ideas.
- Thinking about one problem in a variety of ways.
- Getting to a deeper level of understanding by explaining a perspective and discussing it with folks with different perspectives.
- Dividing up tasks and delegating responsibilities.
- Sharing knowledge and abilities to get a better hold on a problem than they could solve individually.

3.1.2. Individual work

Individual work involves working independently. This type of work helps you to concentrate on what you really need. (*Teamwork vs Individual Work: Definitions and 8 Key Differences, 2021*)

When teachers propose students to work in an autonomous way, we normally wish to observe how they manage something in particular. This type of activity is highly positive, as they have the opportunity to show how they organize their work, what communicative competence level they have, and what kind of intelligence they have.

Here, we could consider the figure of Howard Gardner. He is a crucial psychologist in the sphere of education. He developed the theory of multiple intelligences. In this theory, he explains that there are nine different ways of processing information: Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, and Naturalist. The theory of multiple intelligences was first proposed by Howard Gardner in his 1983 book *Frames of Mind*, where he broadens the definition of intelligence and outlines several distinct types of intellectual competencies. At school, we usually develop and work on Linguistic and Mathematical/Logical intelligence, respectively.

Relating to how our activity would be worked on, if in an individual way or in a small group, teachers should be aware of what students have worked more or have improved their communicative competence by observing their collaboration and individual effort in class.

Some of the advantages of working in an autonomous way could be the following ones:

- Students gain independence to think things through on their own.
- They improve confidence in working through a problem.
- They work at their own level, rather than having to adapt to suit their group members.
- They gain creativity and effective thinking processes that can apply to problem solving, across a range of subjects and types of issues.

3.1.3. Emotional education

“*Emotional education*” could be defined as an educational process which is based on the comprehension of the development of emotions in human beings in order to achieve personal and social well-being in society. (Bisquerra & Pérez, 2012).

In our proposal, the teacher will introduce different tasks to students with the aim of calling their attention and attracting their interest in the history of women in literature. In this way, they will have an active role as they will investigate, explain, value, and express their opinions about different passages from different novels. The goal is that they get to know and reflect on women who have struggled for their social rights, how they dared to speak out and described their emotions.

Some activities that will help our students to reflect and influence their opinions include debates and role plays. Debates will be proposed to the class and teachers will try to engage students in their development. While working on these types of activities, they are expected to be highly motivated and to be willing to collaborate. They are expected to have an active role, as they will have to defend a concrete view. As a result, they will look for information and specific data to justify their ideas.

On the other hand, role plays are activities that let students play the role of a different person, man, or woman in a given situation. These roles can be played in small groups in class or in the assembly hall. While students play those roles, they become aware of the situation or of the different attitudes and opinions that exist in society. For

instance, when a boy performs the character of a dominant male figure, he can probably feel uncomfortable because he cannot understand how some men behaved in a certain way.

Finally, it cannot be forgotten that diversity in the class is a fact and not all students are the same. Some of them may not be willing to participate in these types of activities due to their personality or level of linguistic competence. For instance, some students can be introvert, timid and, for that reason, they may feel anxiety if they are invited to take part and speak in public. To tackle this circumstance, teachers should give them the possibility of cooperating in another way, like, for example, being the investigators of the group or organising the work to the rest of classmates.

Definitively, as teachers, we should propose different activities to the class, but they have to be related to respectful attitudes towards women that helped to develop tolerant, respectful, and positive attitudes.

To conclude this section, it could be emphasized that this didactic proposal invites students to express their opinions about all these controversial topics that will be introduced to them. Students need to clarify and order their ideas to understand and confront with the current society.

Table 1

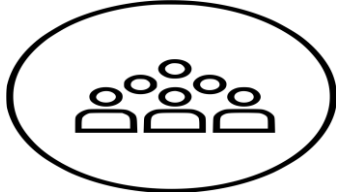


COOPERATIVE LEARNING	INDIVIDUAL WORK	EMOTIONAL EDUCATION
		

Table 1. Different types of learning

4. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

In this section, a possible and original didactic proposal will be introduced. As we have already stated, its aim is that pupils in Secondary Education have the opportunity to study some crucial female English literary women who helped to raise women’s voice in a

society where they were invisible. Our tasks will not forget the female presence in spheres other than literature that also deserve major interest.

For the implementation of the practice, it would be advisable that English teachers involved in this project created a Padlet noticeboard where they could upload the different texts and resources that they wish to employ.

Firstly, some basic ideas related to the introduction of the didactic proposal will be explained. Secondly, the different eleven tasks will be described. Obviously, those eleven activities will match the eleven different entries that will be presented on the Padlet platform.

4.1 Objectives of this Didactic Proposal

The objectives of this research are:

I. To make students aware of how different remarkable women have tried to shed light on the situation of women throughout history, when they felt totally inferior to men and were confined to their private life, household chores, and their children's upbringing.

II. To invite students to express how they feel about this fact and explain why the feminist movement has been extremely essential at the time of improving the role of women in our society.

III. To present different and appealing texts where feminist figures show and analyse values like respect, tolerance, and equality. All these topics will make students reflect deeply on what their current relationship with the other sex is. Both of them, girls and boys, will have the opportunity to think about their behaviour in this sense.

IV. To let students investigate on different topics that will be proposed to them. Firstly, this type of task will aim to encourage and develop their individual work, and, secondly, it will give them the chance to work in groups, carrying out different debates and role plays where they will be able to express their ideas and concerns about this topic.

As stated in previous pages, it is important for us to emphasize the grim reality that gender-based violence or male chauvinist attitudes and behaviours are still present in our society. These behaviours must be eradicated. For that reason, we consider these types of tasks are highly remarkable, as they help to contemplate different roles in both sexes and individuals. We should teach our students to be tolerant and sympathetic to their classmates regardless their sex or social condition.

4.2. Possible Contextualisation: Sample

As it has been mentioned previously, this didactic proposal is addressed to students in the fourth year of Secondary education, but it may be adapted to students in the third year of Secondary education if their level allows to.

Since this proposal has never been implemented, what we offer hereafter is a description of a possible and ideal contextualisation which may function as an orientation to teachers interested in the project.

The high school might be comprised of three classes per cycle and years of Secondary Education. This high school might be a public school, private or concerted school where students would belong to the middle and low social classes. Concerning its distribution, the high school would have an assembly hall —ideal for performances, theatre plays as well as for any other extracurricular activities—, a computer room and a multimedia room with a TV set and audio equipment. In addition, the library would have a large number of graded readers from different crucial novels written by female authors from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dictionaries, maps, and other materials highly beneficial for our activity.

Relating to the class context, there would be twenty-six students, approximately. There is a chance that there are more girls than boys, but the class atmosphere should be appropriate for all of them to be exposed to a varied kind of activities.

The ideal level of these students could be intermediate, since they have been exposed to English since they were three years old. In addition, they usually fancy learning English, since they have had great contact with new technologies, and these ones are normally programmed in English.

Finally, they would receive 4 hours of English per week and in each didactic unit, and, consequently, they would devote several sections to focus on this didactic proposal. The average of sessions should vary depending on how each didactic task has been designed, but it could also be modified according to students' interests and collaboration.

4.3 Methodological analysis

Our didactic proposal is initially conceived for students in the fourth year of Secondary Education, although it could also be adapted to students in the third year of Secondary education if they show the appropriate level to read and understand the different contents. These contents should be covered by employing the use of the possible Padlet noticeboard that will have been previously created by the teacher. As a possible example, the teacher

should create a similar Padlet to the one called “*Female empowerment HECMA*”, which could have been created to work different controversial ideas with students of Secondary Education.

In the area of English, activities related to the study of texts will be employed to help our class become familiar with women’s empowerment. These activities will be presented on the Padlet noticeboard and will be used in several sessions during each didactic unit. Furthermore, these activities will be generally approached twice or three times each month. Undoubtedly, students will be the actual protagonists, since they will use this noticeboard to explain their feelings, concerns, and opinions about different topics. In fact, they will also analyse the different activities and tasks of the research proposed.

In this visual noticeboard, they will approach different figures of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, we will introduce some women writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Frida Kahlo, Marie Curie, Maria Montessori, Ada Lovelace, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Alice Munro, and Simone de Beauvoir.

Thanks to our visual tool, students could investigate how some women struggled to acquire their current rights in the past and know these historical figures’ concerns and feelings in past decades. As a matter of fact, they will be allowed to express their opinions and attitudes as soon as they identify difficult situations experienced by those female authors.

The texts uploaded on this platform will allow our students to establish connections between the ideas they have and the situations that those women endured. They will observe, accordingly, how those crucial women managed to find right paths to struggle against that rigid patriarchal system.

Returning to the Padlet board, each entry will introduce a different crucial woman through the explanation of some significant details about her life. Secondly, a text extracted from one of her most important and known novels from graded readers with a bank of words will usually be presented in order to analyse it. On the other hand, if the female figure introduced to our students belongs to a different discipline, different articles or videos will also be exposed as a starting point. Finally, they will have to complete different activities.

Students will be encouraged to improve their communicative competence using different skills as a starting point. Later, they will be invited to express their opinions and beliefs about the topic proposed to their classmates in small groups.

Needless to say, students will also be able to write their individual feedback and contrasting opinions on this online resource, since they will be able to read all the previous commentaries and add their own. On the other hand, they will also be able to access some different links such as videos, websites, and songs, among others.

4.4 Timing

This didactic proposal might be considered an escape route where our students will delve into appealing topics.

With regard to timing, these activities will be developed all the school year long. In the first term, students will work on three different tasks. Thus, they will learn about different female authors. On the contrary, in the second term, they will focus on four significant female artists from other disciplines or domains. Finally, in the third term, they will reflect on the role of other three female writers to draw conclusions.

Therefore, students will work on these proposed activities four times per month, approximately. At the end of each unit, students will devote several sessions to this didactic proposal about the female empowerment, where they will reflect on different controversial topics that seem to be interesting for them.

4.5 Development

In this section, the main purpose will be to let the students know how the different didactic tasks will be faced in each of the didactic units. Firstly, each didactic unit will be introduced. Secondly, the students' goals will be clarified. Next, the emphasis will be put on how the different activities will be developed, and, finally, we will let our students know how they will be evaluated through some concrete evaluation criteria.

Table 2 shows the way in which the different didactic tasks will be introduced.

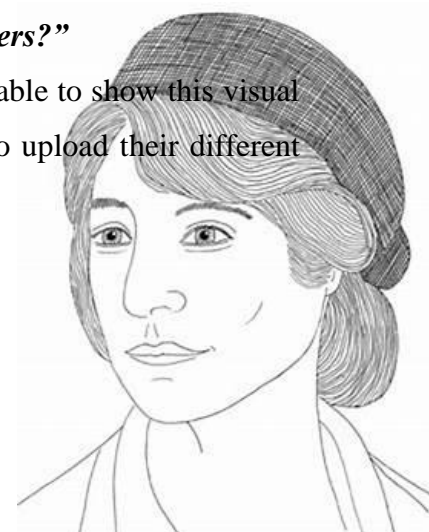
Table 2

FIRST TERM	Didactic Task N.1: “Do you know any of these women writers?”	Didactic Task N.2: “I have a date with Mr. Darcy”	Didactic Task N.3: “Mr. Rochester, have you got any secret which I need to know about your life?”	
Timing Crucial female figures in literature	2 SESSIONS Mary Wollstonecraft	1 SESSION Jane Austen	2 SESSIONS Charlotte Brontë	
SECOND TERM	Didactic Task N.4: “I’d like to meet... Frida Kahlo”	Didactic Task N.5: “All about Mary Curie”.	Didactic Task N.6: “The Decalogue of Maria Montessori”.	Didactic Task N.7: “Ada Lovelace ‘Poet of Science’”.
Timing Important female figures in different spheres.	2 SESSIONS Frida Kahlo	2 SESSIONS Marie Curie	2 SESSIONS Maria Montessori	4 SESSIONS Ada Lovelace
THIRD TERM	Didactic Task N.8: “We should all be feminists”.	Didactic Task N.9: “The roles of men and women in our society”.	Didactic Task N.10: “What is gender?”	Didactic Task N.11: “Let’s go to check our new knowledge”
Timing Crucial female figures in the literature	3SESSIONS Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	4SESSIONS Alice Munro	3 SESSIONS Simone de Beauvoir	3 SESSIONS Check crucial female figures in history.

Table 2. Didactic proposal about the female empowerment in history

4.5.1 Didactic task n.1: “Do you know any of these women writers?”

In this first didactic unit, teachers will explain how they will be able to show this visual noticeboard to students and how they will be able to manage to upload their different answers and contributions.



4.5.1.1 Objectives

Following initial contacts, the main goal of the first task is that students have the opportunity to know and think about how different female authors employed their writing. They probably wanted to convey how women were excluded from any society and public dimension and how, instead, they belonged to the domestic sphere. In particular, they also explained their feelings and concerns.

Students will work on these objectives:

- To promote the interest in reading and in literature.
- To stimulate reflective and critical thinking.
- To be able to understand how the current social situation was/has been created.
- To develop and improve their communicative competence by working on the four skills (Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing).
- To foster the use of interactive resources.

4.5.1.2 Development of the first task

Firstly, the teacher will upload several questions to catch students' attention in this kind of activity. Then, the different answers will be provided orally in class. Next, the first female author, Mary Wollstonecraft, will be introduced and students will have to look for specific information about her. Finally, a small piece of the text from *Vindication of Rights of Woman* will be shown on the noticeboard with a bank of words to achieve better comprehension. Thus, students will be able to understand the meaning of this text. Finally, students will be asked to express their opinions about it and answer questions such as:

- What do you think about this text?
- What feelings does the text convey to you?
- Why do you believe that the female author describes her concerns?

As soon as they answer those questions, they will be expected to write some contributions on the Padlet noticeboard.

4.5.1.3 Evaluation

To evaluate this task, the teacher should consider students' collaboration and effort. All the skills will be evaluated, but oral and reading skills will have greater weight in mark because they will be considered crucial in this first initial contact.

4.5.2. Didactic Task N.2: “I have a date with Mr. Darcy”

This task will be developed in didactic unit n.2. In this task, students will read a short description of Mr. Darcy, who is one of the main characters in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen.



4.5.2.1. Objectives

In this task, students will work on two different activities, they will make an effort to achieve the following goals:

- To read Mr. Darcy’s description and understand the main idea of the text.
- Using a list of specific words that the teacher will have previously provided, to explain what his behaviour towards women is like.
- Using a list of useful expressions that the teacher will have previously provided, to have a brief debate on how they believe that men and women should show their feelings towards the other sex.
- To reinforce intensive and extensive reading skills.

4.5.2.2. Development of this second task

As a follow-up, the students will have to explain how they imagine Mr. Darcy’s personality. Of course, as previously clarified, they will work using a model with a list of useful phrases and words. Thus, they will reinforce and improve their vocabulary. Later, they will read a small text from a graded reader of this crucial novel titled *Pride and Prejudice*.

While reading this brief passage, they will have the opportunity to consider how parents arranged their daughters’ marriages in that period. In other words, the woman needed to be married to a man who was chosen by her parents. That was the way in which she could achieve a major status and a good reputation. Austen depicts this patriarchal supremacy in the following passage:

Mrs Bennet was determined* to find husbands for her daughters for a very good reason. Mr Bennet wasn’t a rich man. He had a very fine house, but a very small income*. And there was one big problem; Mr and Mrs Bennet had no sons. When Mr Bennet died, the house and the estate would go to a cousin and not to the Bennet girls. Mrs Bennet’s family wasn’t a rich one, so they couldn’t help. She had a sister, Mrs Phillips, who lived in Meryton and a brother, Mr Gardiner, who worked in London. Meryton was about a mile away from Longbourn where the

Bennet family lived, so the girls often walked there to visit their aunt. Kitty and Lydia Bennet, however, began to visit Meryton much more often, now that the militia were there. (P. 16)

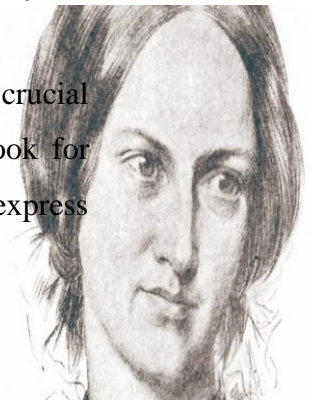
The use of these easy lines could be interesting since they give us some clues about what was crucial in that period of history. Making use of them, teachers could also start a discussion about the idea of marriage.

4.5.2.3. Evaluation

To evaluate this task, teachers will consider how students have used the different resources that were offered to them. In other words, students will have to use in their different contributions the list of expressions given. Without any doubt, they will be allowed to make some mistakes, but, as teachers, we will pay attention to their effort. Thus, they will learn the correct use of these resources thanks to our help.

4.5.3. Didactic task N.3: “Mr. Rochester, have you got any secret about your life which I need to know?”

Firstly, students will discover why Charlotte Brontë is considered a crucial female author from the eighteenth century. Secondly, students will look for information about her masterpiece, *Jane Eyre*, and, finally, they will express their opinion about her attitude toward the other sex.



4.5.3.1 Objectives

In task n. 3, students will focus on the following objectives:

- To be able to search for specific information about this female author.
- To write a small composition about why she was a significant writer.
- To compare the previous female attitude to men with the current one.
- To appreciate tolerant and respectful attitudes toward their classmates.
- To make a positive effort to improve their communicative competence.

4.5.3.2. *Development of this third task*

In the first activity, students will work in small groups. Each group will be given a small envelope with some facts about Charlotte Brontë's biography. Then, they will have to investigate what details are true and which of them are false. Of course, they will have to check those false statements. Finally, they will write a small composition about her life. Since each group will have different information, they will share the new information to order later all those details about Charlotte Brontë's life.

Secondly, students will work on an activity in which they will have to fill in a brief text to discover why Mr. Rochester's wife is hidden in a room. Later, they will discuss if the imprisonment of Mr. Rochester's wife was justified.

4.5.3.3. *Evaluation*

To assess this task, the teacher should contemplate the following evaluation criteria:

- Testing if students have made an effort to learn new words and expressions, along with their contributions in class.
- Observing if students' communicative competence has improved.
- Showing respectful attitudes when their classmates are explaining their opinions, starting from respecting their turns when speaking.

The section in which they approach female authors from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries comes to an end. However, a set of female figures from different working sections is included below.

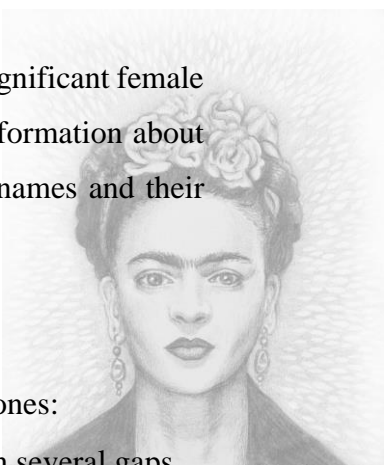
4.5.4. *Didactic task N.4: "I'd like to meet... Frida Kahlo"*

In the second term, this didactic proposal consists of showing different significant female figures from different disciplines. Students will study and learn new information about some crucial women. In all probability, students will only know their names and their professions.

4.5.4.1. *Objectives*

In this activity, the objectives that should be achieved are the following ones:

- To be able to extract information from a Podcast in order to fill in several gaps.
- To be able to appreciate Frida Kahlo's art.
- To express their opinions about her pictures, and convey their emotions at the time of contemplating them.



- To paint a picture with the aim of imitating Kahlo’s works of art.

4.5.4.2. *Development of the task*

Everyone is acquainted nowadays with Frida Kahlo. First of all, she is recognised as an artist. But, what would we expect from her? In order to understand this, our class will start listening to a Podcast in which students will get in touch with several individuals explaining whom they would like to meet and why. Thus, they will establish the first contact with the figure of Frida Kahlo. While they are listening to the Podcast, they will have to fill in several gaps to improve their listening skill. Afterwards, they will have to focus on a comprehension activity in which they will have to choose the right option. Then, some students will explain whom they would like to meet and why.

Through this activity, they will get to know better their classmates and they will be able to appreciate their work since they will witness their slide presentations. Next, they will have the opportunity to consider their pictures as inspiration to create their own work of art. Thirdly, they will have to explain the reasons why they have painted those pictures and give their opinions about what Kahlo’s pictures mean to them.

In conclusion, they will reflect even more on her life by watching a video ²about her figure.

4.5.4.3. *Evaluation*

To evaluate this task, teachers will assess students’ effort and collaboration in the different activities proposed. Naturally, teachers wish that students collaborate in a positive manner since this proposal is different and it is related to the subject of art.

In addition to this, other objectives should also be achieved:

- To extract information from a Podcast, improving their listening skill.
- To paint a picture imitating a work of art.
- To express their opinion about what those paintings mean to them.

4.5.5. *Didactic Task N.5: “All about Marie Curie”*

“All about Marie Curie” is a set of activities where students will discover crucial facts about this scientist’s life and her contributions to society. Curie belonged to the fields of

² “Frida Kahlo Biography Rap Song for Students with Character Traits Worksheets.” *W*www.youtube.com, www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2B37PP076I.



Physics and Chemistry. Previously, both sciences were considered mainly restricted to men and women were excluded, but Curie made a huge discovery.

4.5.5.1. Objectives

In this task, students will consider the following objectives:

- To overcome several obstacles in the “All about Marie Curie Escape Room” activity.
- To be able to work in small groups and develop tolerant, respectful, and sympathetic attitudes.
- To achieve the final stage, where they will have to demonstrate all that they have learned.

4.5.5.2 Development of the task

In this interesting task called “*All about Marie Curie*”, students will have to engage in a list of tasks to reach the final phase. This task consists of several phases where they will have to look for information about chemistry and physics. In other words, they will solve several riddles in each stage. Therefore, there are several levels to achieve.

This activity is usually attractive for students since it lets them learn new information in an innovative way.

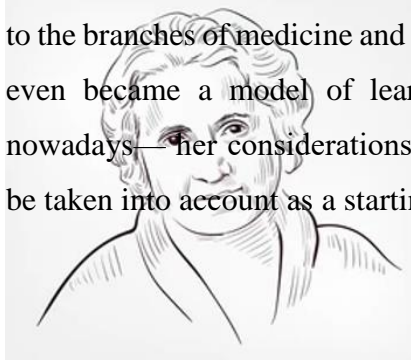
4.5.5.3 Evaluation

To evaluate this task, the teacher will consider the following points:

- Students will work in groups to overcome this challenge.
- Students will show respectful attitudes to their classmates.
- Students will search for information through a rational attitude towards each step given.
- Students will complete a brief test about the figure of Marie Curie.

4.5.6 Didactic Task N.6: “*The Decalogue of Maria Montessori*”

In this didactic task, the figure of Maria Montessori will be studied. This woman belongs to the branches of medicine and pedagogy. She is considered a crucial figure and her work even became a model of learning, since many women followed—and still do it nowadays—her considerations about children’s upbringing. Several of her quotes will be taken into account as a starting point.



4.5.6.1. Objectives

In this task, students will cooperate on the following objectives:

- To watch a short video about this woman and complete a brief questionnaire about her.
- To read and extract information about several quotes regarding the upbringing of children.
- To give their opinions about how they believe children should be raised.
- To come to a conclusion about what principles teachers should follow at the time of teaching in all the subjects.

4.5.6.2. Development of the task

This task will consist of two sessions. In the first session, they will watch a video about this relevant woman coming from the field of pedagogy and will look for information in order to answer several questions. In addition, they will also learn what pedagogy is. By means of this initial proposal, they will be given the opportunity to think about how children should be instructed.

Since they sometimes witness inappropriate behaviours from some classmates, in this task teachers will focus on some topics such as the following ones:

- What type of behaviour would be appropriate in class?
- How would you define education?
- How do you believe that children should be raised?

In the second session, they will develop their digital competence since they will write several lines explaining their opinions about different quotes from Maria Montessori. One of the quotes that they will have to analyse will be the following one: “The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.” (Montessori, n.d.).

4.5.6.3. Evaluation

To evaluate this didactic task, the teacher will take into consideration the following aims:

- Students should be able to answer to several questions about upbringing. In order to do that, they should follow a suggested model which will help them to expand their vocabulary and improve their syntax.

- Students should collaborate with a positive attitude to the activity proposed.
- Students should speak in English in class and express their opinions about upbringing using short sentences. Thanks to their oral interventions, teachers will be able to consider their different points of view.

4.5.7. Didactic Task N.7. “Ada Lovelace, ‘Poet of Science’”

In this task, pupils will become acquainted with the figure of Ada Lovelace. They will probably not know who she was. As it is widely known, she was an English mathematician who created a program for a digital computer. She has been called ‘the first computer programmer’.



The early programming language Ada was named for her, and the second Tuesday in October has become Ada Lovelace Day, on which the contributions of women to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are honoured.
 ((Ada Lovelace / Biography, Computer, & Facts/ Britannica, n.d)

4.5.7.1. Objectives

In this task, students will try and accomplish the following objectives:

- To know new concepts and check different ideas acquired in this second block through a *Kahoot* activity.
- To demonstrate all the different structures that students have learned, writing a brief text about all these crucial women.
- To prepare a brief presentation about other women that they also consider important in the history of our current society.

4.5.7.2. Development of the task

This task will consist of four different sessions where students will learn who Ada Lovelace was and check their knowledge about the previous famous women studied.

As a starting point, teachers will use the book titled *Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science: The First Computer Programmer*, where they will read a brief text about this significant woman and what she discovered. After that, the teacher will explain to them Ada’s first experience, a paper code, and will make students engage in a coding activity on paper, as well.

In the second task, the teacher will surprise them with an appealing activity in which he will create several types of mazes that students will have to solve in teams.

Some students usually like being challenged, whereas other may feel frustrated if they find any difficulty. For that reason, the teacher will promote collaboration among classmates.

After that, in the third session, they will check their knowledge about different crucial women that they have analysed. To end with, in the last session, all of them will introduce a woman they consider important. This activity will be carried out in small groups and the teacher will give some rounds to monitor the different contributions. Finally, they will record themselves through a brief presentation.

4.5.7.3. Evaluation

To evaluate this task, the teacher will assess the following points:

- Students should be able to collaborate in order to solve the different mazes.
- Students should show positive attitudes towards group activities.
- Students should do a brief presentation making use of their digital competence.
- Students should demonstrate all the new information they have acquired in this second term.

4.5.8. Didactic Task N.8: “We should all be feminists”

In this didactic task, students will analyse the figure of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This significant female figure belongs to the twentieth century. She was born in 1977. She was an African woman who was interested in writing, although she also studied medicine and pharmacy. She worked as an editor for her university. Her novels grow from Chinua Achebe’s inspiration, another African female writer who was also crucial in the world of literature. Adichie’s work centres around the themes of Nigerian culture, African identity in the United States, and feminism. This female author achieved major popularity when she gave some conferences about ‘Feminism’.

In 2009, Adichie gave a TED Talk entitled *The Danger of a Single Story*. The video clip later went viral on YouTube. In 2012, Adichie gave another TEDx talk called “We Should All be Feminists”, which was later sampled in Beyonce's 2013 hit song, “***Flawless.” (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Biography | List of Works, Study Guides & Essays, n. d.).



Studying the figure of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is useful for arising students' interest in African literature. For that reason, several topics such as racism, slavery and the female role in the African society will be proposed to discuss in class.

4.5.8.1. Objectives

In this didactic task, students will try to achieve the following aims:

- To achieve major knowledge about the main topics of African literature.
- To study Chimamanda's speech that appeared in the song titled "Flawless" and to discuss it in class.
- To search and be able to explain some facts related to slavery and racism being guided by the teacher.

4.5.8.2. Development of the task

This task may be highly appealing to students since the teacher will employ a song in English class. Firstly, students will listen to a piece of the song chosen, and, in the meantime, they will have to fill in some gaps, order some sentences and deduce the meaning of Chimamanda's speech. Later, they will search for information about the singer and why she decided to include Chimamanda's words. With this, students will get acquainted with the figure of Adichie.

Then, the teacher will propose to them some tasks useful at the time of studying her role in society such as researching her life, watching a video where she talks about feminism and discussing three different topics: marriage, slavery and racism.

As not all students feel comfortable when speaking in public, this last activity will be done in small groups: they will feel at ease and will collaborate in a better way as the affective filter would probably be appropriate.

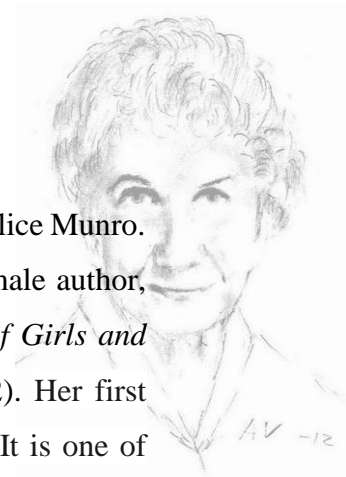
This task will consist of three sessions for them to focus on this task better. In the last activity, students will upload some ideas about what they have understood from the previous video.

4.5.8.3 Evaluation

To evaluate students, the teacher will observe if they have been able to fulfil the following goals:

- To be able to complete several gaps and order sentences in the song chosen.

- To be able to check if concrete information relating to Chimamanda’s biography is true or not.
- To be able to express their opinions about slavery and racism.



4.5.9. Didactic Task N.9: “The roles of men and women in our society”

In this didactic task, students will have the opportunity to meet the figure of Alice Munro. She was born in Wingham, Ontario, Canada on July 10, 1931. She is a female author, who wrote many short stories, but also some crucial novels such as *Life of Girls and Women* (1971), *The Love of a Good Woman* (1998), and *Dear Life* (2012). Her first collection of stories was published as *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968). It is one of three of her collections —the other two being *Who Do You Think You Are?* (1978) and *The Progress of Love* (1986), respectively. She is a crucial female author since she deals with topics related to the tension in the ordinary lives of both men and women. Her novels, usually autobiographic, relate many situations that she has lived.

Housework never really bothered me... what bothered me about it later was that it was expected to be your life... when you’re a housewife, you are constantly interrupted. You have no space in your life. It isn’t the fact that you do the laundry. (Munro, n.d).

In addition, here, it might be mentioned that Phrabakar and K. Venkat Satish (2011) pronounced the following words:

Alice Munro is a forthright feminist fiction writer who uses the short story form as a medium to portray the sad conditions of women living in the landscape of small town, Ontario, Canada where she has been brought up and her stories voice woman’s feeling towards society from feminist perspective. (Phrabakar & K.Venkat Satish, 2011).

For that reason, her figure has been chosen since her short stories let teachers foster interesting topics related to the relation of equality between men and women.

4.5.9.1. Objectives

In this didactic task, the following aims will be pursued:

- To be able to extract information from a short text where students will focus on their intensive reading skill.
- To discuss the roles of men and women relating to household chores and the upbringing of children.
- To take part in a short role play where learners will have to play different female and male characters.
- To make a list of tasks appropriate to different situations that the teacher exposes in class.

All these previous goals have the aim to allow students to reflect on different domestic situations that are very common in our daily life. With this in mind, our students will be able to express their opinions, even when they do not agree with situations where women are not respected or need more help from their partners.

4.5.9.2. *Development of the task*

This didactic task will be developed in three sessions. In the first session, students will watch a brief video where a couple talk about how they share their household chores. As a follow-up activity, the teacher will pose several questions to discuss:

- Who does more tasks in that situation?
- What do you think about the sharing of tasks? Is it fair? Why?
- How are household chores shared in your house? Do you help at home?

This activity will be carried out in small groups where students will have a list of statements that they can use to express their ideas. The use of this list will help students to enrich their communicative competence.

In the second session, teachers will use a short text from *Boys and Girls*, by Alice Munro. Here, students will have to answer several questions making use of her intensive reading skill. Finally, they will search for information about why Alice Munro is considered a feminist.

In the third session, they will perform a role play where they will have to play different roles in a situation in which the household chores are not shared in an equitable manner. After that, they will be asked to rewrite that role play in order to show an equal situation. Finally, they will write a small list of tasks appropriate to different situations introduced by the teacher where the tasks should be shared by both members of a couple.

This didactic task may be pretty enriching, because it deals with a current highly controversial topic.

4.5.9.3. Evaluation

To evaluate this didactic task, the teacher will assess the following sections:

- Students' collaboration and participation in the different tasks where they will have to speak in public, although the different contributions will be done in small groups.
- Students will have to search for information on the Internet using their digital competence.
- Students show a positive attitude towards an equal relationship.



4.5.10. Didactic Task N.9: “What is gender?”

In this didactic unit, students will study the figure of Simone de Beauvoir. This female author was a French writer and philosopher who laid the foundation for the modern feminist movement. She published countless works of fiction and nonfiction during her incredible career —often with existentialist themes—, including 1949's *The Second Sex*, which is considered a pioneering work of the modern feminism movement.

This female writer has been chosen because she had a crucial role in the current feminist movement. Through the reading of several passages extracted from *The Second Sex*, students will be able to discuss current topics related to gender and sex.

Nowadays, teenagers get interested in these topics when they start to feel attracted to the other sex and they start to identify with a particular gender, depending on how they feel.

4.5.10.1. Objectives

In this didactic task, students are expected:

- To be able to read a short quote from this female author and do an extensive reading where they have to discover the main idea of the text.
- To be able to watch a video and answer several multiple-choice questions.
- To find different quotes which show Simone De Beauvoir's feminist attitude and upload them to the Padlet platform.
- To discuss the meaning of female, male or binary genders.

4.5.10.2. *Development of the task*

This didactic task will be developed in three different sessions. In the first session, students will start by reading several quotes from Simone de Beauvoir. It will let them discuss topics related to gender and sex. Then, some quotes may be introduced, such as the following one:

In itself, homosexuality is as limiting as heterosexuality: the ideal should be to be capable of loving a woman or a man; either, a human being, without feeling fear, restraint, or obligation. (Beauvoir, 2014)

On the other hand, “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman” (Beauvoir, 1949, p.330) is another quote from Simone de Beauvoir that also invites students to deal with the topic of gender. This activity will be done in small groups. Firstly, a student will read the quote. Later, it will be discussed among them.

In the second session, they will bring to the class some quotes from this female author to be read to their classmates. After that, they will have to search for information to explain why Beauvoir is considered a feminist.

In the third session, they will watch a short video related to gender stereotypes³. This video aims to reinforce the previous ideas explained in the last sessions.

This didactic task may be highly interesting for them due to the fact that it deals with topics related to their feelings, personality, gender, and role in our current society. In other words, these topics are very common among teenagers. However, if any student decides not to collaborate in this activity, the teacher will respect their decision since we are dealing with personal matters. In such a case, these students will be asked to carry out other activities where they search for information about Alice Munro and her works.

4.5.10.3. *Evaluation*

To evaluate this didactic task, the teacher will assess the following points:

- Students will be able to read the different quotes and explain their meaning.
- Students will be able to look for information about a concrete topic presented to them.

³ HelloJoey. (2019). What are Gender Stereotypes? In *YouTube*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdHSDaJNQSg>

- Students will be able to watch a video and consolidate their knowledge about how they feel regarding gender.

4.5.11. Didactic Task N.11: “Let’s check our new knowledge”

In this last didactic task, students will check all the new ideas, concepts and vocabulary that have been acquired. Thus, they will be aware of what information has been acquired and what concepts need to be reinforced.

4.5.11.1. Objectives

In this final didactic unit, students will collaborate to achieve the following aims:

- To be able to do a timeline with several data offered by the teacher.
- To complete a *Kahoot* activity⁴ where they will observe what they have learned.
- To do a Power Point presentation about one of the women introduced to them.
- To show their opinion about the usefulness of this type of activity.
- To value how different women have struggled to defend their ideas and fulfil their dreams.

4.5.11.2. Development of the task

As this three-session didactic task will be the last one of this school year, students will engage in several activities where they will show the knowledge they have acquired. In small groups, they will do a timeline where they will have to order all these female figures throughout history. Of course, they will be allowed to make use of their digital resources when needed. Secondly, they will start to work individually. In particular, they will do a *Kahoot* activity where they will show what they have learned and evaluate if all those previous didactic tasks have been positive or negative for their formation.

Finally, they will use their creativity to create a Power Point presentation about the female figure that they have considered to be more interesting. As a last step, they will upload these presentations to the Padlet noticeboard.

⁴ *Kahoot!* (n.d.). Create.kahoot.it. <https://create.kahoot.it/share/let-s-go-to-check-your-knowledge/46e50127-f93e-4aaf-bb8d-3889f8c89c0b>

4.5.11.3. Evaluation

To evaluate this final task, students will have to fulfil the following objectives:

- To demonstrate all those ideas and concepts that have been assimilated.
- To design a brief Power Point presentation where they provide new information about the female figure chosen. This task will be presented in small groups and the teacher will give several rounds in the class in order to monitor students' collaboration and how their communicative competence has been developed.

5. THE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS

At this stage, not only students are expected to be evaluated: teachers will also become protagonists. Teachers should evaluate their own work and their planning.

As far as this didactic proposal is concerned, teachers will fill out the next chart to check if they have accomplished a good result. The functioning of this self-evaluation is easy and intuitive, but also absolutely voluntary. Undoubtedly, it may also be modified due to their needs.

Table 3

Self-evaluation sheet for the didactic proposal "Female Empowerment in History"				
Assessment	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Contents Introduction				
<p>The order of the different tasks uploaded in the Padlet noticeboard is respected.</p> <p>If it is not, a justification is provided.</p> <p>Contents are organized according to their importance.</p> <p>It prioritizes the function of contents.</p> <p>Some changes are executed depending on</p>				

students' interests.				
Organization criteria and timing				
<p>The teacher assured himself that all students have understood the development of the different tasks and their access to the Padlet platform.</p> <p>The teacher informs their students about all those changes that have been done.</p> <p>The teacher respects the timing proposed for each activity.</p>				
Group Work				
<p>Respectful and tolerant attitudes are encouraged.</p> <p>All students managed to have an active role in their learning.</p> <p>Debate and critical opinions are promoted.</p> <p>Different approaches and tools are used.</p> <p>It is prevented to compare students.</p> <p>The teacher is receptive to students' complaints and their recommendations.</p>				
Evaluation				
<p>Different evaluation tools are used.</p> <p>Comparison among students'</p>				

results is prevented. The teacher is receptive to students' complaints and their recommendations.				
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Table 3. Self-evaluation table for teacher's work

6. CONCLUSION

This research was aimed at showing how the role of women has evolved throughout history. From the beginning of mankind, women have always been confined to a certain private sphere and excluded from men's space, including workplaces. On the contrary, men seemed to be regarded as rulers in all spheres of society.

But, across time, women have achieved more and more visibility, even if never completely. For that reason, this didactic proposal has the purpose to let teenage students know how different women have struggled to achieve their rights, how they managed to occupy the main positions in different fields, and how they reached considerable respect from men. Furthermore, they have demonstrated that they are equally able to contribute to society through their critical thinking and actions.

These twelve different tasks are suggested to increase students' knowledge about how society has evolved. For that purpose, eleven different female artists have been introduced to the class in order to reach the main goal: to acknowledge women's visibility in different sectors of the society.

Women wish to be regarded as equal as men. Particularly, they wish to have the same opportunities, to be treated with respect, and possess the same rights as men. Women need to be heard. For that reason, they must fight together to achieve that aim.

This didactic proposal is developed in the English subject through the introduction of many different English and American female artists as well as other major women from other countries such as Marie Curie and Maria Montessori, among others.

However, the visibility of women is not the only topic, but the starting point, as other relevant matters related to it such as racism, gender and slavery are exposed to students.

With regard to the previous idea, this didactic proposal allows students to think, reflect, and share their ideas, concerns, and opinions together with their classmates and

teachers. As it has been previously emphasized, students in the third or fourth year in Secondary Education start to wonder why their current society shows this structure and hegemony. On the other hand, the first love relationships also start to emerge. In particular, males and females start to confront situations where they have different points of view. From that moment, it is interesting to observe how students would not only be influenced by their relatives' and friends' opinions, but they also must express their own opinions, critical thinking, and actions, according to their beliefs.

But, in order to create their different opinions and actions, they need to consider the fact that men and women have the same rights and none of them is inferior to the other although they witness male chauvinist commentaries and facts. Then, with respect to these types of situations where women would not be addressed with the same respect, students could react since they have been exposed to many different class tasks where they have had the opportunity to assimilate how many women have pursued the equality between men and women.

In order to carry out this didactic proposal, a digital resource was chosen, since this tool is absolutely attractive to students and they do not usually have problems managing them. Nowadays, students cannot live without technological aids. For that reason, it is essential to use them in the class context.

Thus, the relationship among classmates could improve as soon as they share their different opinions on the Padlet noticeboard. As it has previously explained, students will upload their different contributions to that platform for the school year.

The final aim of this research is to highlight the role of hard-working, critical, intellectual, and persistent women who wished to have the same possibilities as men.

In addition, the teacher follows some concrete indications, but whether this didactic proposal functions or not, it will be discovered when it will be brought into the class. For that reason, both the teacher and student's roles should be evaluated. Thus, it will be checked if they have tried to achieve that aim. To end with, the teacher may adapt the different activities through the use of a different approach interconnected with his or her students' interests and attitudes.

Finally, it would be interesting to outmost the development of these tasks in English class since it is not frequent. Nowadays, people reflect on the role of women only on Women's day or on some specific days. This didactic proposal would let students deal with current and ordinary topics more often and to acquire a better and major knowledge about the female empowerment, thanks to the English class.

To conclude, teachers observe their students' behaviour and attitudes every day. For that reason, they should promote respectful and tolerant attitudes in different situations that can emerge daily. Besides, students usually consider teachers as a guide, a role model. For that reason, teachers cannot obviate the fact that students belong to society and they should teach them to behave appropriately, respecting the equality of both sexes, and supporting the visibility of women in all fields.

To end this research, we invite our reader to reflect on this quote by the character of Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë:

I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you. (Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 6).

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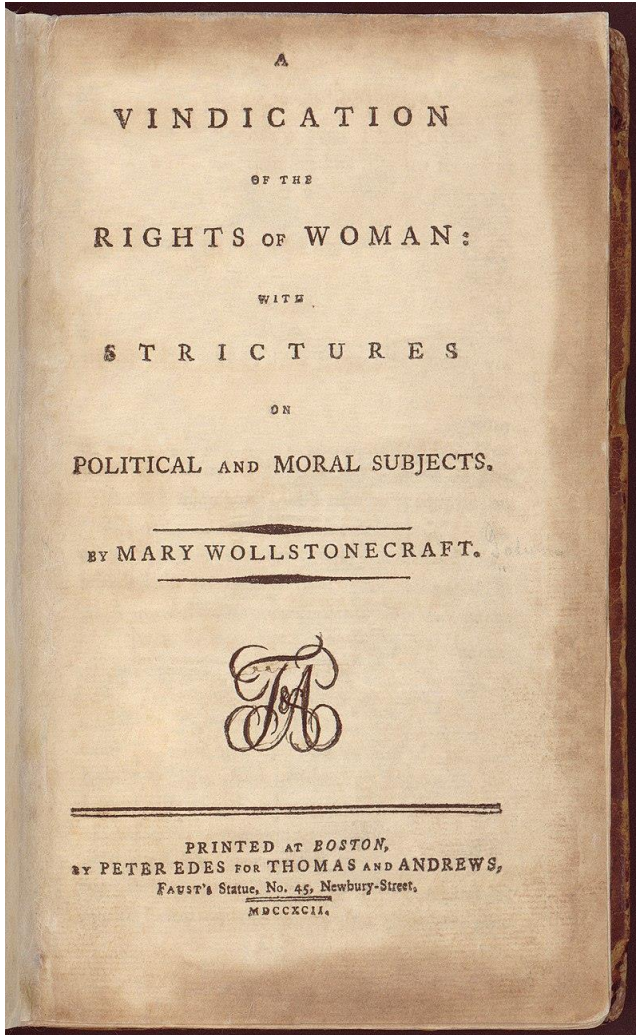
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8. ANNEXES

Annexe A

Didactic Task N.1. “Do you know any of these women writers?”



Vocabulary Bank

Weakness:	the state of quality of being weak
Cunning :	prettily appealing
Softness:	Pleasing or agreeable to the senses: bringing ease, comfort or quiet
Outward:	Situated on outside
Needless:	Unnecessary

Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness or temper, *outward* obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless, for, at least, twenty years of their lives. [Wollstonecraft, M. (1792). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Pp. 96-97]

Ask these questions:

- What do you think about this text?
- What feelings does the text convey to you?
- Why do you believe that the female author describes her concerns?

Annexe B

Didactic Task N.2: “I have a date with Mr. Darcy”

Description of Mr. Darcy:

Mr Darcy wasn't as popular. He only danced with Mr Bingley's sisters and spent a lot of the evening walking around the room. The ladies of Meryton soon agreed that Mr Darcy was very rich, but he was also proud and arrogant.

[Austen, J. (1813). *Pride and Prejudice*]

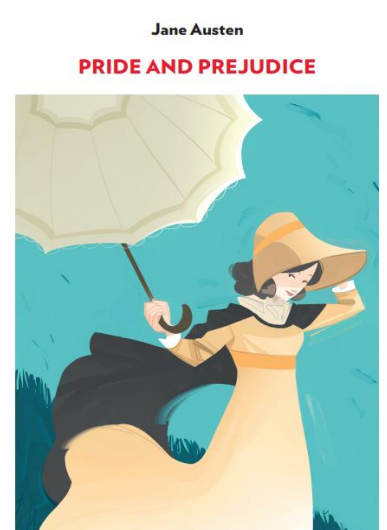


Read the text and answer these questions:

‘Miss Bennet is the most beautiful girl in the world. But look,’ said his friend, pointing to Elizabeth, ‘her sister Elizabeth Bennet is also beautiful. She has no-one to dance with.’

‘She’s quite pretty, I suppose,’ replied Darcy coldly, ‘but not pretty enough for me. Go back to your partner, go back to Jane Bennet’s smiles. Leave me alone.’ Unfortunately for Mr Darcy, Elizabeth heard his comments*. She decided that she didn’t like Mr Darcy, but she had a good sense of humour.

[Austen, J. (1813). *Pride and Prejudice*]



- **How did he behave with Elizabeth Bennet when he was at the party?**
- **Can men and women show their feelings towards that person they love? Why?**

List of words to use in your contribution

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weakness</u>
Wealthy	Pride
Intelligent	Quick to judge
Sexy	Elitist
Generous	Condescending
Kind	
Overcomes	
Pride	



Annexe C

Didactic Task N. 3: “Mr. Rochester, have you got any secret about your life that I need to know?”



Activity 1:

Look for information about who Charlotte Brontë is and explain why she is considered a crucial writer from the eighteenth century.

Activity 2: Complete this text using those words. Then, give your opinion about Bertha Mason's closing.



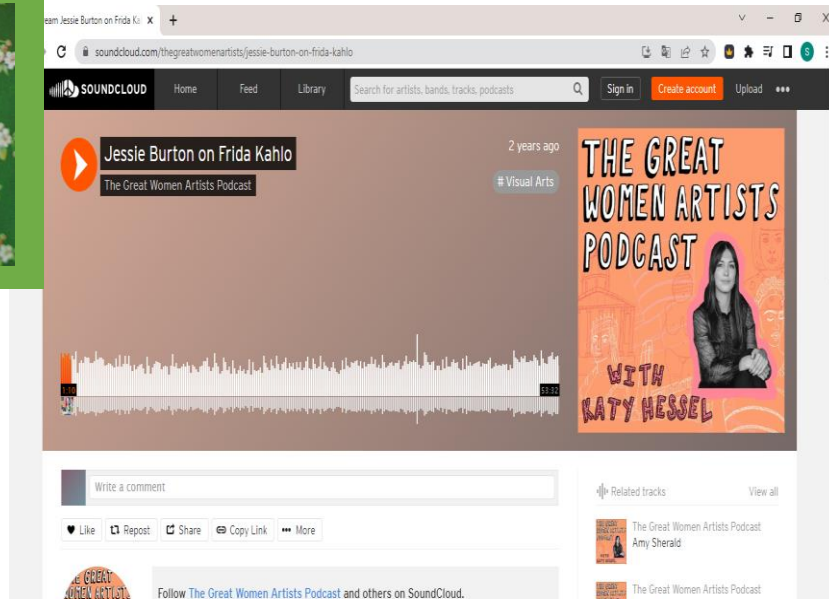
Married question moment loudly clergyman started

The clergyman _____ to speak. At every marriage, the clergyman asks an important _____. He asks the people in the church, 'Is there a problem about this marriage?' The clergyman spoke _____. He asked this question and he waited. There was silence for a _____. And then one of the men in the dark corner stood up. He spoke loudly. 'There is a problem. These two people must not be _____!' he said. 'There is not a problem!' Mr. Rochester said to the _____. 'Please go on with the marriage.' 'No, I cannot go on with the marriage,' the clergyman replied. He spoke to the man in the corner. 'What is the problem, sir?' he asked.

(Bronte, C. 2005, *Jane Eyre*. Macmillan Readers Beginner Level)

Annexe D

Didactic task N. 4: “I’d like to meet... Frida Kahlo”



Listen to a Podcast about Frida Kahlo for some minutes

[https://soundcloud.com/thegreatwomenartists/jessie-burton-on-frida-](https://soundcloud.com/thegreatwomenartists/jessie-burton-on-frida-kahlo?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

[kahlo?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/thegreatwomenartists/jessie-burton-on-frida-kahlo?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)



After contemplating her art, draw a picture with her inspiration.



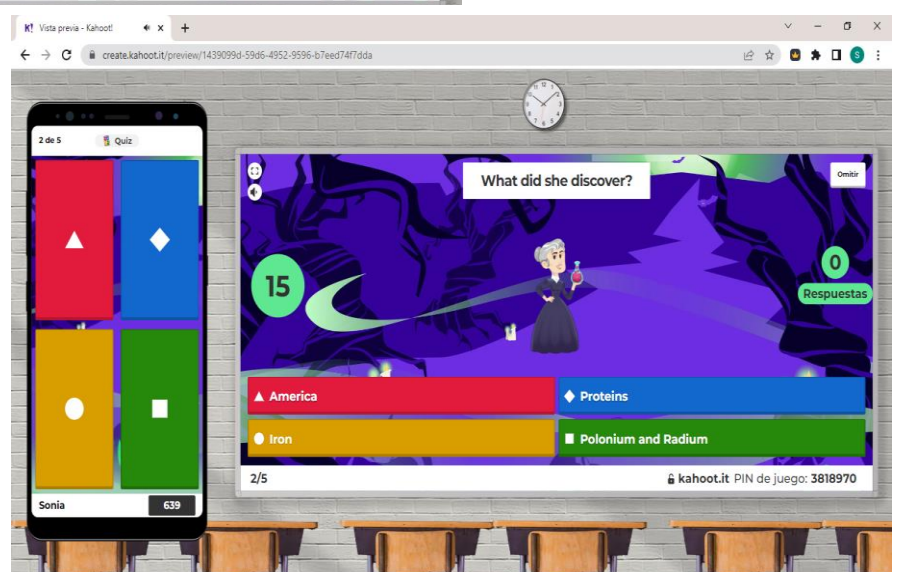
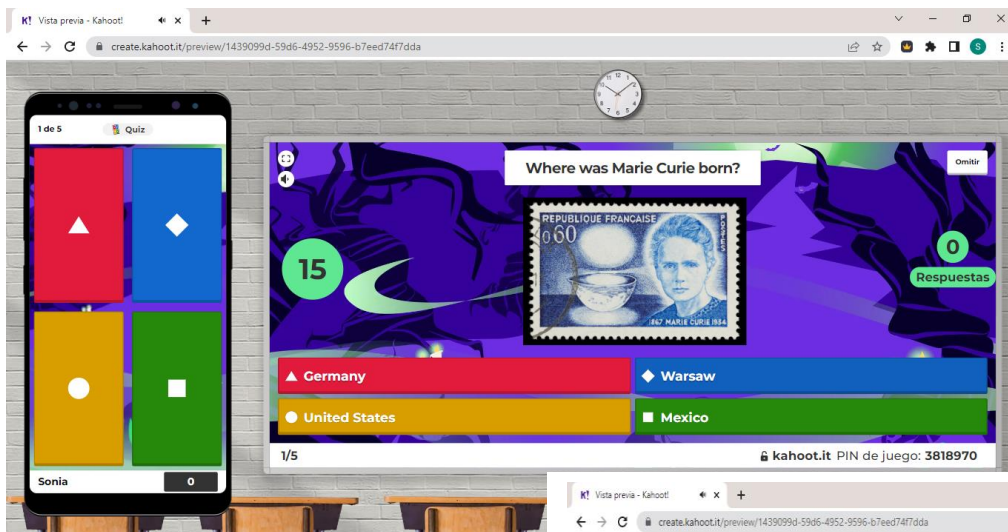
Annexe E

Didactic Task N.5. "All about Mary Curie".

Video from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhBEqybCs4Q>



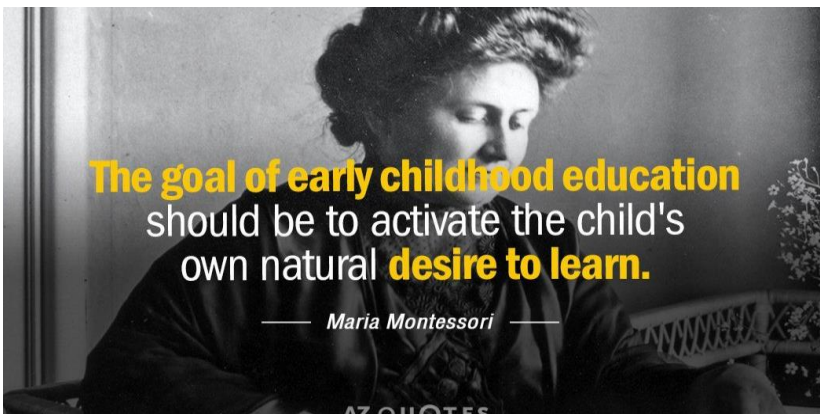
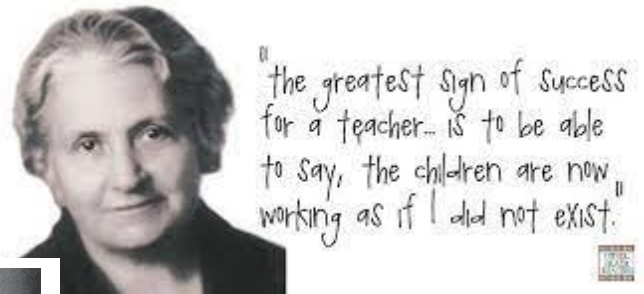
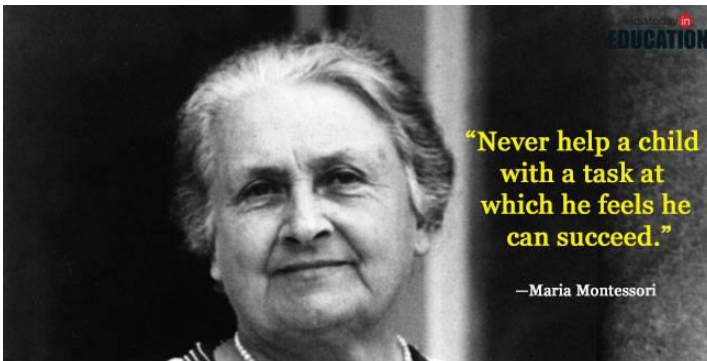
Why was Marie Curie important to the Industrial Revolution?



Annexe F

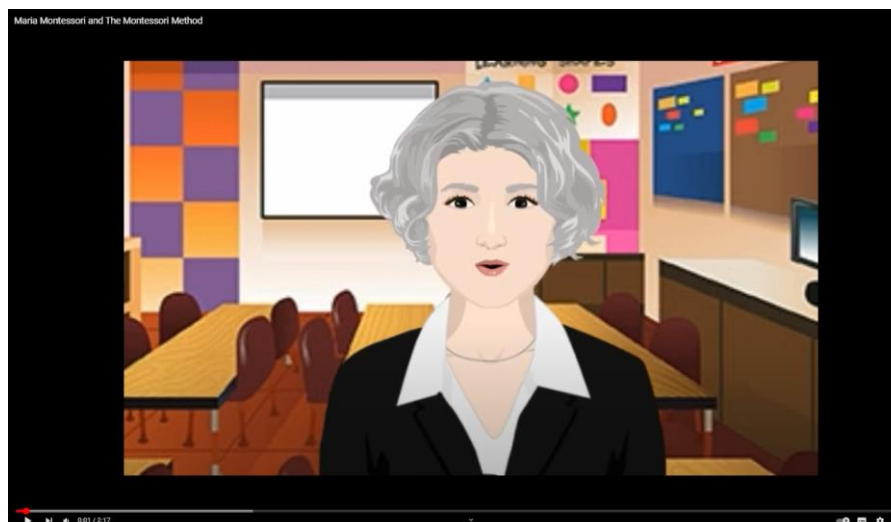
Didactic Task N.6: “The Decalogue of Maria Montessori”.

Read these quotes and give your opinion about them.



“The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of Responsibility and the wings of Independence.”

Watch the video and extract some ideas about the Montessori Method.

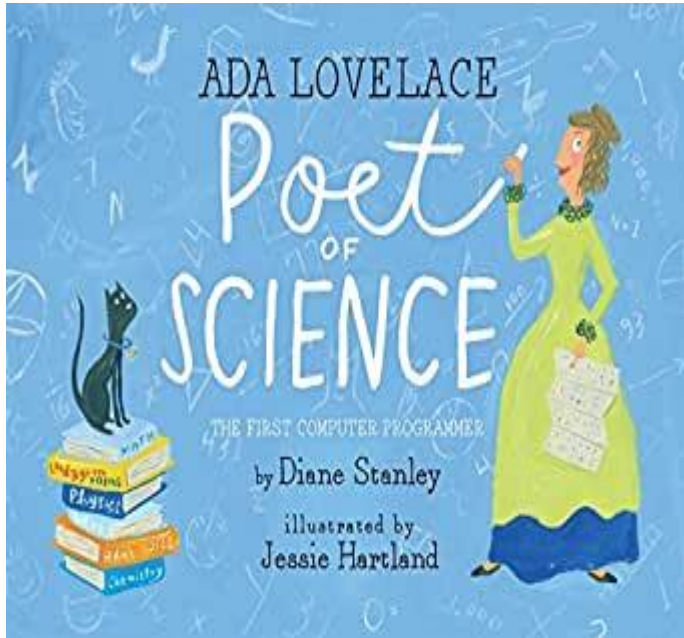


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lkf6pEE56-s>

Annexe G

Didactic Task N.7: “Ada Lovelace ‘Poet of Science’”.

Read a short text from this book.

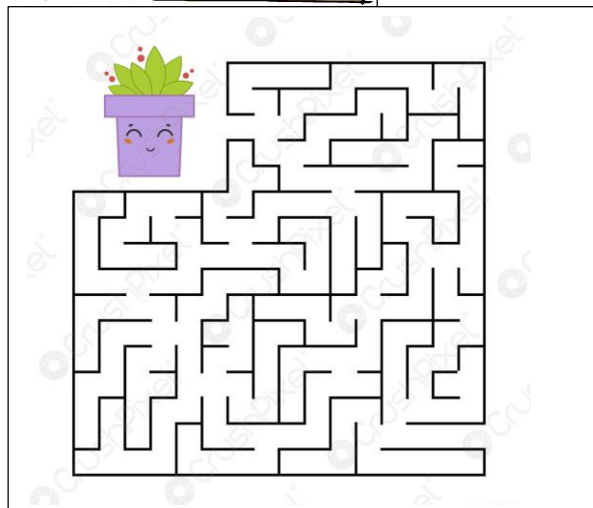
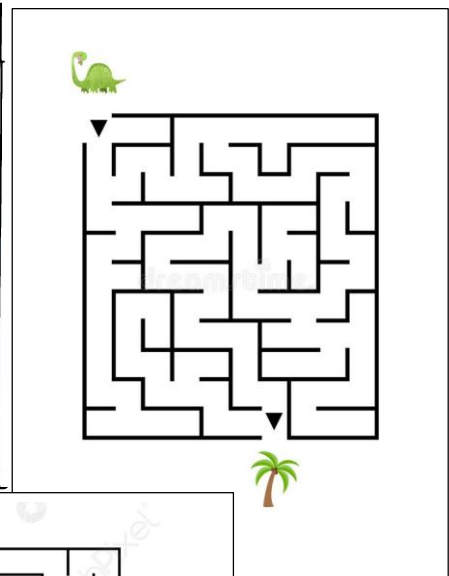
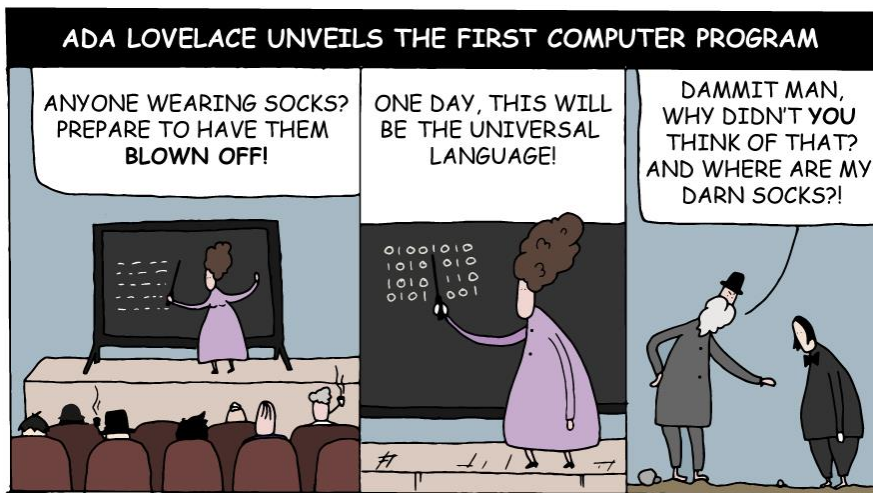


Solve this coding activity in group.

3 1 1 1
3 2 1

Team-Cartwright.com

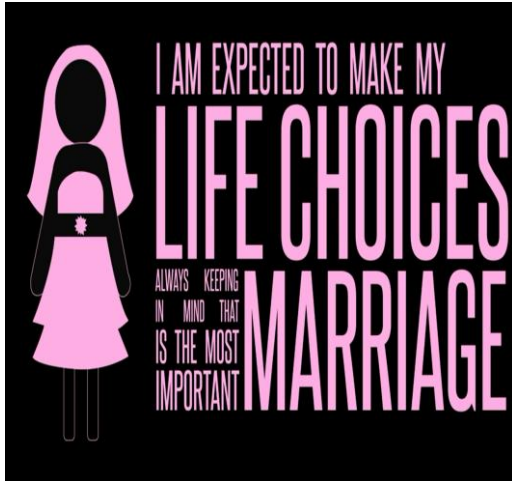
Solve these mazes:



Annexe H

Didactic Task N.8: *"We should all be feminists"*.

"Flawless"



"Flawless" consists of two parts – "Bow Down" and "Flawless", divided by a speech titled "[We Should All Be Feminists](#)" delivered by Nigerian writer [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#) at a [TEDxEuston](#) conference.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9mKo5K2rsU>

(They will only watch Chimamanda's speech.)

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_we_should_all_be_feminists?language=es



Slavery

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Racism

Students will discuss these three topics:

- Marriage
- Slavery
- Racism

Annexe I

Didactic Task N.9: "The roles of men and women in our society".

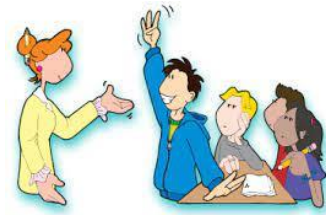
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZojKWjuJU8>

Questions

- How are the household chores shared at home?
- Do you collaborate?
- Who do you believe that does more tasks, your father or your mother?



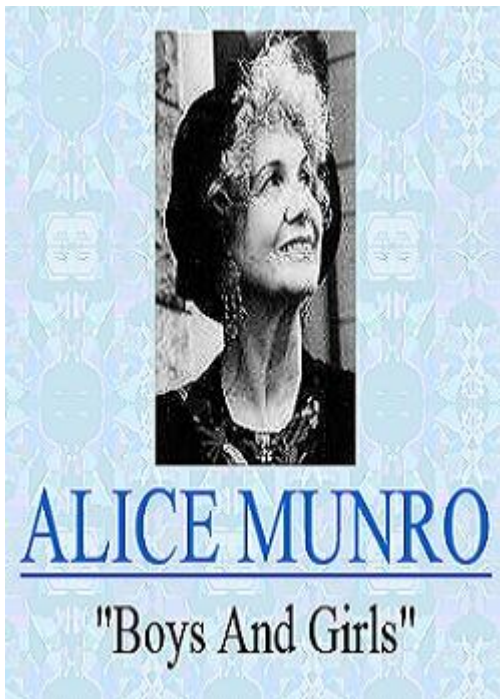
Create a list about how the household chores might be



shared at home.

Read the text and explain your ideas to your classmates.

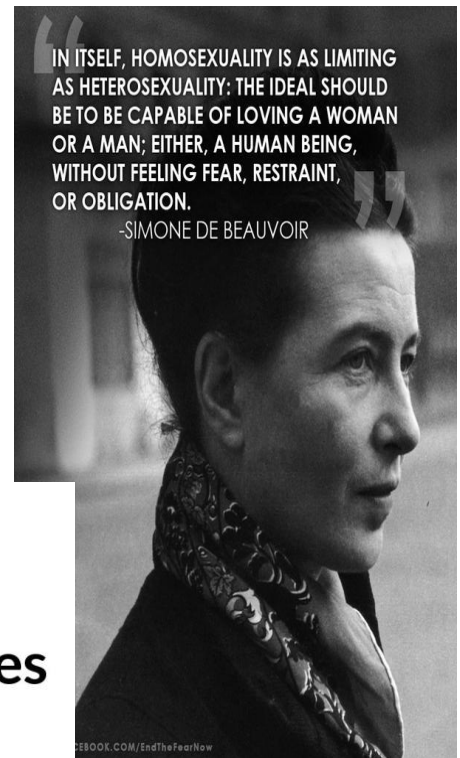
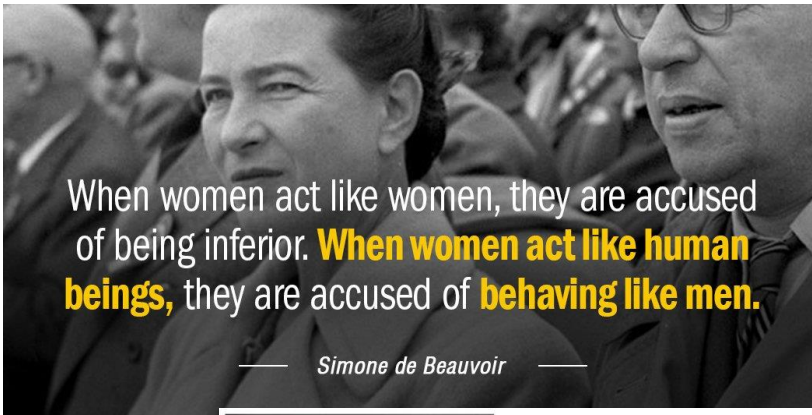
My father did not talk to me unless it was about the job we were doing. In this he was quite different from my mother, who, if she was feeling cheerful, would tell me all sorts of things – the name of a dog she had when she was a little girl, the names of boys she had gone out with later on when she was grown-up, and what certain dresses of hers had looked like – she could not imagine now what had become of them. Whatever thoughts and stories my father had were private, and I was shy of him and would never ask him questions. [(Munro, A. (1968). *Boys and Girls*)]



Annexe J

Didactic Task N.10: "What is gender?"

Read these quotes and discuss them.



“ One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. ”

Simone de Beauvoir (The Second Sex)

Search for information to know why Simone de Beauvoir is considered feminist.



Respect the different genders!!

What are gender stereotypes?

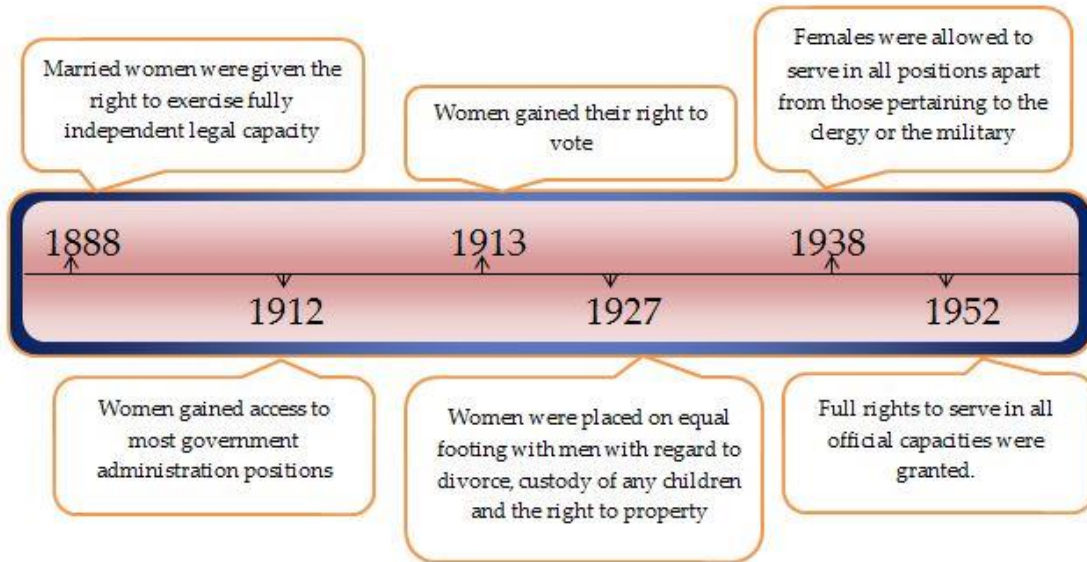
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdHSDaJNQSg>



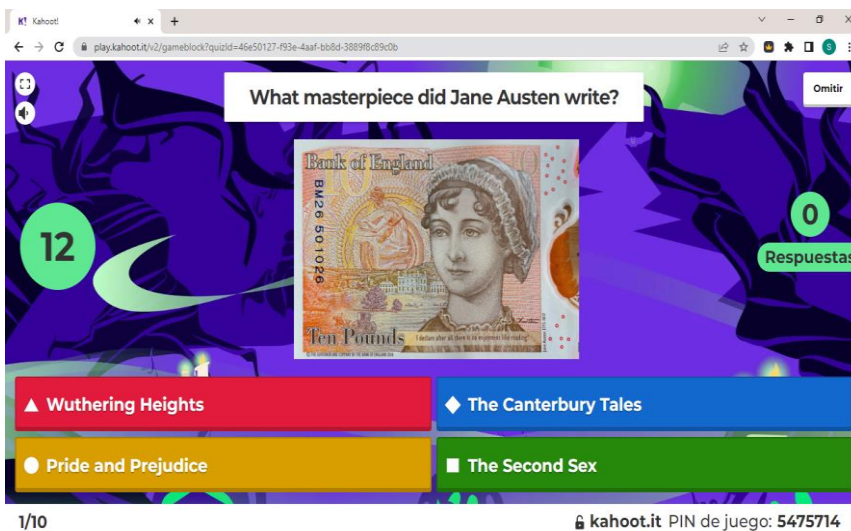
Annexe K

Didactic Task N.12: "Let's check our new knowledge"

Timeline: Link each date with its appropriate event.



Let's play a Kahoot!! <https://create.kahoot.it/share/let-s-go-to-check-your-knowledge/46e50127-f93e-4aaf-bb8d-3889f8c89c0b>



Do a brief presentation using PowerPoint

