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Who runs the world? : A Literature Workshop on

***Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott**

An elective workshop for 10th graders

Trabajo de Titulación Para Optar al Grado de Licenciado
en Educación y al Título de Profesor de Inglés.

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To my parents, friends, and teachers...without you this journey would have been impossible.

Thank you.

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Introduction

The following project consists of an extracurricular workshop that will take part for students from a semi private school who are in year 10. The workshop will be based on a guided reading of Louisa May Alcott's novel *Little Women* (1868), which is a novel that has been considered children's literature throughout the years, a fact that has overshadowed its real feminist nature, content and intent.

The purpose of this workshop is raising student's awareness of gender stereotypes by using the novel as an evidence of the many changes the role of women and men have faced and also to switch the erroneous vision of the concept of Feminism.

Even though the novel might seem to be oriented only toward women, there are many elements and ideologies that will resonate and make sense not only to female, but also male students. The project also looks for the inclusion and cooperation from both sexes inside the classroom in the context of a discussion on gender awareness and inclusion through the reading of Alcott's novel.

The project is divided into 5 different sections: The Theoretical Framework, the Needs Analysis, The Rationale, The Course Syllabus, and finally the Sample Lessons. In the first section of the project, some of the relevant concepts are analyzed and explained from a theoretical point of view: those include Literature, Children's Literature and Young Adult's Literature, Feminist novel, and Bildungsroman; later, a plot summary is included so as to provide context to the analysis of the novel and a short bibliographical sketch of the author.

After that, a Needs Analysis carried out in Colegio Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia is presented in order to show students' needs, reading habits, and favorite activities inside the classroom. Moreover, graphics are given to objectively exemplify the results.

The description of the school is also included and brings with it the name of the school, its location, its mission, religion, and the facilities it has.

Furthermore, in the Rationale, the Needs analysis results are used to draw some decisions on the design of the project, among them, the choice syllabus to be used.

After that, Course Syllabus' description and objectives are shown to later display the general planning for this project, the samples of lessons plans and sample activities, the material corresponding to each of them and a final conclusion.

It is hoped to be a project that not only teaches about literature in general, but also to be a tool for nowadays generations when facing real life and start coexisting in a world of stereotypes.

Defining Literature

There have been many attempts to try to define Literature. Many people have tried to get the exact meaning of it, but it is evident that there is not a single and accurate definition for it. The concept of Literature has been built up over time thanks to a variety of enquiries and approaches by several scholars and shaped by the different cultural and historical changes in the world.

By the late twentieth century, “literature”, as a concept and as a term, has become so problematical—either through ideological contamination as the high cultural “Canon”, or, conversely, through demystification and deconstruction by radical critical theory—that it approaches the unuseable, at least without contorted apologetics. (Widdowson, 2)

Literature in its broadest and most arguable definitions corresponds to “written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit.” (Oxford Dictionary) However this narrow vision needs to be tested and expanded beyond the appreciation that people have on the concept itself.

Understanding exactly what literature is has always been a challenge; pinning down a single definition has proven to a fascinating impossibility. In fact, at times one seems to be reduced to saying, “I know it when I see it,” or perhaps, “Anything is literature if you want to read it that way.” Sometimes the motivation for a particular definition seems like the work of copyright lawyers, aimed primarily at stopping people from using the word ‘literature’ for works which have not been licensed as literature by The Critics, by the keepers of the tradition, by “all high school English teachers,” and so on. (Meyer, 1).

It would be a daring or ridiculous claim, in sight of the complexity in the issue, to intend to state the last word on what literature is—yet most discussions seem to veer either towards

an authoritarian definition based on certain critical assumptions, or towards a definition based solely on whatever a particular reader chooses to call literature. (Meyer, 1).

As a matter of fact, Meyer avoids addressing the question directly by discussing methodological criteria to assess texts as literary based on Literary Prototypes. He introduces two approaches that claim, from different standpoints, to provide more or less flexible standards to define a literary text: The Criterial Approach and the Prototype Approach.

The former proposes that to define a word in particular it is necessary to provide a list of criteria which must be met and the latter, focuses not on a list of criteria which must be met by each example, but on an established prototype, a particularly good example of the word, to which other examples of the word bear some resemblance. (Meyer, 1-2).

Meyer champions the use of the Prototype Approach as the most effective and also as the one with the better claim to be a tool in the definition of literature.

Jim Meyer's Literary Prototype asserts that Literature (in this case prototypical literary works) are mainly: written texts, are marked by careful use of language, including features such as creative metaphors, well-turned phrases, elegant syntax, rhyme, alliteration, meter, are in a literary genre (poetry, prose fiction, or drama), are read aesthetically, are intended by the author to be read aesthetically and contain many weak implicates (are deliberately somewhat open in interpretation) (Meyer, 6)

On the one hand, 'literature' is not just a frame in which we put language: not every sentence will make it as literature if set down on a page as a poem. But, on the other hand, literature is not just a special kind of language, for many literary works don't flaunt their difference from other sorts of language; they function in special ways because of the special attention they receive. (Culler, 28) In this case, literature or literary works can be seen from two

different perspectives that overlap, intersect, but don't seem to yield a synthesis. We can think of literary works as language with particular properties or features, and we can think of literature as the product of conventions and a certain kind of attention. Neither perspective successfully incorporates the other, nor one must shift back and forth between them. (Culler, 28).

Literature would constitute some sort of canon –and this is arguable –which consists of those works in a language by which a community defines itself through the course of its history. It includes works primarily artistic and also those whose aesthetic qualities are only secondary. The self-defining activity of the community is conducted in the light of the works, as its members have come to read them (or concretize them) (McFadden qtd. in Meyer 2). This reading affects the way communities imagine themselves; people see themselves in the fiction their artists create –in the way they change the language common to all –and that reinforces their identity.

Thus, perhaps literature is definable not only according to whether it is fictional or 'imaginative', but also because it uses language in peculiar ways. On this theory, literature is a kind of writing which, in the words of the Russian critic Roman Jakobson, represents an 'organized violence committed on ordinary speech'. Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech (Eagleton, 2). That is actually the central concern of early XXth century Russian Formalism, which was essentially the application of the formal aspects of linguistics to the study of literature. Literature is to linguistics what poetry is to communication: stories and poems are just special ways to use language and, hence, the analysis of literary 'content (where one might always be tempted into psychology or sociology) should be traded for the study of literary form. (Eagleton, 3)

Children's Literature

It is of primary importance to understand what children's literature is since this project is intended to teach students how to read Louisa M. Alcott's *Little Women* beyond this genre. As a general view, children stories have existed for decades, but today's Children's Literature has been adapted and transformed from the oral tradition of telling a story to a more permanent format (Kiefer, 65) In that sense, probably the first stories that were told were stories addressed to children: stories to warn them of danger, to explain how things work, etc. Stories became more structured in their instructional aim and influenced by the historical circumstances they was immersed in and by the vision that society had of childhood.

"Before the seventeenth century, evidence of childhood as a distinct and separate culture is hard to find. Children dressed like adults, played the same games, and were entertained by the same arts that interested adults, as is shown by written and artistic records that existed prior to the 1600s" (Kiefer, 65). Kiefer indicates that childhood was not different from adulthood until after the middle ages. Children were seen just as smaller versions of adults so they were never thought of recipients of anything specifically designed.

During the middle ages children were not as valued as nowadays standards, but they were considered as adult members of a community. Children, especially the poor, were forced to work and spend most of their day laboring with their relatives or other people. Therefore, few of them could read and have access to books, which during that period were considered uncommon and sophisticated.

The first materials created for Western children were instructional rather than entertaining and this tradition continued for several centuries. It was not until the seventeenth century

that books began to reach a wider audience of children. *Orbis Pictus* is often referred to as the first picture book for children. However, books of this century were dominated by the stern spiritual beliefs of Puritanism and were meant to save children's souls rather than entertain them. Actually, most entertainment for children came from books written for adults but adapted for children such as Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Strange and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

During seventeenth century, two aspects reformulate the concept of childhood, which are: the rise of Puritanism that established a stress on the individual's own salvation (a child in this case) through the reading and understanding of the Bible and John Locke's theory of *tabula rasa* or blank slate.

In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke attacked vigorously the rationalist conception of "innate ideas". The rationalists argued that many of our concepts or ideas (both within and outside of science) are present at birth. Locke argued powerfully and persuasively the empiricist position that all ideas come from either "sensation" (the interaction of the senses with the environment) or "reflection" on sensations. Therefore, all knowledge of the external world must come from experience and observation, or reflection on the same. Not only did his *Essay* further the empiricist cause in science, but it also provided a major philosophical foundation for the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Locke's view that the human mind at birth is truly a *tabula rasa* on which experience is imprinted justifies the liberal view of the Enlightenment that the education of the young can improve society and the quality of life. (Hunt, 29)

Finally in the eighteenth century with the rise of the Enlightenment, a literature for childhood emerged. Influenced by John Locke who postulated that as soon as children know their alphabet they should be led to read for pleasure. (Kiefer 65 - 68) The idea that children

should be guided into the habit of reading and that this should start as early as possible settled.

In Children's Literature not only the words are important, but also the illustrations it includes. John Locke was a Pioneer in using pictures in books and later John Newbery, influenced by Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, published *A Little Pretty-Pocket-Book* in order to improve children's enjoyment of reading.

In 1693, John Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, offering some advice of teaching a young child to read, recommended the provision of "some easy pleasant book suited to his capacity". This sensible suggestion seems to have provided a blueprint for the development of children's literature, a view apparently confirmed by the fact that, in 1774, John Newbery published what came to be thought of as the first children's book, *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*. Furthermore- to establish his credentials- Newbery made explicit his indebtedness to Locke and transformed with some precision the philosopher's recommendation into a realistic publishing venture. (Watson, 31)

Locke specifically recommended both *Reynard the Fox* (1481) and *Aesop's Fables* (1484), and he suggested the following:

"if his Aesop has pictures in it, it will entertain him much the better and encourage him to read, when it carries the increase of Knowledge with it . For such visible objects children hear talked of in vain and without any satisfaction, whilst they have no ideas of them; those ideas being not to be had from sounds, but from the things themselves, or their pictures of animals should be got him, as can be found, with the printed names to them, which at

the same time will invite him to read, and afford him matter of enquiry.”
(Locke qtd in Castronovo, 202).

Both Locke and Newbery encouraged the idea of mixing teaching and entertaining as two concepts that work together in order to boost children’s reading.

Every day, children are bombarded with television images which cannot be said to be uplifting. It is the duty of the illustrator, working closely with the author and the editor, to endeavor to give children more positive images and uplift them emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. (Segun, 25). Pictures and illustrations do not only complement the story, they tell a parallel wone which can broaden the imaginative horizon of children and expand his emotional range.

Illustration in books is highly important because images help to stimulate children’s imagination and creativity, to witness past events, and to correct wrong notions. Illustrations lead the reader to a more concrete experience without leaving behind imagination. The illustration can act as a footnote or underlining to details and aspects overlooked by the reader in the text.

In the twenty first century the focus of Children’s Literature has changed, by organically including visual arts in books, by developing critical thinking in the readers, and by enhancing children the affection for reading. Real world issues and social realism are the main focus of nowadays literature. Illustrators are pushing the envelope by incorporating more aspects than just the traditional familiar characters and environments in their books, trying to incorporate elements of the grotesque and macabre in their books. These innovations are mainly oriented to the directed and safe environment provided in classrooms.

According to Peter Hunt in his book *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, children's books are becoming less "literary and reflective" and more "dynamic," which perhaps is a reflection of competition from other media. Children today are sophisticated and multimedial readers who want to be challenged and surprised.

This change can be witnessed because in the past Children's Literature was often characterized by a heavily didactic tone-authoritative discourse distinguishing itself as fiction. Over time, however, the tone and content of Children's Literature have changed. Today Children's Literature that focuses on spiritual matters is more apt to raise important questions that children themselves may be considering rather than to provide answers to them. This development is consonant with what research is showing us about children's cognitive and spiritual development; children are not born "blank slates" upon which knowledge is to be inscribe. They are constantly constructing meaning from the environment about them. (Dowling and Scarlett, 312)

Children's Literature is thought to be created only to entertain both children and adults, but is not. In the case of children, it has essential roles, such as acting as first attempts into experience, being metaphorical escapes from reality that allow kids to live situations, learn and interpret signals. Children's Literature debunks the narrow assumptions about it and goes beyond them; it is meant to educate, to construct childhood, and to establish a bound between the reader and the story from the very beginning.

A word that characterizes Children's Literature is *Complexity*, because it is addressed to a public which is mostly vulnerable and easy to manipulate. And as childhood is the phase in our lives that mark us the most, Children's Literature needs to be meaningful, shocking, intriguing, and unique, not only to teach and cause an impact on children, but also on adults.

Arguably, the most pervasive theme in children's fiction is the transition within the individual from infantile solipsism to maturing social awareness. All developmental paths are ideologically constructed, involving conformity to societal norms, and it is important for anyone concerned with children's fiction to develop an awareness of the processes and ends of this construction. (Stephens, 3-4)

According to Lesnik- Oberstein, its complexity arises partly because the reading "child" of Children's Literature is primarily discussed in terms of emotional responses and consciousness from adults. Criticism of Children's books, for instance, actually devotes little systematic discussion to cognitive issues such as the correspondence between vocabulary lists composed by educational psychologists and the vocabulary levels in books, or to levels of cognitive development thought to be necessary to understanding the content of a book. (Hunt, 16)

This is why according to Barbara Wall, all writers for children must, in a sense, be writing down. If they write with an educated adult audience in mind, their stories will surely be, at best not always interesting and probably often intelligible, and at worst positively harmful, to children, even when a child appears as a central character. Whenever a writer shows consciousness of an immature audience, in the sense of adapting the material of the story or the techniques of the discourse for the benefit of child readers, that writer might be said to be writing down, that is, acknowledging that there is a difference in the skills, interests and frame of reference of children and adults. (Wall qtd in Hunt, 19)

According to M.O Grenby, the challenges of Children's Literature are many, and they are complex and fascinating. But the greatest challenge, which all of the best children's literature criticism meets, is to give children's books the kind of careful, nuanced and disinterested

critical attention that for many years was reserved only for books written for adults. (Meyer, 9)

In Children's Literature, there is a category in which *Little Women* takes part of, which is The Family Story. The category mentioned above, is that it probably includes more accounts of family disordering than family coherence. All the texts mentioned so far present families which have been disrupted, removing parents or children from one another by death, divorce, evacuation, flight, abandonment or some other mechanism. Usually this break is shown from the children's perspective in emotional and its practical consequences – the March family is subjected to the need of Mr. March's military service during the American Civil War in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. Marmee and the March sisters will have to survive the hardships of what that absence involves.

For Townsend, it is not so much the physical break-up of the family that was necessary for the family story to flourish, but rather for parents to have their authority diminished. Children then are tested with their first foray into community life in adult fashion, in which they have to prove their adaptation powers and value in terms of contribution. *Little Women*, he argues, could become 'the first great example' of the family story only because it 'marks a relaxation of the stiff and authoritarian stereotype of family life'. 'The family story could not work in an atmosphere of repression or of chilly grandeur', he wrote, for its 'key characteristic is always warmth. (Grenby, 118-119-120)

Young Adult Literature

As well as Children's Literature, Young Adult Literature is a genre that throughout the years has been difficult to consider to be part of a more serious vision of Literature due to the fact that it lacks of "quality" and is not as rich, as deep, as powerfully moving, and as complex as Literature. (Soter and Connors, 63). Young Adult's Literature, has been accused of being: for children only, somewhat simplistic, chick lit for teens, less than literary, not serious enough for use in schools, a marketing ploy, written by less serious or amateur writers, experimental, not established enough to bid for spots in the canon (Stephens, 34). This classification has marketing commercial motivation so experts tend to be patronizing.

A better approach to defining young adult literature is to consider what teens *choose* to read as opposed to what they are *required* to read (i.e., classical texts). Most teens choose books that publishing companies market as YA literature, as well as books that are marketed for the adult audience. They choose books with teen protagonists and seldom choose to read the traditional canon. While this approach to defining the genre has merit, it's somewhat problematic. In latter years the young adult genre has evolved, become more sophisticated, more inclusive, and has gained more widespread popularity. In classrooms across the country, teachers have replaced classical texts with books marketed primarily for teens. The idea, therefore, that young adult literature is what young adults *choose* to read and not what they are *coerced* to read falls a bit short because sometimes teens are forced to read books traditionally labeled "young adult." (Cole, 50).

In general terms, Young Adult's Literature is believed to be only focused to a teenage audience because of the topics that are related to it, in which we can find romance, identity problems, and isolation, among others. However, Young Adult Literature surpasses those narrow connotations. In fact, rites of passage identity issues, placement of self in the larger social and cultural context, and discovery of self in terms of (and against) defined roles are very much issues that confront young adults as they emerge from childhood. They are not, however, the sole domain of adolescence. To the contrary, they are issues that concern all of us as human beings, regardless of age. (Sotter and Connors, 64).

A positive view on Young Adult Literature is that adolescents can easily identify with some of the characters from the story since their rebellious and misunderstood nature so typical for teenagers. Furthermore, this genre is approachable to youth because of the following characteristics illustrated by Pam B. Cole:

1. The protagonist is a teenager.
2. Events revolve around the protagonist and his/her struggle to resolve conflict.
3. The story is told from the viewpoint and in the voice of a young adult.
4. Literature is written by and for young adults.
5. Literature is marketed to the young adult audience.
6. Story doesn't have a "storybook" or "happily-ever-after" ending—a characteristic of children's books.
7. Parents are noticeably absent or at odds with young adults.
8. Themes address coming-of-age issues (e.g., maturity, sexuality, relationships, and drugs).
9. Books contain under 300 pages, closer to 200. (49)

In Young Adult Literature, most of the times, the reader starts a journey towards maturity along with the character. Such process is most faithfully reflected in the Bildungsroman, a type of narrative also known as Novel of formation. Such genre was first introduced by Karl Morgerstenin in the early 19th century and later popularized by Wilhelm Diltthey in the early 20th century takes place; even though not all Young Adult Literature is considered as Bildungsroman, a lot of the most popular examples of it share some of its features.

Roughly it has been defined as “an account of the youthful development of a hero or heroine (usually the former). It describes the processes by which maturity is achieved through the various ups and downs of life.”(Cuddon, 77) Novels such as *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain are two of the many examples of novels of formation in which a male characters is the protagonist of the story. According to Camilla Brandstorm, the predominant focus on the male protagonist in the Bildungsroman genre has provoked feminist critics to offer a re-definition of the genre, claiming that the female protagonist's development differs in significant ways from the traditionally expected course of development (i.e. male). (1)

Through time, the Bildungsroman genre has become more inclusive and thus changed its character; from having focused solely on the 19th century white male hero, it has expanded to include not only the development of the white female protagonist but also the post-colonial protagonist, male as well as female. (Brändström, 11) Even though the Bildungsroman has gradually changed its gender focus in relation to protagonists and is in, a lot of cases, not male-centered (as in *Little Women*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, among others) there are elements of gender difference and sexism.

Continuing with the topic of sexism, there is a specific context in which Feminists have often accused male intellectuals of “stealing” women ideas. Dale Spender’s book examines cases of clear intellectual dishonesty: men presenting women’s ideas as their own without any kind of acknowledgment of their borrowing, which must be said to constitute an obvious example of the widespread patriarchal effort to silence women. (Moi, 119).

If F. Scott Fitzgerald could take the creative resources of Zelda Fitzgerald’s diaries as his own property and build his novels upon them, if he could see *her* creativity as the raw material for *his* work – and if the law upheld his right to do this and prevented Zelda from publishing her own work (which it did) – then the practice of men stealing women’s creativity is hardly outrageous or unknown. It is accepted practice and as such its widespread presence should be expected. (Spender, 30)

Although there are common themes in the male and female Bildungsroman, such as relationships to family and friends, formal/informal education, sexuality/love and the overall goal of self-development, there is a marked gender difference between the aims of the spiritual and psychological quest of the male hero and female heroine respectively, which needs to be recognized and realized in a proper (re)definition of the *Bildungsroman* genre. Gender difference is that “[e]very male hero of the *Bildungsroman* is guided by a mentor; something that the female heroine rarely acquires” (Labovitz qtd in Brändström, 14). If this is rule, then the process of formation of women is not only different, but one that lacks models and is shaped by other stimuli.

Lacking proper guidance in life by a mentor, in contrast to her male counterpart who has reached the end of his journey as well as important career choices when he is but a young

man, the female protagonist's developmental quest is both procrastinated and prolonged into middle age. Consequently, "... the female *Bildungsroman* requires expansion beyond the point when the heroine is married, for up until this point of maturation the heroine has no sharp delineation of herself or her role, taking her identity from the man she marries, and wavering between self-narrowing and growth" (194). In contrast to the male hero who has modelled himself on his mentor, the female protagonist, lacking a representative model, has not yet found her role in society by the time she marries when still a young woman. As she has not yet found her own identity but instead models herself on her husband, thus hesitating between narrowing and developing herself, the female protagonist's growth continues well beyond matrimony. The theme of role models hence reveals clear gender differences between the male and the female *Bildungsroman*.

Another difference between sexes regarding *Bildungsroman* concerns the issue of gender and sexual inequality. Patriarchy plays a rather significant role in the female *Bildungsroman*, as well as the heroines' repudiation of male power. Consequently, "... the theme of equality between sexes is one sharply raised in the female *Bildungsroman*, alone". Whereas gender equality is a major concern in the female novel of development exclusively, the male hero, in contrast, will "grapple with social equality"; by means of his vocation the male protagonist starts to climb the social ladder, while his female counterpart rebels against the structure of society and its injustices. (Brändström, 14-15)

While detractors of the female *Bildungsroman* are sceptical about the apparent dissemination of the genre, John H. Smith finds the notion a "contradiction in terms" for other reasons:

Much women's literature addresses , in fact, the inappropriateness of male developmental models for women in the patriarchy...My tendency for now, however, would be to reserve the term *Bildungsroman* for those works that

illustrate the cultivation and discontent of *Bildung* understood as the engendering of the male subject in the modern patriarchal Symbolic order.

(Smith qtd in McWilliams, 26)

The Bildungsroman by design and definition follows the psychological, spiritual and social growth of a protagonist.

As this genre historically opens to include the development of women, *Little Women* can be considered one as the reader can witness Josephine's self-development and evolution from a tomboyish girl to a new aged woman who incorporates conservative and revolutionary ideas of womanhood. Jo confronts patriarchal presences, represented by male and female characters, and shapes her own personality by fiercely defying the role others try to impose against her just for being a woman. Much like Elizabeth Bennet—the protagonist of *Pride and Prejudice*—she refuses convenient proposals, does not doubt in sacrificing her hair and chooses a career over family life.

Feminism, Feminist Novel and *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

Generally speaking, the feminist novel is directly linked to a historical period in which people have become aware and more concerned about gender inequality. In 1773 the Monthly Review stated that when it came to fiction the field was filled by ladies, and well into the nineteenth century it was conceded that not only were women novelists plentiful, but that they were good (Spender, 25)

So it is important to start by defining what Feminism is. Feminism is a way of looking at the world, which women occupy from the perspective of women. It has as its central focus the concept of patriarchy, which can be described as a system of male authority, which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions.(Osborne, 8) All ideas, including feminist ones, are “contaminated” by patriarchal ideology. (Moi, 118).

The patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on a biological woman, in order precisely to make people believe that the chosen standards for “femininity” are *natural*. Patriarchy has developed a whole series of “feminine” characteristics (sweetness, modesty, subservience, humility, etc.) that need to be conformed so as to be accepted in society as a woman. Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both *unfeminine* and *unnatural*. It is in the patriarchal interest that these two terms (femininity and femaleness) stay thoroughly confused. Patriarchy in other words, wants us to believe that there is such a thing as an essence of femaleness, called femininity. Feminists, on the other hand, have to disentangle this confusion, and must therefore always insist that though women undoubtedly are *female*, this in no way guarantees that they will conform to the constraint of the *feminine*. (Moi, 123) In simpler words, Feminism is the ‘advocacy of

women's rights, or of the movement for the advancement and emancipation of women' (Osborne 9)

Another relevant concept that arised in conjunction with Feminism is the Feminist Criticism it entails, which is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature. A feminist critic can use whichever methods or theories she likes. There are, of course, different political views within the feminist camp. Recognisable feminist criticism and theory must in some way be relevant to the study of the social, institutional and personal power relations between the sexes. (Moi, 117-118)

In literature, Virginia Woolf is rightly considered the founder of modern feminist literary criticism. Prior to her landmark contributions to the field, in particular her feminist manifesto of literary criticism, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), very few works register in historical accounts of its genesis.

Woolf redresses the critically neglected area of early feminist literature, introducing novels, short stories and poems of the suffrage era (until 1930), an era that spans much of the period of Woolf 's formative literary career and closes as *A Room of One's Own* makes its first impact.

There are, of course, many women writers among her contemporaries whom we may regard as feminist. Some wrote manifestos on (feminist/socialist/pacifist) politics (Alexandra Kollontai, Emma Goldman, Mina Loy, Storm Jameson, Rebecca West, Christina Stead) or on literary aesthetics (Amy Lowell, Gertrude Stein, May Sinclair, Marianne Moore), but Woolf stands out for her sustained attempts to combine both. Her work was nevertheless influenced by feminist intellectuals in other disciplines, not least by the Cambridge classical anthropologist Jane Harrison (1850–1928), who was a mentor to Woolf, and also by the

feminist writer and activist Ray Strachey (1887–1940), a member of Woolf’s Bloomsbury circle and author of *The Cause* (1928), a history of the modern British feminist movement. Woolf’s feminist literary criticism is not, then, *sui generis*, as further evidenced by her large body of writings on her feminist antecedents and contemporaries; nor is it safe to assume that her arguments are entirely original. Woolf’s interests, set out in *A Room of One’s Own*, in the gender politics of literary production and consumption, and the impact on fiction of the rise of women (Goldman 66-67).

Throughout history, there have been three rough stages in the feminist movement that are usually called “The Three Waves of Feminism” tracing the process from its first systematic public manifestations with the suffragette movement in the late 19th century to these days.

The First Wave of Feminism emerged during the industrial society and it is linked to the liberal women’s rights movement and socialist feminism in the late 19th and early 20th century in the United States and Europe. This wave looked for the inclusion and equality for women. It encompassed contributions of feminists who worked primarily within the confines of existing systems of rules and laws to achieve equality for women and the right to participate more widely in society (Worrel, 469-470).

The Second Wave of Feminism arose in the 1960s to 1970s in postwar Western welfare societies. This movement is linked to the radical voices of women’s empowerment and differential rights which will evolve during the 1980s to 1990s into a crucial differentiation from second-wave feminism itself: transition from second to third wave feminists see difference within feminists themselves and mark degrees of separation among white and women of color and third-world women. (Kroløkke and Sørensen, 1). The second wave produced a variety of thought about the nature of gender oppression, the appropriate goals of feminism, and the optimal means of reaching these goals. Four major theories associated

with second wave of feminism are liberal feminism, cultural feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism. (Worrel, 470)

Finally, The Third Feminist Wave goes from the mid-1990s onward. This wave manifests itself in “grrl” (sic) rhetoric, which seeks to overcome the theoretical question of equity or difference and the political question of evolution or revolution, while it challenges the notion of “universal womanhood” and embraces ambiguity, diversity, and multiplicity in transversal theory and politics. (Kroløkke and Sørensen, 1).

The Third Feminist wave have produced elaborations and critiques of previous theories and included postmodern, women of color, lesbian, global, and generation-X third wave feminisms. (Worrel, 470).

In Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s view, capitalism and patriarchy work together in the economic and sexual exploitation of women. What Gilman called the “sexuo-economic relation” is extensively analysed in *Women and Economics* (1898). Under capitalist patriarchy, “the economic relation is combined with sex-relation and the consequence is women’s dependence and subordination. Gilman uses the concept of evolution to point out that under these conditions a particular type of woman is bred –men choose women for marriage and reproduction (and limit them to that role), which suits the prevailing patriarchal view of femininity. “We have trained and bred one kind of qualities into one half the species, and another kind into the other half. ...For instance, we have done all we could, in addition to natural forces, to make men brave. We have done all we could, in addition to natural forces, to make women cowards” (Gilman qtd in Madsen, 41). Women are empowered as long as they conform to the roles provided and strictly limited by male authority.

During the nineteenth century, women were victims of the patriarchal society, in which they were entirely dependent upon their father or husband. (Laire, 6). Here, men were supposed

to work while women were supposed to take care of the household chores and children. In short, the ideal young girl should prepare herself to be the perfect wife (modern but accepting her traditional role), who can create a perfect home (a domestic paradise) and conduct her life in a completely self-sacrificing manner (serving her husband's needs). (Delaney, 36) This was about to change.

In 1848 a Woman's Right Convention at Seneca Falls, New York took place. In this place, women claimed for social, political and economic equality, so as for education. Educated women had the possibility to write books and by writing them, they had the opportunity to influence other women to build up their independence, so as Louisa May Alcott was eager to transmit to female the readers.

According to Jill P. May, the female characters drawn by Louisa May Alcott for *Little Women* represent a significant break from the typical late-nineteenth-century New England housewife image. They accept the notion that happiness comes in marriage, but each has strong opinions and a desire to satisfy her own goals within marriage. (May, 10)

Little Women marks a relaxation of the authoritarian stereotype of family life (Townsend qtd. in Grenby, 120). In the novel, a loving, caring and warmth family fights against the adversities together; women achieve independence within marriage by creating a sort of partnership, so as a result there is a break from the 19th century housewife image and women have strong opinions and want to satisfy their goals.

The idea of partnership goes in hand with the marital union, which is one of symmetrical "equals", promoting erotic and familial partnership. The narrative flow makes such conjugal "happy endings" appear natural and inevitable, in much the same way that Plutarch depicted marriage as the natural site of philosophical progression. The inequalities of gender difference are, as is Plutarch, relativized and reconfigured by the gentle rubric of

“partnership” or *symbiosis*, through a discourse of elite matrimonial harmony. (Levine and Robbins, 33).

Regarding the novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott; her stories of nineteenth-century domestic life include what is widely known as the quintessential women's novel: *Little Women; or, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy* (1868). Her novels detailing the lives of Jo, Meg, Amy, Beth, their children, and their careers have remained popular for over a century, though many observers consider them the exclusive province of female readers. (Alcott Louisa May Introduction. T. Gale. *Feminism in Literature: A Gale Critical Companion*, Jan. 2005.)

Based on Louisa May Alcott's own childhood this lively portrait of the nineteenth-century family is the story of four girls: Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy March who have to cope with poverty and the inequality of the 19th century while their father is fighting in the Civil War. Even though this group of girls are poor, her mother (Marmee) always encourages them to help people in lesser conditions. In this case we see the disruption of the patriarchal system of a family because Marmee is the one who is in charge due to Mr. March's absence.

The novel shows how difficult it is for The Marches to fit in in the nineteenth century welfare society, because they were not rich enough. Once, Meg was invited to a friend's party and she accepted to be dressed up in high style with borrowed clothes. Meg felt and looked as a high society woman, but sadly while at the party, everybody started gossiping that Meg wanted to marry Laurie because of his fortune. With this situation, Meg learnt and internalized that appearances are not important at all.

In this part, it is shown that women will not find an important place in society until they get marry to a well-positioned man in order to secure their future prosperity. If a woman did not have the chance to marry a wealthy man, the only thing she could do was working in an era in which job opportunities were limited.

In the following quotations, Meg and Jo are complaining about the social inequalities of the nineteenth century, being women specially affected because of the pressure imposed by society on them.

Meg: "We shouldn't enjoy ourselves half so much as we do now. But it does seem so nice to have little suppers and bouquets, and go to parties, and drive home, and read and rest, and not work. It's like other people, you know, and I always envy girls who do such things, I'm so fond of luxury," said Meg, trying to decide which of two shabby gowns was the least shabby." (Chapter 4, Part 1)

Jo: "My patience, how blue we are!" cried Jo. "I don't much wonder, poor dear, for you see other girls having splendid times, while you grind, grind, year in and year out. Oh, don't I wish I could manage things for you as I do for my heroines! You're pretty enough and good enough already, so I'd have some rich relation leave you a fortune unexpectedly. Then you'd dash out as an heiress, scorn everyone who has slighted you, go abroad, and come home my Lady Something in a blaze of splendor and elegance." (Chapter 15)

Meg: "People don't have fortunes left them in that style nowadays, men have to work and women marry for money. It's a dreadfully unjust world," said Meg bitterly." (Chapter 15)

The novel not only describes the precarious situation of a fatherless family, but even adds more complication by risking the possibility of total loss. In the passive role women are relegated, the March girls would just have to wait for doom to knock at their door.

One day The Marches received a telegram informing that Mr. March was in the hospital in Washington D.C. Marmee decides to go there in order to help and support her husband. As

The Marches had money problems, Jo had her hair cut and then sold it so as her mother can pay the trip.

Here we see two women assuming an active role that disrupts the circumscription of patriarchy. On the one hand, Marmee goes to Washington. On the other hand, Jo cuts her hair off and sells it.

Marmee: "My dear, where did you get it? Twenty five dollars! Jo, I hope you haven't done anything rash?"

Jo: "No, it's mine honestly. I didn't beg, borrow, or steal it. I earned it, and I don't think you'll blame me, for I only sold what was my own."

As she spoke, Jo took off her bonnet, and a general outcry arose, for all her abundant hair was cut short. (Chapter 15)

"Children, I leave you to Hannah's care and Mr. Laurence's protection. Hannah is faithfulness itself, and our good neighbor will guard you as if you were his own. I have no fears for you, yet I am anxious that you should take this trouble rightly. Don't grieve and fret when I am gone, or think that you can be idle and comfort yourselves by being idle and trying to forget. Go on with your work as usual, for work is a blessed solace. Hope and keep busy, and whatever happens, remember that you never can be fatherless." (Chapter 16)

The quotes show the two specific moments in which women leave behind the feminine roles of the nineteenth century breaking the rules imposed on them.

Continuing with the images adopted by each character, Beth is the most benevolent of the female images; the feminine one. Only Beth visited her poor and sick neighbors who had a

baby with scarlet fever. Sadly Beth catches this deadly disease. Meanwhile, as Amy is the youngest, she spends time at Aunt March's house in order to escape the scarlet fever.

Beth recovers, though not completely. In the meantime Laurie's tutor falls in love with Meg and asks for her hand in marriage.

Three years pass and Mr. March is at home, and Laurie is almost finishing school. Soon, Meg marries and moves into a new house with Mr. Brooke (Laurie's tutor) dealing with the house chores including two babies, and Jo gets another novel published. Amy goes to Paris with aunt March, because she prefers Amy's companion and attitude over Jo's.

Marmee: "Aunt Carrol is going abroad next month, and wants..."

Jo: "Me to go with her!" burst in Jo, flying out of her chair in an uncontrollable rapture."

Marmee: "No, dear, not you. It's Amy."

Jo: "Oh, Mother! She's too young, it's my turn first. I've wanted it so long. It would do me so much good, and be so altogether splendid. I must go!"

Marmee: "I'm afraid it's impossible, Jo. Aunt says Amy, decidedly, and it is not for us to dictate when she offers such a favor."

Jo: "It's always so. Amy has all the fun and I have all the work. It isn't fair, oh, it isn't fair!" cried Jo passionately.

Marmee: "I'm afraid it's partly your own fault, dear. When Aunt spoke to me the other day, she regretted your blunt manners and too independent spirit, and here she writes, as if quoting something you had said—I planned at first to ask Jo, but as 'favors burden her', and she

'hates French', I think I won't venture to invite her. Amy is more docile, will make a good companion for Flo, and receive gratefully any help the trip may give her." (Chapter 30).

Here, the ideas of models in the female and male Bildungsroman presented by Brandstorm are exemplified. In the novel, all the important young characters have mentor figures in which they find support, protection, orientation, training and wise pieces of advice. Jo has professor Baher, Beth has Mr. Laurence, Amy has aunt March and Laurie has his tutor Mr. Brooke.

As the novel goes on, Laurie finally confesses his love to Jo and she rejects him, saying that she does not love him as he loves her.

Laurie: "I've loved you ever since I've known you, Jo, couldn't help it, you've been so good to me. I've tried to show it, but you wouldn't let me. Now I'm going to make you hear, and give me an answer, for I can't go on so any longer."

Jo: "You, you are, you're a great deal too good for me, and I'm so grateful to you, and so proud and fond of you, I don't know why I can't love you as you want me to. I've tried, but I can't change the feeling, and it would be a lie to say I do when I don't."

Jo: "Oh, Teddy, I'm sorry, so desperately sorry, I could kill myself if it would do any good! I wish you wouldn't take it so hard, I can't help it. You know it's impossible for people to make themselves love other people if they don't," cried Jo inelegantly but remorsefully, as she softly patted his shoulder, remembering the time when he had comforted her so long ago.

"They do sometimes," said a muffled voice from the post. "I don't believe it's the right sort of love, and I'd rather not try it," was the decided answer. (Chapter 35)

In this case, Jo breaks with the concept of subordination of women during the nineteenth century. In that period men choose women for marriage and reproduction (and limit them to that role), which suits the prevailing patriarchal view of femininity. (Madsen, 41). Jo empowers herself and choose the man she wants to love and with this, debunking the concept of patriarchy. No one imposed her a man to love, she chose him by her own and finally marries him.

Jo moves to New York in order to escape Laurie's affections for her. While in New York, Jo meets Professor Bhaer, a poor German language instructor. This geographical change is directly related to experience and so as to the concept of Bildungsroman because the reader is able to perceive Jo's self-development.

Professor Bhaer dismays Jo from writing exaggerated stories, and she takes his advice and finds a more transparent writing style.

On the one hand Jo and Laurie, have a quick temper and dislike being restrained by others. Jo learns that an ideal match must base on mutual tolerance and patience, which both of them just lack for. In the novel Miss March says the following:

"As friends you are very happy, and your frequent quarrels soon blow over, but I fear you would both rebel if you were mated for life. You are too much alike and too fond of freedom, not to mention hot tempers and strong wills, to get on happily together, in a relation which needs infinite patience and forbearance, as well as love." (Chapter 32).

On the other hand, with the benevolent Professor Baher Jo undergoes a shift from tomboyhood to womanhood, as she starts hungering for someone to love and being loved.

Professor Baher is the right person to help her out of helplessness and solitude. With Mr. Baher, in sharp contrast to her past concepts, she begins to pay more attention to her appearance now and behaves like a little girl who has beautiful dreams of love. Jo subtly accepts her female identity and is even “afraid of being laughed at for surrendering, after her many and vehement declarations of independence”.

Jo and Professor Baher decided to open a school, they share the value that happy life counts for more than money and pleasure in the common pursuit of helping others. It seems as if Jo has abandoned her previously yearned independence and given in to a conventional woman destiny. (Zhou 17-18-19) Nevertheless, this transformation goes in hand the concept of partnership; Jo and Professor Baher complement each other.

Beth soon dies. This shows that the role of the Victorian who is in charge of the household chores and submitted to the rules and ideologies of the nineteenth century is metaphorically killing her. Beth is everything that a woman was supposed to be in the nineteenth century; a submissive, patient, feminine, and hard-working woman.

The novel ends with The Marches cheerfully reunited showing each of the sisters appreciating what they have and thanking for their good fortune and for having each other.

Louisa May Alcott

Through her life and stories, Louisa May Alcott has occupied the center of the controversy over women's roles in America. The March family trilogy of *Little Women*, *Little Men*, and *Jo's Boys* has never been out of print and continues to speak to girls today about themselves, about boys and about family life (Elbert, 1)

Alcott was born in a highly intellectual family in November 29, 1832 in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and lived most of her life in Concord, Massachusetts. She was the second of four daughters.

On the one hand, her father Bronson Alcott, was an idealist, an educator, a man of causes and his daughter's chief educator he also was an educational reformer who implemented ideas about coeducation and racial integration into his classroom (Brook, 3).

On the other hand, her mother Abigail May Alcott was a strong, practical woman who fostered Louisa to become a capable, independent woman.

Abigail, shared her husband's desire to reform society by educating women and curbing racial prejudice. Abigail thought that it was important for women to cultivate their minds in order to become better home companions to their husbands, but however limiting her reasons, she did ensure that her daughters received adequate education. (Greene, 3)

A piece of Alcott's life is reflected in *Little Women*, because Louisa is reflected in Josephine March. In addition, the whole story is influenced by Alcott's life and education.

Description of the school

The school chosen to be part of this project is called Colegio Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia. It is a mixed, semi-private, and catholic school located in Guillermo Munich #112 Cerro Alegre, Valparaiso.

The school offers fully equipped classrooms that apart from the common facilities, it also includes a projector and access to Wi-Fi.

For the development of the students, the school offers extracurricular activities, so the students are used to having activities after regular classes and to working in groups.

What the school chases is explained in two categories called Misión and the Visión that states the following:

MISIÓN

El Colegio Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia es una comunidad educativa que participa en la misión educativa de la Iglesia Católica con las riquezas del carisma Rossellano, asumiendo el desafío de una educación de calidad y al servicio de la evangelización y la cultura, colabora con las familias para acompañar a sus hijos e hijas en su formación como personas íntegras, cristianas, de valores irrenunciables, constructores de una sociedad que responda a la civilización del amor siendo ellos mismos un aporte afectivo y efectivo con su ser y quehacer a Chile y al mundo globalizado, preparándose en el campo humano, social y religioso.

VISIÓN

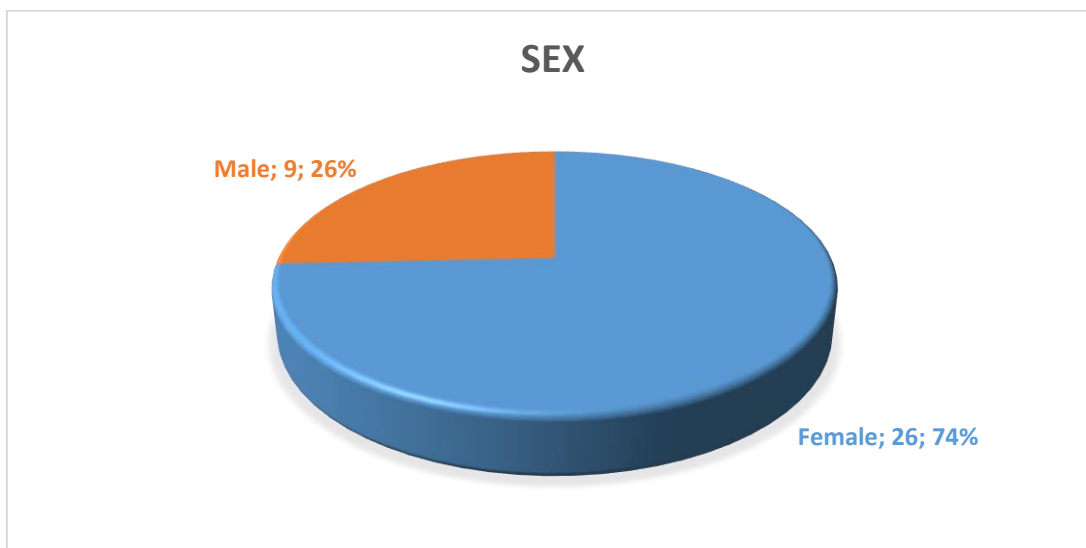
Ser una comunidad educativa que favorezca el crecimiento integral de los niños, niñas y adolescentes, en el área personal, cognitiva y religiosa, estimulando el desarrollo del pensamiento, el espíritu crítico responsable y participativo, mediante un trabajo creativo, firme, amoroso y sistemático en la interrelación niño/a – familia – colegio para que sean niños, niñas, adolescentes felices, integrados, con capacidad de autonomía, autodisciplina, solidaridad, justicia, respeto y creatividad. Que sean constructores de familias sanas y miembros activos en la transformación de nuestra sociedad, en la consolidación de la civilización del amor y la vida.

Needs Analysis

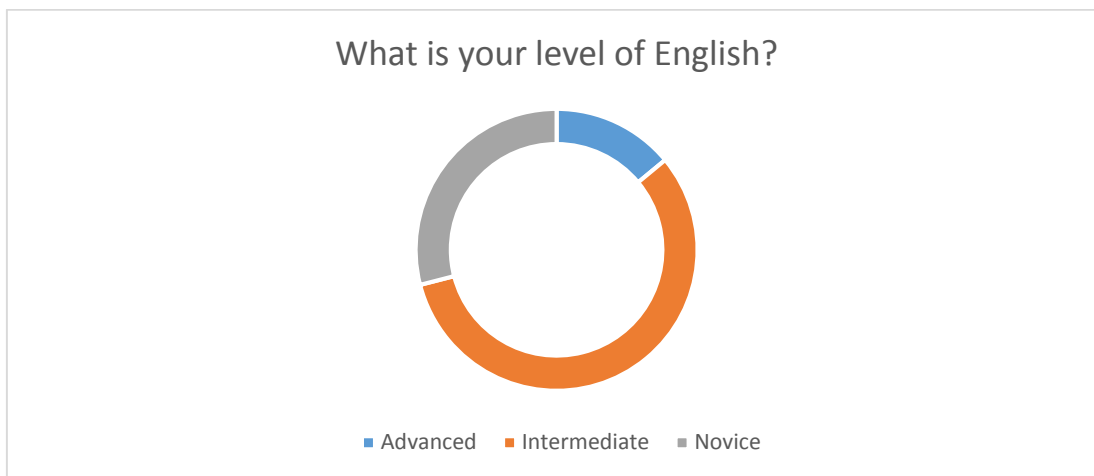
To put this in context, Colegio Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia was a single sex school before this only for girls, so the majority of the students are women. Gradually, men have started being members of this school as well. Nowadays, from kindergarten to second year of high school there are mixed courses.

For the Needs Analysis a structured questionnaire that consisted of 14 questions was given to the second year of high school class composed by 35 students who had to answer them anonymously.

They were asked to answer the following questions:



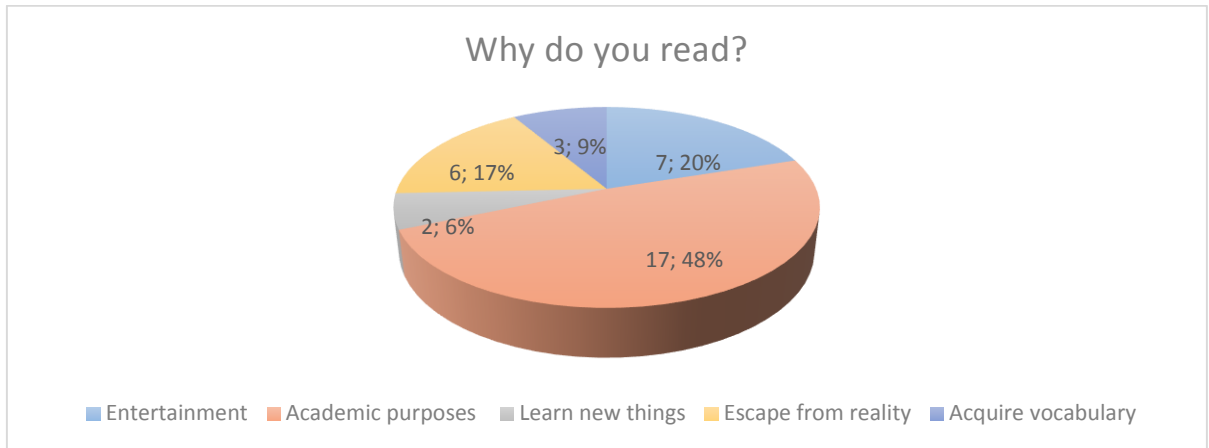
Regarding gender, as it was mentioned before, the majority of students are girls. The graphic shows that a 79% of students are women and a 21% of students are men. This means that the course is consists in 26 girls and 7 boys.



In relation to the level of English of the students, 14% of them (5 students) established that they have an Advanced level of English. A 57% of them (20 students) claimed to have an Intermediate level of English. Finally, a 29% of the students (10 students) established that they have a Novice level of English.



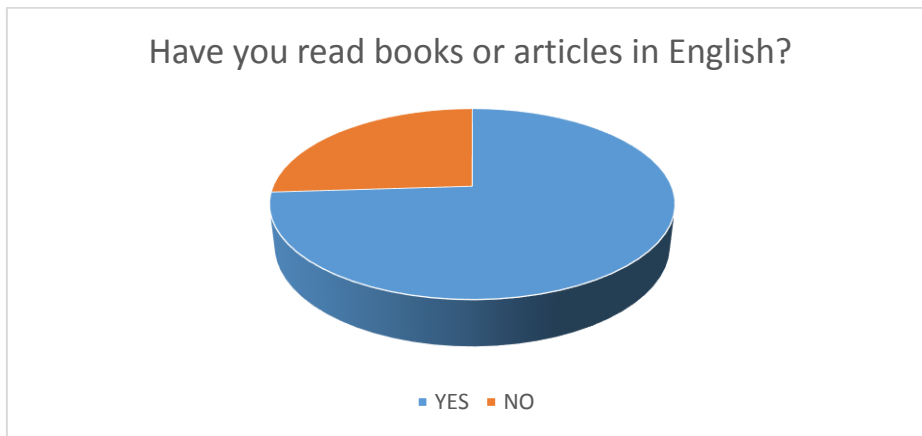
Regarding the 4 skills of English, 28% of students (10) consider themselves good at Reading, 26% of the students (9) consider themselves good at Speaking, 17% of them (6) said that they are good at Listening; and finally, 29% of them (10) claimed to be good at Writing.



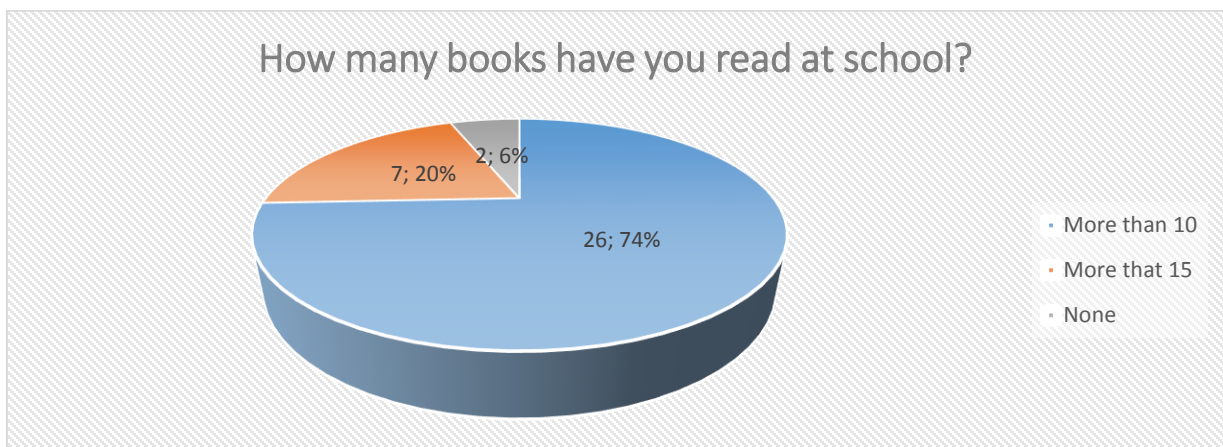
Here the students were asked the reasons why they read. A 48% of students (17 of them) claimed to read for entertainment, while a 20% 7of the students (7 of them) claimed to read for academic purposes.

A 9% of the students (3 of them) claimed to read in order to learn new things, while a 17% of the students (6 of them) claimed to read to escape from reality.

Finally, a 6% of the students claimed to read in order to acquire vocabulary.



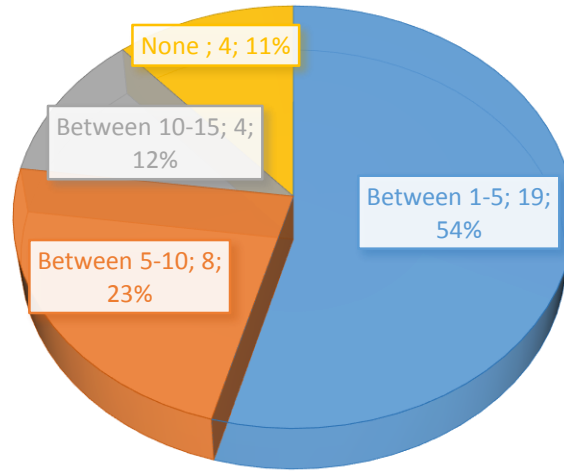
After students were asked if they have read books or articles in English, a 74% of them (26 students) assured that they have read books or essays in English, while a 26% (9 of them) claimed that they have not read a book or article in English.



In relation to this question, a 74% of students (26) assured that they have read more than 10 books at school, while a 20% of the students (7) claimed to have read more than 15 books at school.

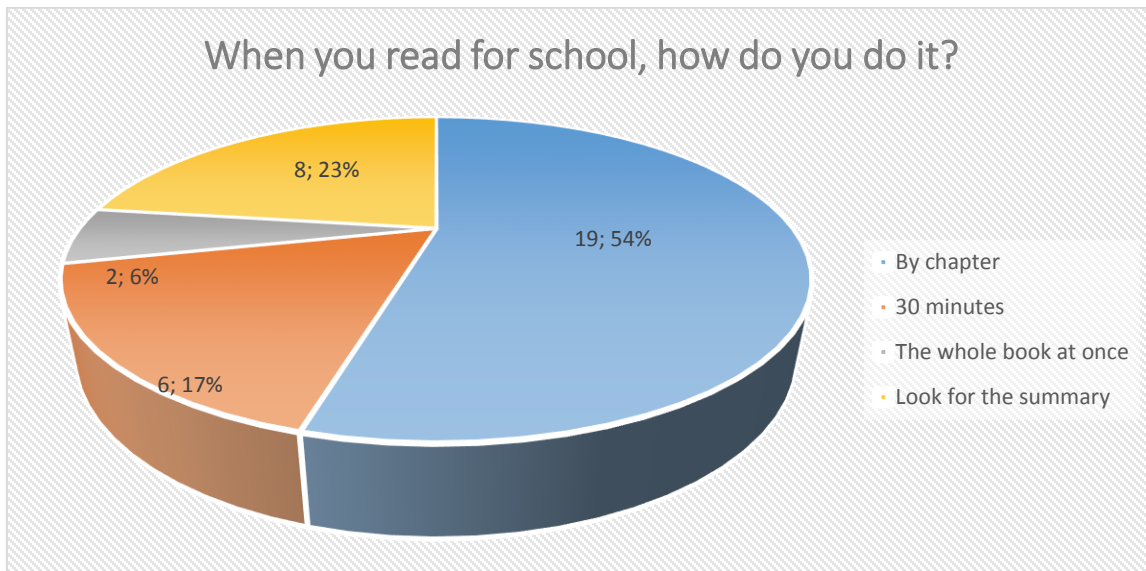
Finally, a 6% (2) of students, recognize that they have never read a book at school

HOW MANY BOOKS HAVE YOU READ ON YOUR OWN?

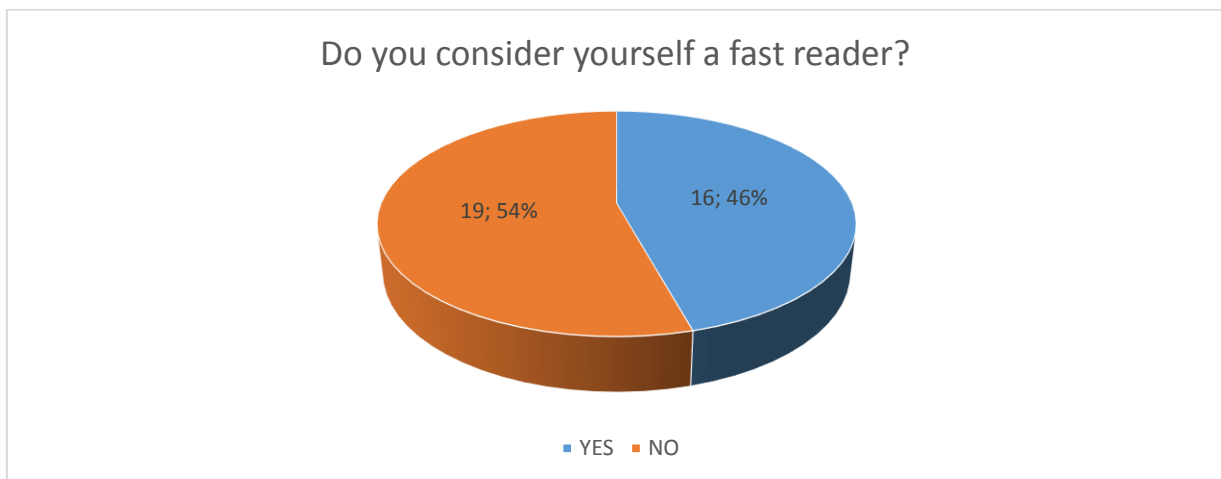


Regarding this question, 54%(19) of students claimed to have read between 1 and 5 books out by their own, then, a 23% (8)of the students claimed to have read between 5 and 10 books.

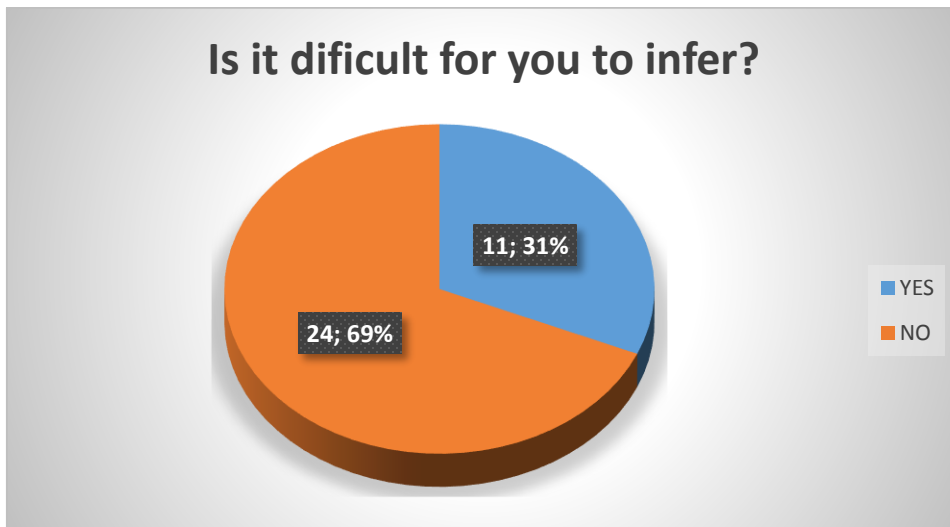
A 12% (4) of the students assured to have read between 10 and 15 books by their own, and finally, (1-2) 11% of them have not read a book on their own.



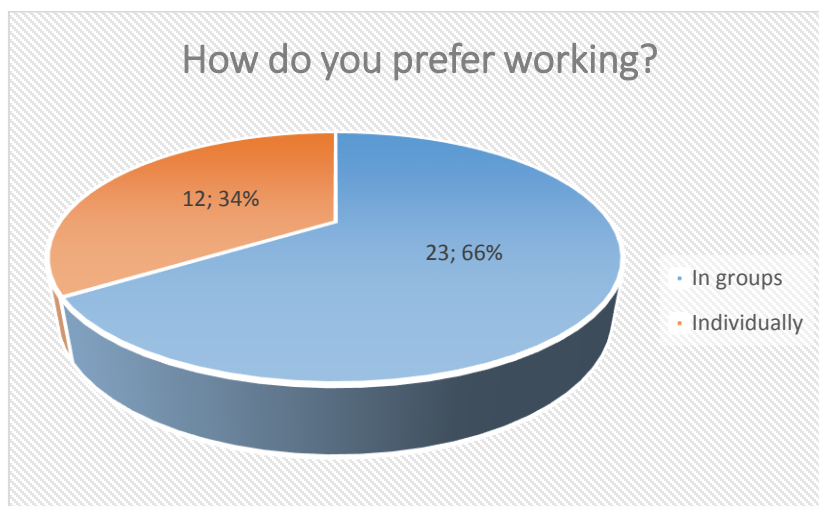
In relation to this question, a 54% (19) of students claimed to read by chapter, a 17% of the students (6) claimed to read for 30 minutes a day, a 6% of them (2) read the whole book at once, and finally, a 23% of the students (8) look for the summary.



In this cases, a 46% of the students (16) consider themselves fast readers, while a 54% of them (19) do not consider themselves fast readers.

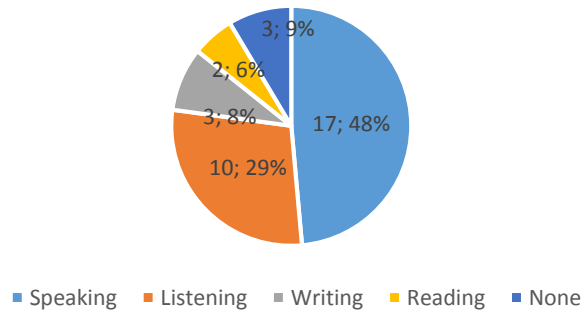


In this cases, 69% (24) of the students consider themselves good at inferring, while a 31% of them (11) consider themselves not that good at inferring



This graphic shows that a 66% of the students (23) enjoy working in groups, while a 34% of them (12) do not enjoy working in groups.

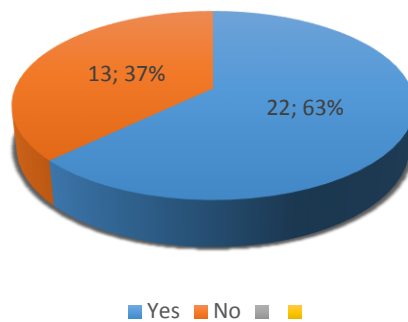
What activities do you enjoy doing at class?



According to this graphic, a 48% of students enjoy working on speaking activities, a 29% enjoy doing listening activities.

An 8% of students enjoy working on writing activities, while a 6% of them enjoy doing reading activities. Finally a 9% of students, do not enjoy working with activities in English.

Would you take a Literature workshop after class?



Regarding the last question, students were asked if they would like to take an extracurricular workshop, after class.

63% of them (22) agreed on taking the workshop, while 37% of them (13) would not take an extracurricular workshop of literature.

Rationale

The workshop takes place in a semi-private school called Colegio Nuestra Señora de la Misericordia, in which the target group is a year 10.

The novel that students work with is *Little Women* (1868) written by the American writer Louisa May Alcott.

According to the Needs Analysis, the students evidenced to have an Intermediate level of English, which will help the class to be more dynamic. Language proficiency being intermediate, contents could be partially difficult for them to follow. As a way to make atmosphere more learner-friendly –as there are some students who considered themselves Advanced speakers –they will be mingled with the less proficient ones and will be delegated roles of monitoring in order to strengthen bounds and help the ones who have more problems in their language learning process

Luckily the majority of the students enjoy reading and speaking, which are the two main skills for the development of this workshop.

Something that was totally unexpected was the fact that students actually read any book by chapter when necessary, which is an important activity to be assessed in the workshop.

Other important features are the fact that the students enjoy working in groups and that are willing to participate in a Literature workshop. For these reasons, activities that include working in groups are designed for them to keep enriching their social skills. As Speaking and Listening are their weakest skills in English, group work will help the students to practice such skills and improve themselves when interacting with others in English.

The decisions for the activities are based on the needs analysis in order to fulfill students' needs and of course, have fun when learning.

The types of syllabus that are going to be used in this project are: Task Based syllabus and Content Syllabus.

In task-based instruction the content of the teaching is a series of complex and purposeful tasks that the Students want or need to perform with the language they are learning. The tasks are defined as activities with a purpose other than language learning, but, as in a content-based syllabus, the performance of the tasks is approached in a way that is intended to develop second language ability. Language learning is subordinated to task performance, and language teaching occurs only as the need arises during the performance of a given task. Tasks integrate language (and other) skills in specific settings of language use. (Krahnke, 17)

With content-based instruction, learners are helped to acquire language through the study of a series of relevant topics, each topic exploited in systematic ways and from different angles, as outlined in Mohan's "knowledge framework", (Nunan, 1988 pp. 49-50.) Content syllabuses certainly give learners a lot of exposure to the language, which is good. (Nunan qtd. in Jalilzadeh and Tahmasebi 224).

In a content-based approach, the activities of the language class are specific to the subject matter being taught, and are geared to stimulate students to think and learn through the use of the target language. Such an approach lends itself quite naturally to the integrated teaching of the four traditional language skills. For example, it employs authentic reading materials which require students not only to understand information but to interpret and evaluate it as well. It provides a forum in which students can respond orally to reading and lecture materials. It recognizes that academic writing follows from listening and reading, and thus requires students to synthesize facts and ideas from multiple sources as preparation for writing. In this approach, students are exposed to study skills and learn a variety of language

skills which prepare them for the range of academic tasks they will encounter. (Jalilzadeh and Tahmasebi, 224).

A content-based syllabus is not really a language teaching syllabus at all. In content-based language teaching, the primary purpose of the instruction is to teach some content or information using the language that the students are also learning.

A task-based syllabus and a content-based syllabus are similar in that in both the teaching is not organized around linguistic features of the language being learned but according to some other organizing principle. (Krahnke, 17-18)

Course Syllabus

Graduation Project Outline

Gianinna Papalli Lagunas

September, 2015

“Who runs the world?” a Literature Workshop on Louisa May Alcott’s

Little Women

Teacher: Gianinna Papalli	Area: English
Lesson Period: 2 nd semester	Sub Area: Literature
Weekly Hours: 2	Number of Lessons: 13 (from the 1 st week of September)

Context: This course will be developed as an extracurricular workshop for students from a semi private school who are in elementary, specifically in year 10. It is a workshop centered on a guided reading of *Little Women*, a 1868 novel written by the American writer Louisa May Alcott.

The students of this workshop are invited to be part of the story and to participate actively by being curious and giving their own opinions based on the novel and the historical context in both periods (the 19th and 21st Century).

The workshop will be carried out once a week (on Tuesdays) after regular classes and the final grade of it corresponds to a 30% of the final grade of the English lessons.

Course Description: This course is meant to be taught to students who want to learn about English Literature. The novel that they are going to work with is Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*. The workshop will provide the students a basic introduction to literature and basic

instruments to understand and analyze the novel informedly. Feminism is a key concept in the novel, so that it would be fully develop throughout the course, whose main goal is raising the students' awareness about gender stereotyping.

General Objective: The main goal of this workshop is reinforcing critical thinking in the students and encouraging them to discover the importance of gender roles in society. Students will achieve that through their involvement in the different assignments and tasks scheduled by the teacher through the reading and critical discussion of Louisa M. Alcott's *Little Women*.

Another important goal of this workshop is helping the students to acquire reading skills, so that they can all participate in the lessons with the same tools.

Specific Objectives: The students will be able to:

- Recall the most relevant themes and information of the novel.
- Contrast the gender roles between the 19th and 21st centuries.
- Illustrate each of the characters based on what they have read.
- Analyze specific situations of the novel and their effects
- Debate different outcomes that take place in the novel.
- Classify each character's role in the story.
- Design a profile with the most important features of the characters.

Expected Learning Outcomes: Students are expected to:

- Summarize and paraphrase information.
- Interpret information given in the story.

- Work effectively with others when sharing ideas and being respectful.
- Understand how the gender roles work by performing it in any situation.
- Organizing their speech when giving an opinion or writing a text.
- Discover and value the importance of each character
- Apply core vocabulary from the novel and from the each unit.
- Enhance their oral skills when presenting a topic in front of others.

Contents and Themes: Ideologies, gender stereotyping, family relationships, role of women, society in the 19th century, men and women's status, restrictions, children's literature, young adult literature, Bildungsroman.

Key concepts: Feminism, family, roles, boundaries, young adult literature, children's literature, Bildungsroman.

Class Information:

1. Number of Students: 30 students
2. Grade: Second Year , Highschool.
3. Period: Tuesdays after regular classes.
4. Type of Syllabus used: Content-based syllabus primarily, and task-based syllabus.
5. Number of Lessons: 13 lessons, once a week.

Requisites:

- To be able to participate in all the lessons
- To attend to all the lessons.

- To read the novel.
- To look for information about the novel and the historical period of it.
- To work enthusiastically.
- To be ready to participate in every lesson.
- To be responsible.
- To be prepared to work with different people.
- To bring a monolingual dictionary.

Required Readings:

1. Course Materials: *Little Women* book.
2. Additional Materials: *Little Women* movies, worksheets, supplementary readings, whiteboard, markers, computers, speakers, projector.

Evaluations: The final grade of the workshop corresponds to a 30% of the final grade in the English lessons.

The following course assignments will be evaluated:

Speaking Activities (Discussions and role play)	40%
Activities performed in class	10 %
Final Project	30%
Participation	10%

Late Assignments: All the pieces of homework are compulsory, so late assignments won't be neither evaluated nor included in the final percentage of the course assignment related to homework.

On the other hand, only the cases in which the student can justify his/her absence, the student can bring the piece of homework the following class or sent it through email. In this case, it will take part of the final percentage.

Academic misconduct: Any type of misconduct is not accepted in the workshop, such as disrespect from students to the teacher or between them, irresponsibility in general, lateness, bad disposition, cheating, and dishonesty.

If there is any problem the teacher will meet with the student or students that are involved in some of the issues mentioned before and try to solve it. If not possible, the headmaster of the school will take part of the situation.

General Planning

Unit 1: A journey through discovery

Session/Date	Contents	Learning Outcomes	Activities
Session 1 01/09/2015	Description of the course and syllabus. Rules settlement Introduction to reading skills.	At the end of the class the students will be able to read fast and to spot important details in texts.	Engage: The teacher explains the course description and the syllabus to the students. The teacher and the students get to an agreement in relation to the rules inside the classroom and they are asked to sign a contract written by them in which they commit to be good students throughout the course. Study: The students practice skimming and scanning with short texts by answering worksheet given by the teacher. Activate: The students share with the rest of the class what they have discovered.
Session 2 08/09/2015	Children's Literature, Young Adult Literature and Feminism in order to understand <i>Little Women</i>	At the end of the class the students will be able to distinguish concepts and classify them in a chart.	Engage: At the beginning of the class the teacher activates students' previous knowledge by showing a Power Point with concepts, stories or novels randomly selected for the students to categorize them in three big groups which are Children's Literature, Young Adult Literature and Feminism. Study: The students start reading the novel in groups and outloud for them to practice reading and listening skills as well as pronunciation. Activate: as a post reading activity the students share their first notions about the story in a roundtable.
Session 3 15/09/2015	The context of <i>Little Women</i> .	At the end of the class the students will be able to refer to a particular period of time, to grow imagination by organizing images in a chronological order and to discuss their choices.	Engage: The teacher explains to the students how life was during the nineteenth century. The teacher uses images from that century as a visual support.

			<p>Activate: The teacher asks the students to form 5 groups of 7 students. The teacher brings illustrations from the novel (in this case parts of the movie will be used) and asks the students to organize them in a chronological order.</p> <p>Study: The students try to explain why they chose such organization of the images. If their predictions are wrong, the teacher will refer to each image and organize it for the students to have the whole plot of the story.</p>
Session 4 22/09/2015	Feminism	At the end of the class the students will be able to select important features of a topic (Feminism), discriminate information by weighing the importance of it and growing social skills.	<p>Engage: The teacher asks the students to brainstorm concepts about what they think feminism is. The teacher explains to the students the most relevant characteristics of Feminism.</p> <p>Activate: The teacher tells the students to create groups of 5 people for them to start working on posters based on Feminism.</p> <p>Study: The students and the teacher go to the computers rooms in order to look for images and information. As the students are asked to create a poster, they might not be able to finish at class, so they can finish at home and bring the posters ready the following class for them to place their works around the school.</p>

Unit 2: The World of *Little Women*

Session/Date	Contents	Learning Outcomes	Activities
Session 5 29/09/2015	Women and men's roles in the nineteenth century.	At the end of the class the students will be able to argue, judge and give opinions.	<p>Engage: Using images as a visual support, the teacher explains to the students what the roles of women and men were during the nineteenth century. After that, the teacher shows a video in which the roles of women and men are based on stereotypes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujGqiZlarAY</p> <p>Study: The students are asked to write an essay in which they have to give arguments either against or in favor of stereotypes or not.</p> <p>Activate: The students write their essays and then hand in them to the teacher to correct it.</p>
Session 6 06/10/2015	Characters of the novel	At the end of the class the students will be able to evaluate and apply the characters' personalities and apply specific features on a given situation.	<p>Engage: Together, the teacher and the students brainstorm characteristics of the most important characters in the novel.</p> <p>Study: The teacher tells the students that in groups of five people have to choose one character from a list (7 characters will be on the list: Jo, Meg, Amy, Beth, Marmee, Professor Baher and Laurie) and create a Facebook profile including the most specific features of the character. The students can include the characters' interests, profile pictures, Facebook status, events, and feelings.</p> <p>Activate: With the Facebook profile ready, the students can interact with each other, so as the characters would do it.</p>

Session 7 13/10/2015	Chapters in the novel	At the end of the class the students will be able to illustrate and produce a given situation from the past into the present and to develop their oral skills.	<p>Engage: The teacher selects specific parts of the novel and then shows the students such parts taken from the movie adaptation. The teacher asks the students to re-enact each part, but using expressions and elements from the twenty first century.</p> <p>Study: The students start practicing and adapting the parts of the novel to this century, keeping the essence of the story and the main idea of the selected part.</p> <p>Activate: The students re-enact the selected part of the novel in front of the class.</p>
Session 8 20/10/2015	Analyzing quotes from the novel.	At the end of the class the students will be able to analyze short pieces of texts and create an illustration for it.	<p>Engage: The teacher shows students images with quotes from the novel.</p> <p>Study: The students chose a quotation and analyze it and then make an illustration of the quotation. They can draw whatever the quotation evoked to them.</p> <p>Activate: The students present in front of the class what they understood by the quotation</p>

Unit 3: Bridging the gender gap

Session/Date	Contents	Learning Outcomes	Activities
Session 9 27/10/2015	Gender Stereotyping	At the end of the class the students will be able to implement elements from the lessons in order to construct a TV commercial	<p>Engage: The teacher shows a video of gender stereotyping in the media in order to introduce the class. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z6ks8Z0X20) and also images for them to analyze them.</p> <p>Study: The students write their impressions of the images shown and then they are asked to create a TV commercial on gender stereotyping.</p> <p>Activate: The students present the TV commercial in front of the class.</p>
Session 10 03/11/2015	Laurie Laurence v/s Friedrich Bhaer	At the end of the class the students will be able to contrast both characters.	<p>Engage: In the previous class, the teacher asked the students to bring materials to create banners. The teacher shows a video for the students to now the basic rules to give a good speech in front of people. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tShavGuo0_E).</p> <p>Study: After showing the video, the teacher forms two big groups: Team Laurie vs Team Baher. The scenario would be similar to a presidential election. In this part the students brainstorm ideas for the speech.</p> <p>Activate: One student from each group present their speech, presenting arguments to support the character given. (Laurie and Professor Baher)</p>
Session 11 10/11/2015	Disrupting <i>Little Women</i>	At the end of the class the students will be able to work in groups and create and create a new story based on <i>Little Women</i> .	<p>Engage: The teacher shows the students the different genres that are presented in Literature.</p> <p>Study: The teacher asks the students that in groups of five they have to write an alternative version of <i>Little Women</i>, it can be a sci-fi history, a comic or manga adaptation, a horror story, a fantasy story, etc.</p> <p>Activate: When the students finish writing the alternative version of <i>Little Women</i>, they present the story in front of the class. Each student should read a part of the story.</p>

Session 12 17/11/2015	Travelling in time	At the end of the class the students will be able to work in groups, follow instructions and recall previous information.	<p>Engage: The teacher shows a video about the life in the nineteenth century. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfW4TagctHI)</p> <p>Study: In groups of 5 students will have to do some research and find elements from the nineteenth century. Each group will be in charge of a topic.</p> <p>Activate: The students present what they have to the teacher in order to receive feedback.</p>
Session 13 24/11/2015	Travelling in time	At the end of the class the students will be able to work in groups, follow instructions and recall previous information.	<p>The students organize their booths around the classroom, so as the teacher and the students can learn from each element selected from the nineteenth century.</p> <p>The teacher asks the students questions related to each topic.</p> <p>The teacher will evaluate this last project based on a rubric.</p>

Sample Lesson

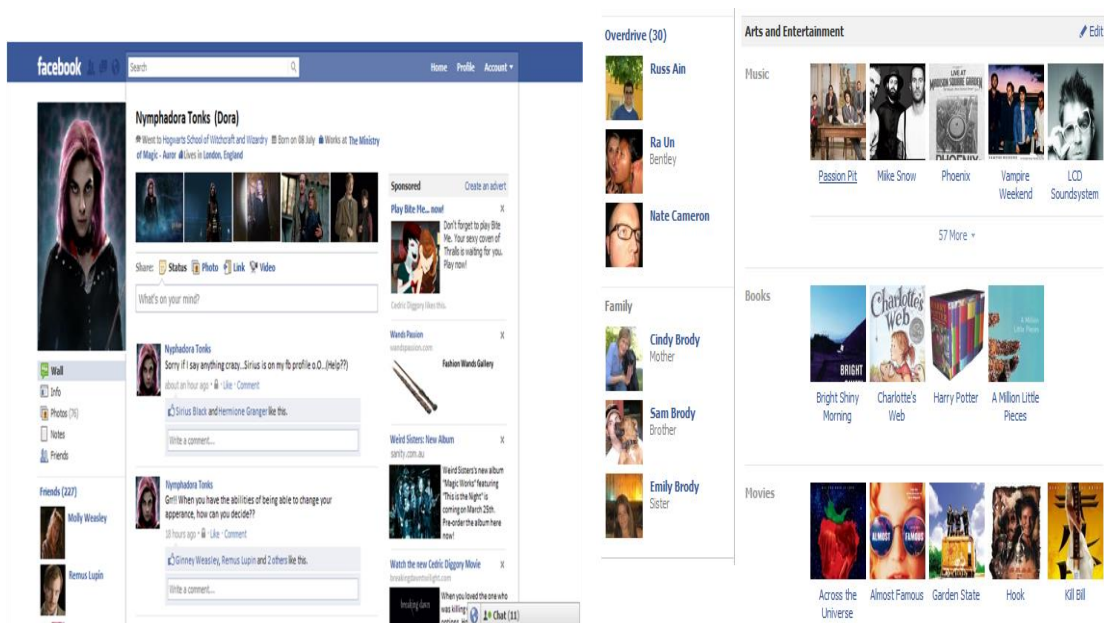
Unit 2: Lesson 6 Characters of the Novel

Time	Stages (E-S-A)	Objectives
90 min		
5 minutes	Greeting the students	After completing the stage, the
25 min	Engage: at the beginning of the class, the teacher presents specific characteristics of a Facebook profile, what it is about, and the purpose of it. After doing that, the students are going to be asked to brainstorm specific characteristics of each character.	students will be able to identify and apply the concepts they have learnt in class.
20 min	Study: After choosing one character from a list (7 characters will be on the list: Jo, Meg, Amy, Beth, Marmee, Professor Baher and Laurie) The students create a Facebook profile including the most specific features of the character. The students can include the characters' interests, Facebook status, events, and feelings.	By completing the stage, the students will be able to compile information and generate a profile for a character, so as to judge and apply the character's personality and her or his specific features.

<p>35 min</p>	<p>Activate: The students present their work in front of the class and then start using the Facebook profile to interact with the rest of the profiles.</p> <p>The idea is that the students pretend to be character given using the specific features of each character in order to interact on Facebook.</p>	<p>At the end of the activity, the students will be able to design a person's profile by labeling specific characteristics.</p>
<p>5min</p>	<p>The teacher finishes the class by giving feedback to the students.</p>	

Material needed

Images of a common Facebook's profile



Unit 3: Lesson 9 Gender Stereotyping

Time	Stages (E-S-A)	Objectives
90 min		
5 minutes	Greeting the students	
25 min	Engage: At the beginning of the class the students are going to watch a video that contains the gender stereotyping of women in the media. The teacher is going to use this video to introduce the new topic of the class. After watching the video, the students will have to think about one TV commercial they have seen in which the stereotyping of women is present.	At the end of this stage the students will be able to recall information from their previous knowledge.
20 min	Study: The teacher shows gender stereotyping images to the students, for them to analyze them. The students have to write a short reaction to the images and how they can be enhanced.	By the end of the stage, the students will be able to analyze and evaluate and specific information when writing the reaction to the images.

<p>35 min</p>	<p>Activate: The teacher asks the students to form groups of five students and to create a TV commercial on gender stereotyping.</p> <p>After that they present the commercial in front of the class. A rule for this is that all the members in the group need to participate.</p>	<p>By the end of the stage, the students will be able to perform a situation by illustrating the contents given at the beginning of the class.</p>
<p>5 min</p>	<p>The teacher finishes the class by giving feedback</p>	

Material needed

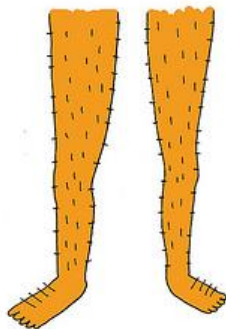
Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z6ks8Z0X20>

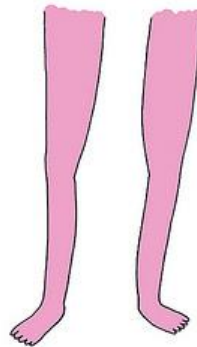


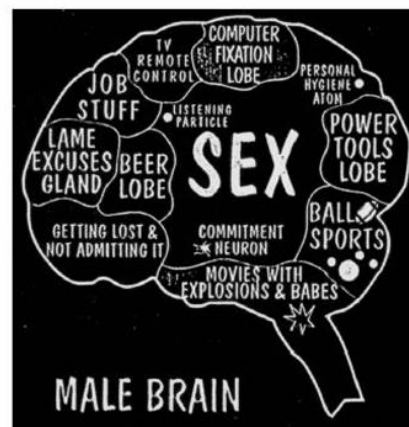
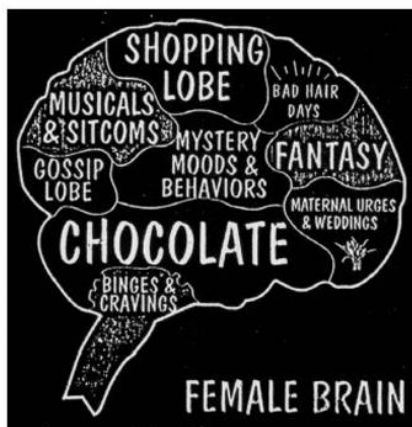
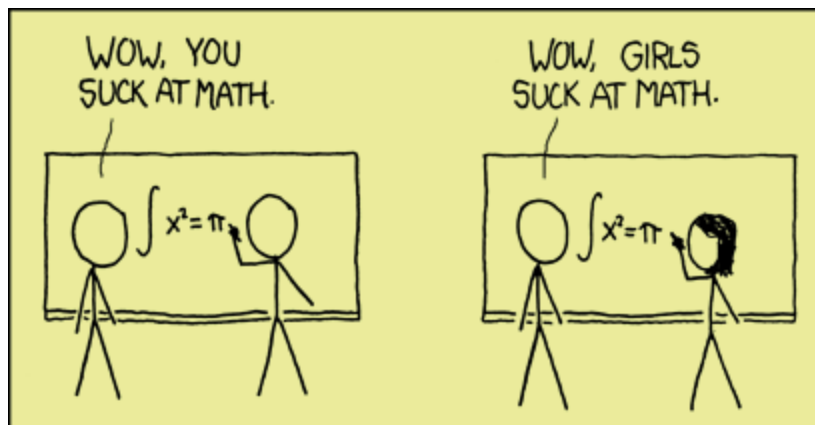
Images

WHICH IS THE
MAN?



WHY?







125 Years Of Evolution

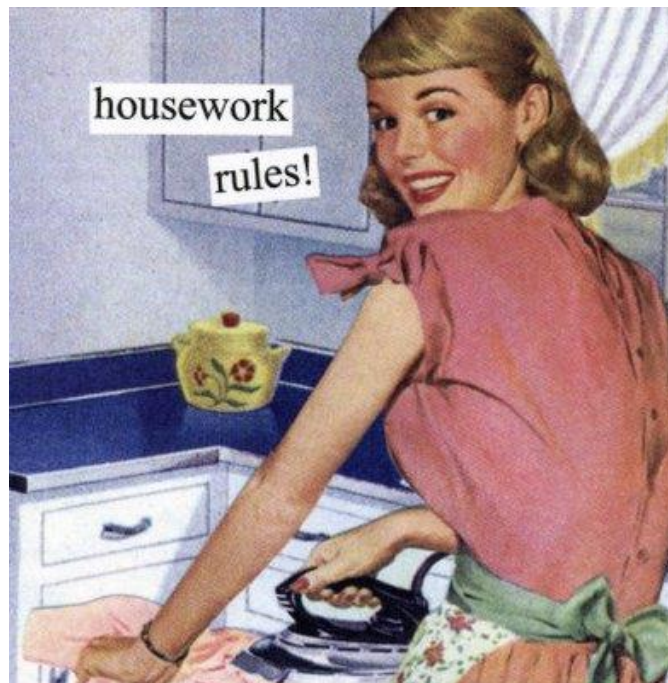
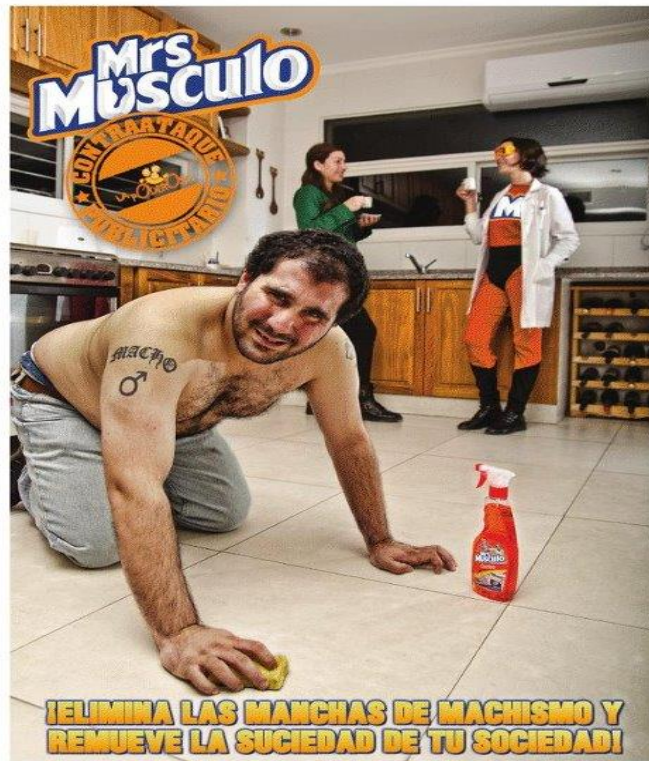
The advertisement is a timeline titled '125 Years Of Evolution' showing the progression of Bosch washing machines. It features five women standing next to different models of Bosch washing machines, illustrating the evolution of the technology over time. The timeline starts in 1886 with a woman standing next to a small, boxy washing machine. It continues through four intermediate models, each with a woman standing next to it, showing the progression of the technology. The timeline ends in 2011 with a woman standing next to a modern, sleek Bosch washing machine. The Bosch logo and the tagline 'Invented for life' are prominently displayed at the bottom right. The Euronics logo and tagline 'Your local independent electrical retailer' are displayed at the bottom left.

1886

2011

EURONICS
Your local independent electrical retailer

BOSCH
Invented for life



Unit 3: Lesson 12 Travelling in Time

Time	Stages (E-S-A)	Objectives
90 min		
5 minutes	Greeting the students	By the end of the stage, the
25 min	<p>Engage: The teacher introduces the class by showing a video of the customs, traditions and ways of living of the nineteenth century, in order to put into context the class topic.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfW4TagctHI</p> <p>After the video, the teacher asks the students their reactions about what meant to live during that period of time, the teacher asks the students to start working on their final projects.</p>	students will be able to relate and recall information from the video they have watched.
20 min	<p>Study: The students start doing research on the specific topic they have.</p>	By the end of the stage, the students will be able to select information and summarize it
35 min	<p>Activate: The students present what they have to the teacher in order to receive feedback.</p> <p>After this, the teacher presents the rubric of evaluation to the students for them to prepare for the next class, in which they will have to present.</p>	By the end of the stage the students will be able to explain their decisions.
5 min	The teacher finishes the class.	

Material needed

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfW4TagctHI>



Unit 3: Lesson 13 Travelling in time

Time	Stages (E-S-A)	Objectives
90 min		
5 minutes	Greeting the students	
10 min	Engage: The teacher asks the students to organize the classroom in order to prepare the <i>Nineteenth Century Fair</i> . The activity consists of a fair in which the students present diverse features of the nineteenth century, explaining them to the teacher and the rest of the class. The students will be hosts and visitors at the same time.	By the end of the stage, the students will be able to relate and recall information from the video they have watched.
20 min	Study: The students organize each booth for the rest to visit them and interact with each feature of the nineteenth century.	By the end of the stage the students will be able to fashion each of the stands with the context given.

<p>40 min</p>	<p>Activate: The teacher and the students will visit each stand and will ask the students of each booth questions related to the correspondent stand. They can be related to the food, customs, traditions, architecture, among others.</p> <p>After this activity, the teacher asks the students to reorganize the room.</p>	<p>The students will be able to answer questions by recalling and relating the previous information they have studied and prepared and to produce and oral text in order to integrate the nineteenth features in their speech.</p>
<p>5min</p>	<p>The teacher gives general feedback and the final grades.</p>	

Material needed

Rubric for the presentation

Criteria	4	3	2	1	Points
Subject Knowledge	Student demonstrates full grasp of the topic, presenting complete and accurate information	Student is at ease with topic and presents accurate information	Student is uncomfortable with information, leaves out important details and/or presents inaccurate information.	Student does not have grasp of information. Many statements are incorrect and unsupported	
Explanations from Evidence	The student uses all available data and her/his prior knowledge/research and experience to draw conclusions.	The student used some data, prior knowledge, research, and experience to draw conclusions, but ignores other evidence introduced during the presentation.	Conclusions are very poorly related to the evidence provided in the presentation.	The student either has no conclusions or the conclusions are not related to the evidence provided in the presentation.	
Questions	Student answers all class questions with explanations and elaboration.	Student is at ease with answers to most questions, but fails to elaborate	Student is able to answer only rudimentary questions. Answers questions without explanation.	Student cannot answer questions about subject.	
Body Language	Movement seemed fluid and helped the audience visualize	Made movements or gestures that enhanced articulation	Very little movement or descriptive gestures.	No movement or descriptive gestures.	
Eye Contact	Hold attention of entire audience with the use of direct eye contact	Consistent use of direct eye contact with audience.	Displayed minimal eye contact with audience.	No eye contact with audience.	
Voice	Use of fluid speech and inflection maintains the interest of the audience.	Satisfactory use of inflection, but does not consistently use fluid speech	Displays some level of inflection throughout delivery.	Consistently uses a monotone voice.	

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Appendix

Cuestionario

Lea las siguientes preguntas cuidadosamente y responda con honestidad y a conciencia.

Encierre en un círculo la alternativa que más se asemeje a tu punto de vista cuando sea necesario.

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Género | Femenino | Masculino |
|-----------|----------|-----------|

 - | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------|
| 2. ¿Cuál es tu nivel de inglés? | Principiante | Intermedio | Avanzado |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------|

 3. ¿En qué habilidades del Inglés eres mejor?
 - a) Speaking
 - b) Writing
 - c) Listening
 - d) Reading

 4. ¿Cuál es tu libro favorito?

 5. ¿Por qué lees?
 - a) Por diversión
 - b) Por propósitos académicos
 - c) Porque me gusta aprender cosas nuevas
 - d) Por vivir experiencias de una vida que no es la mía
 - e) Para adquirir vocabulario

 - | | | |
|--|----|----|
| 6. ¿Has leído libros, historias breves o artículos variados en inglés? | SI | NO |
|--|----|----|

 7. ¿Cuántos libros has leído en el colegio?

- a) Mas de 10
- b) Mas de 15
- c) Ninguno

8. **¿Cuántos libros has leído por cuenta propia?**

- a) de 1 a 5
- b) de 5 a 10
- c) de 10 a 15
- d) Ninguno

9. **Si te dan a leer un libro dentro de un periodo de tiempo ¿Cómo parcelas la lectura?**

- a) Leo el libro por capitulo
- b) Leo un determinado tiempo (por ejemplo, 30 minutos al día)
- c) Intento leer el libro completo de una vez
- d) No lo leo, busco el resumen

10. **¿Te consideras un lector rápido?** SI NO

11. **¿Te cuesta inferir las ideas de un libro?** SI NO

12. **¿De qué manera te gusta trabajar?** En grupo Individualmente

13. **¿Qué actividades te gusta realizar en una clase de inglés?**

- a) Writing
- b) Speaking
- c) Listening
- d) Reading

14. **¿Serías parte de un taller de Literatura después de clases?** SI NO