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Raising awareness of the cultural connection between real life and sitcoms: An elective course for senior students

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

para optar al Grado de Licenciado en Educación y al Título de Profesor de Inglés.

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Segundo semestre 2014

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my father, Carlos, who before passing away gave me everything I needed to become the person I am today

To my mom, Inés, and my sister, Karem, for their patience and support through this long process. Also, I would like to thank my boyfriend Patricio, who constantly advised me, gave me support and helped me to carry on every time I needed it.

To professor Benítez, for guiding me and encouraging me to work harder for attaining my goals.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all my friends who accompanied me in this journey. Particularly, to Nadia Vásquez who always took the time to help me when I needed it.

Introduction

It is well known that every individual belongs to a certain type of culture, adopts a certain ideology or observes a set of customs. But, it seems difficult to reflect on why people act in a certain way; that is, if a culture is better than or different from another, or whether everyone deserves the same respect and tolerance as any other culture around the globe. These issues are still a matter of study. This might be the reason for the many definitions of the complex word *Culture*, which is usually taken for granted.

According to Moran (2001), culture has had and still has several definitions; nevertheless, there is one that comes closer to the current conventions experienced by this globalized society. He states that the term culture should be changed to *cultural experience*, “the encounter with another way of life” (13), to “make a distinction between culture as a way of life and participating in that way of life” (13), mainly. Thus, “as language teachers, we all provide our students with cultural experiences of one kind or another, all with the intention of helping them learn culture”(13).

Particularly, an elective course has been created to compare and contrast American culture with Chilean culture. To achieve this goal, it is important to reflect on the way American culture is manifested in three comedy shows: *Friends*, *How I Met Your Mother*, and *Modern Family*.

Based on these ideas some relevant elements are defined to clarify this work so that the reader can have a better understanding of the proposal presented.

Cultural awareness

Because one of the main aims of this elective course is to raise cultural awareness in 17-18-year-old students, it is necessary to have detailed knowledge of this concept. Cakir (2006:160) claims that in order to develop cultural awareness, “it is important that we help our students distinguish between the cultural norms, beliefs, or habits of the majority within the speech community and the individual or group deviations from some of these norms.”

Likewise, Adams (1995) postulates that *cultural awareness* refers to the understanding of other ethnic groups, and this implies personal changes in relation to attitudes and values.

Similarly, sensitivity may be another way of creating awareness of the existence of different beliefs, ideologies and / or customs. Hence, the purpose of this project is to foster sensitivity among students by making them analyze, criticize and realize that their culture may have similarities with the American one, but also differences.

On the other hand, Brown (2007) suggests that language – as a means of communication – is the best way of expressing culture. Nevertheless, Kramersch (as cited by Saniei, 2012: 11-12) argues that:

“(..) entering into a foreign culture implies a cognitive modification that has implications for the learner’s identity as a social and cultural being. He suggests need of including—in a language course- activities related to cultural awareness, as doing so, according to Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004), ‘can not only increase the educational value of the course but can also facilitate language acquisition’.”

This is the main reason for expressing how important it is to have students reflect and construct knowledge of their own culture and lifestyles and the one they analyze among their peers.

Cultural awareness involves a “gradually developing inner sense of the equality of cultures, an increased understanding of your own and other people’s cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ. Such awareness can broaden the mind, increase tolerance and facilitate international communication” (Tomlinson, 2001:5).

English as a second Language for teaching Culture

The foreign language of English is essential for students who wish to become professionals. English plays a major role in their future professional prospects, and it is considered one of the most relevant qualifications to fit a competent profile with highly demanding degrees and subsequent careers. A large number of people from different locations in the world no longer speak only their mother tongue; thus, English has become the common bridge between the United States and Chile.

The usage and combination of *global* and *local* content is essential to compare and contrast two different cultures. Whereas the local perspective is often interpreted as simply being able to talk about one’s own culture in English, other authors emphasize the potential for

intercultural learning when one's own culture is viewed in contrast to a target culture, or even through the eyes of a foreigner (Volkman, as cited by Glas 2013: 67).

Likewise, the combination between culture and English as the target language has reached common ground, where both concepts need each other to be understood analytically and comparatively; but this interdependence mainly relates to the subjects of the study: American culture and Chilean culture; two different cultures in a world where people have gotten used to having distinct, but sometimes very similar lifestyles, consciously or unconsciously.

Target audience

The purpose of this project is to provide an engaging and motivating input to have students analyze and contrast some distinctive features of American behavior with those found in the Chilean culture.

One way of teaching students about this century's values and principles is through the teaching of a foreign language. Accordingly, this project proposes English as a foreign language lessons for seniors. The goal is teach them not only to learn about their own culture by providing experiences, but also to urge them to contrast and think rationally about another culture that is much closer to them than they might think.

These senior students will be able to generate and exchange simple to complex ideas and to apply and develop critical thinking, thanks to a language that gradually will be considered closer to their lives. This will be mainly achieved by students being exposed to excerpts from the comedies selected.

Therefore, this project is intended to attain these goals among students in their last year of secondary school as they are at a stage where it is easier for them to recognize irony, sarcasm and different types of jokes that sitcoms provide through their comical stories. At this level, considering The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF or CEFR), senior students have an intermediate level of English or B2; consequently, the language used by the comedians will not be too difficult for them, but still challenging.

Sitcoms

Sitcoms show the relevance and influence television has in this globalized world as a connection between fictional and real life. Taflinger (n.d. <http://public.wsu.edu/~taflinge/sitcom.html>) states that “Television has been called many things, most of them unflattering: chewing gum for the eyes, the vast wasteland, junk food for the mind, the boob tube, the video set. However, no matter what is said about it, it cannot be denied that television is the most pervasive single element in American society, dominating time, conversation, attitudes, thought, and the entertainment industry.”

It is for this reason that sitcoms are not only a means of entertainment, but also a means of understanding through authentic material how these type of comedy shows can effectively reflect people’s behavior and lifestyles from a particular place or country. It is necessary then to clarify that, according to Herron (1999: 35), “sitcoms are a forceful input for teaching culture as they show living vibrant people who use the target language for daily communication.” In addition, Chen (1998) supports the previous idea by saying that sitcoms familiarize learners with a target culture's sites, authentic discourse, native speakers' lives, and their social behaviors. Furthermore, students may find differences and similarities between their home culture and the target culture.

The selection of this authentic material— *Friends*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Modern Family*—was not at random since these comedies express reality in an exaggerated way for spectators to realize that there are certain patterns or features repeated in social life and reality.

Taflinger (as cited by Hložková 2013:4) claims that “sitcoms provide four criteria for humor: (1) appeal to the intellect rather than emotion, (2) established societal norms, (3) disagreement with those norms, and (4) the perception by the audience that the events are essentially harmless to both the characters and to the sensibilities and beliefs of the audience.” Considering the above, the development of listening and speaking skills broaden the students’ vocabulary by student interaction after the exposure to some comedy scenes; therefore, students are expected to comprehend what the speakers are saying and feel more comfortable with the English language itself.

Nevertheless, another way of separating or representing real life on television is through soap operas. A soap opera is defined as “a serial drama performed originally on a daytime radio or television program and chiefly characterized by tangled interpersonal situations and melodramatic or sentimental treatment (Merriam Webster n.d. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/soap%20opera>). Yet, it may be more effective that students pay attention to something funny and superficial reactions toward daily situations than to the inherent drama of complex and tense circumstances in soap operas. Moreover, encouraging activities based on sitcoms may guarantee and boost their participation in aspects of life presented in a more positive and affirmative way.

Friends is set in New York, where a group of six young people look for better prospects in life, finding support, companionship and even love in each other. Similarly, *How I Met Your Mother* deals with themes as the ones stated above, but giving special importance to the characters’ romantic relationships and how these continue throughout the seasons. Finally, in *Modern Family*, three unique yet related families living in Los Angeles face the struggles of everyday life. This series presents themes such as multiculturalism, parenthood and marriage in a comical manner.

Cultural identity and Cultural Stereotypes

In this globalized world, cultures have more similarities than differences that make them look less unique than in the past; however, currently we may still see that cultures in general have aspects that differ from one another. Thus, it is essential to recognize what those aspects are that differentiate us from the rest and to understand how we can define our own culture in relation to the foreign one.

For this, it is worth noting that cultural identity is related to common cultural practices performed by individuals that belong to a certain group and that this identity is conceived as “how individuals or groups see and define themselves and how other individuals or groups see and define them. Identity is formed through the socialization process and the influence of social institutions like the family, the education system and the mass media” (Browne, 2008: 38).

On the other hand, as one culture has its own identity, there are several opportunities in which individuals tend to classify or to be classified according to their behavior or way of living. Therefore, it is important to clarify the concept of cultural stereotypes when Dyer (1999:1) states that these are “a form of 'ordering' the mass of complex and inchoate data that we receive from the world are only a particular form -- to do with the representation and categorization of persons [1] -- of the wider process by which any human society, and individuals within it, make sense of that society through generalities, patternings and 'typifications'.”

Consequently, students can make use of these concepts (Cultural awareness, cultural identity, cultural stereotypes, sitcoms, soap operas) as a source of understanding, making connections with their own culture and expressing whether they identify themselves with a certain cultural group or recognize any stereotypes in their own culture. Later on, they will be able to complete the same exercise, but in conjunction with studying the following sitcoms: *Friends*, *How I Met Your Mother*, and *Modern Family*. These sitcoms have been chosen due to their popularity both in the United States as well as Chile (all three of them have been received Emmy awards). Additionally, these sitcoms explicitly show features that allow the viewer to reach a deeper understanding of the American culture. All of this leads to an enriched correlation between the American lifestyle and the Chilean one.

This project and the MINEDUC objectives

From the cross-curricular objectives designed by the Ministerio de Educación de Chile MINEDUC (2009), it is evident that the Chilean government has brought light to the relevance of cultural identity among students and the importance to become critical learners from early stages:

“In relation to the person and her/his environment, the learning objectives refer to the improvement of the interaction, in family, work, social and civic contexts , in which values of mutual respect, active citizenship, national identity, and democratic co-existence should reign (...) The following learning should be consolidated (...): to acquire knowledge about and value key figures , history, symbols, territorial and cultural heritage of the nation, in the context of an increasingly globalized and interdependent world , understanding the tension and the complementary that exists on both levels” (Glas 2013:86).

Although it is evident that the Ministry of Education has considered aspects of culture in the English classes, there is a gap between the contents and cross-curricular objectives suggested by the MINEDUC. The latter are quite incomprehensible, because there is even poor consistency in the terminology employed (Glas, 2013). Culture has been presented several times in Chilean pedagogical documents; unfortunately, they have not yet provided contents or any specific materials for students to apply them and make eventual use of this powerful tool (cultural learning as part of the syllabus in Chilean classrooms) to enrich their thinking capacity and share their knowledge with other cultures and ethnicities in their near future. Neither is there a current plan that explicitly details the content and specific objectives recommended to teach to senior students.

Taking these previous points into consideration, it is necessary to change the current methodology of teaching English and to apply adequate methods to include culture as to how it may enhance critical thinking among students before leaving high school.

The Syllabus

Finally, for this graduation project, there is an essential element to make it work functionally and productively: a *Syllabus*. As Nunan (1988) explains, a syllabus is seen as being concerned essentially with the selection and grading of content. Nevertheless, a

“Syllabus replaces the concept of ‘method’, and the syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of ‘fit’ between the needs and aims of the learner (as social being and as individual) and the activities which will take place in the classroom” (Yalden, as cited by Nunan, 1984:14).

Specifically, this elective course is developed with a content-based syllabus, where the purpose of encouraging students to participate actively in the activities assigned to them and improvement assessment will be constant practice.

Mohan (1986) argues for content-based syllabuses on the grounds that they facilitate learning not merely *through* language but *with* language. Hence, students will be asked to reflect on their own views on Chilean cultural behavior, in contrast to the American lifestyle seen from

selected comedy shows, such as *Friends* (1994-2004), *How I Met Your Mother* (2005-2014) and *Modern Family* (2009-). These sitcoms will be the major input for learners to become more involved with and immersed in the American culture with the support of background knowledge and the delivery of information to compare their assumptions or opinions about their own culture and the American one argumentatively.

Mohan (as cited by Nunan, 1988) develops a framework which can be used for organizing knowledge and learning activities. This knowledge framework consists of a specific, practical side and a general, theoretical side. The specific side is divided into description, sequence and choice, while the general side is divided into classification, principles and evaluation.

Consequently, this knowledge framework will be applied particularly to the classroom itself through communicative activities by integrating the four skills as supported by Brown (1994): Listening, Speaking, Writing and Reading in which the theoretical part takes place and the practical side makes this strategy closer to them; strategy in which students are taught a specific topic using the target language the learners are supposed to learn. In addition, by presenting the objectives of the contents to be learned, students are supposed to be aware of what is really essential to comprehend and to pay attention to the schedule and planning of the activities. Mager and Clark (as cited by Glas, 2013:75) state that “carried through an experiment in which students who knew where they were heading learned much faster than students who had not been provided with course objectives.” Steiner (as cited by Glas, 2013) writes that providing learning objectives brings the opportunity to know in advance what students are expected to learn, how to be assessed and a constant means of feedback, and Brindley (as cited by Glas 2013:75) adds that “since learners can set their own standards of performance and evaluate how well these standards have been attained.”

Needs Analysis

To collect useful information, a questionnaire was formulated (see Appendix 1), which was answered individually by 21 senior students from a state-subsidized private school in Quilpué.

The answers these students provided (see Appendix 2) are significant and revealing. It seems this group of students is a mixed one in terms of interests. Even though more than 50 percent of the students like their English class, there is a considerable number who do not like the subject whatsoever. Similarly, of this group 67 percent shows lack of enthusiasm about the same class. As they are in their last year of school, it can be assumed that—comparing Graph 1 with Graph 2—some students do not find the class interesting, because they feel it is not entertaining and poorly engaging. But, the fact that 80 percent of them express being periodically exposed to the language through authentic and didactic materials: watching and listening videos and radio excerpts, is contradictory.

The reasons may be deduced; the majority believes the listening activities can actually improve pronunciation and can help acquire more sophisticated vocabulary. Therefore, it can be assumed that the approach to teaching listening comprehension has not been completely successful. Because of this, the pedagogical technique herein proposed —applying sitcoms to the teaching of English as a second language—intends to make a shift in students' perception of their EFL lessons and make them feel effectively attracted to the use of comedies, and even though a low number of students feel comfortable when putting into practice their listening skills, they unconsciously express willingness to practice this skill by watching TV programs—comedy among their choices— and recognize it is entertaining for them to watch amusing programs or sitcoms. In fact, Graph 11 reveals explicitly that more than half of the class has heard of the comedy shows selected for the sample activities that the syllabus planned for this project contains.

Additionally, although students have expressed not being exposed to learning about foreign cultures, the results show they feel interested in learning about one that is unknown or not consciously known for them. Likewise, they think that comedy shows may reflect the behavior of a country or a culture in particular.

To conclude, students feel motivated in learning a second language, but they tend to think the traditional strategy applied is not the most motivating for them; therefore, it is useful to know they enjoy watching comedy shows as the ones selected for this project, for it means it could be successful to work with these comedies—*Friends*, *How I met Your Mother*, *Modern Family*—to raise awareness of the cultural connection between real life and sitcoms and to contrast the American culture with their own. Also, given the fact that they do not mind being assessed through oral presentations and /or dialogues— where they need to work with their peers in order to share their knowledge and assign roles— checking students’ improvement through this type of assessment will be fruitful.

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Syllabus Design

Name of the course: “Raising awareness of the cultural connection between real life and sitcoms: An elective course for senior students”

Type of course: Elective course

Audience: Senior Students

English Level: Intermediate Level

Duration: One Semester

Class hours: 2 hours a week (90 minutes)

Teacher: Miss Karla Manzo Paredes

Email: karla.manzo.p.@gmail.com

Rationale

The reasons for creating an elective course based on sitcoms were as follows: Firstly, to create motivation among senior students to learn about other cultures and making a link with their own culture. All this being feasible thanks to the selection of some US sitcoms that are popular in Chile. Secondly, our country needs to build more awareness of the foreign cultures that coexist in the same continent as ours. In particular, students should be aware of the U.S nation, its social conventions and cultural behavior through authentic materials. Therefore, it is important to have them compare and contrast both cultures through an analysis of sitcoms.

This elective course is based on an integrated skills syllabus, which will require the learners to develop and improve both their productive and receptive, as well as their critical thinking and creativity.

Course organization

This syllabus is organized into four learning units that contain different aspects which characterize the three selected sitcoms—*Friends*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Modern Family*. Each content unit involves different stages of development of critical thinking, beginning from the least to the most complex one. In every lesson, students are asked to apply their four skills—Listening, Reading, Speaking, And Writing— to show their improvement and final mastery of the target language.

Course Objectives

General Objective:

At the end of this elective course, students will be able to compare and contrast argumentatively the American and the Chilean lifestyle through sitcoms.

Table 1: Specific Objectives for each unit.

Unit 1: Getting in touch with sitcoms and new <i>Friends</i>	
Lesson	Specific Objectives
1 Let's make the difference between sitcoms and comedy shows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Classify TV programs according to their genre.✓ Identify a sitcom in relation to other genres presented.✓ Define what a sitcom is.
2 Meeting my new Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Remember key concepts learnt last class.✓ Identify characters' personality presented in the following scenes.✓ Identify character's physical appearance.✓ Recognize key concepts related to the actions performed by the characters.

<p>3 May these new friends be part of your life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Classify transitional devices according to their relationship ✓ Describe a formal context versus and informal one. ✓ Describe people’s reactions in relation to the actions performed by the characters in a segment. ✓ Describe people’s actions in an informal context. ✓ Compare character’s reactions in a segment with a similar situation in your life. ✓ Contrast the context in which the situation happened in the same segment with your own experience.
<p>4 What have you learned up to this point?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reflect on what you have learned by the end of the unit. ✓ Consolidate the content learned throughout the unit.

Unit 2: Getting used to new people. Meet <i>How I met Your Mother</i>	
Lesson	Specific Objectives
<p>1 Getting even closer with the new culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Question your own type of living in terms of food choices. ✓ Compare food choices of the American Culture and the Chilean one ✓ Reflect on the lifestyle Chileans have decided to make in relation to their meals.
<p>2 Festivities, Festivities Everywhere!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify festivities celebrated in American Culture. ✓ Differentiate festivities in the US with the Chilean ones. ✓ Compare the American celebrations with the ones in Chile. ✓ Contrast the American festivities with the ones celebrated in Chile.

<p>3 Sexual orientation, prejudices, tolerance and respect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Differentiate social aspects in America and in Chile. ✓ Reflect on the social issues Chile face in relation to tolerance and respect. ✓ Propose possible solutions to sexual orientation problem.
<p>4 What have you learned up to this point?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reflect on what you have learned by the end of the unit. ✓ Consolidate the content learned throughout the unit.

Unit 3: Let's have some fun! Be the character you always wanted to be	
Lesson	Specific Objectives
<p>1 We are family, aren't we?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Define your own concept of family. ✓ Compare the definition of <i>family</i> provided by the Oxford Dictionary with the concept of family in the US and in Chile. ✓ Contrast the scenario presented in <i>Modern Family</i> with the reality in Chile. ✓ Infer the notion of family in the US and in Chile from the segment of <i>Modern Family</i>.
<p>2 Creativity is in our hands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Select the dialogues each member of the group is going to perform. ✓ Prepare the dialogues each member of the group is going to perform. ✓ Adapt dialogues from the scenes if necessary.
<p>3 Organization is the key of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prepare the presentation in the corresponding groups. ✓ Create a hypothetical situation based on the dialogues chosen from the sitcom selected. ✓ Develop the story by practicing the roles of each member of the group.

4 It is time to act!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dramatize a scene of one of the selected sitcoms.
4-5 What have you learned before saying good bye?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dramatize a scene of one of the selected sitcoms. ✓ Reflect on what you have learned by the end of the unit. ✓ Consolidate the content learned throughout the unit and semester. ✓ Summarize what the unit was about.

Evaluation criteria (See Appendices 2,3,4,5,6)

- ✓ Written assignment 30 %
- ✓ Oral presentation 40 %
- ✓ Class participation 10 %
- ✓ Self - evaluation 10 %
- ✓ Peer – evaluation 10%

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Lesson 1: Let's make the difference between sitcoms and comedy shows.

Warm-up

Activity 1: Answer the following questions with a partner:

- a) What kind of TV programs have you watched in your life? Name them. (ex: science-fiction, talk show, news, etc.)
- b) Have you ever seen a sitcom? Have you ever seen a comedy show? Do you know the difference between the two?
- c) Do you think TV series such as comedies, dramas and musicals, among others, can reflect a country's culture? How so?
- d) When you watch a TV program, have you ever felt you have been in the same situation? (E.g. a scene showing a family celebration, wearing customs for a party, etc.)

Activity 2: Watch the following segments of different types of TV programs. Then, enumerate them according to their genre.

___ Comedy

___ Talk show

___ Cartoon

___ Sports

___ Documentary

___ Cookery

Activity 3: Read the following three definitions and decide which concept from the oval is referring to. Write the concept next to its definition.



_____ It is related to common cultural practices performed by individuals that belong to a certain group and that this identity is conceived as “how individuals or groups act and live” (Browne, 2008: 38).

_____ Dyer (1999:1) states that these are “a form of 'ordering' the mass (...) make sense of that society through generalities, patternings and 'typifications'.”

_____ It refers to the understanding of other ethnic groups, and this implies personal changes in relation to attitudes and values (Adams 1995).

Practice:

Activity 4: Now, watch carefully a whole episode of *Friends*. Then, respond to these statements:

- a) Based on what you have seen, define what a sitcom is.
- b) List special characteristics that describe a sitcom.

Follow-up

Activity 5:

a) Now, with three other classmates share your answers and re-think of the answers already discussed in the **warm-up** section. After that, answer each question again, by saying if you have or have not changed your mind and why.

b) Why do you think it is important to learn about another culture? Do you think we need to reflect on our own culture first to understand or tolerate a foreign one? How so? Discuss these questions with your group and take notes of what each person says.

Unit 1: Getting in touch with sitcoms and some *Friends*.

Lesson 2: Meeting some new Friends.

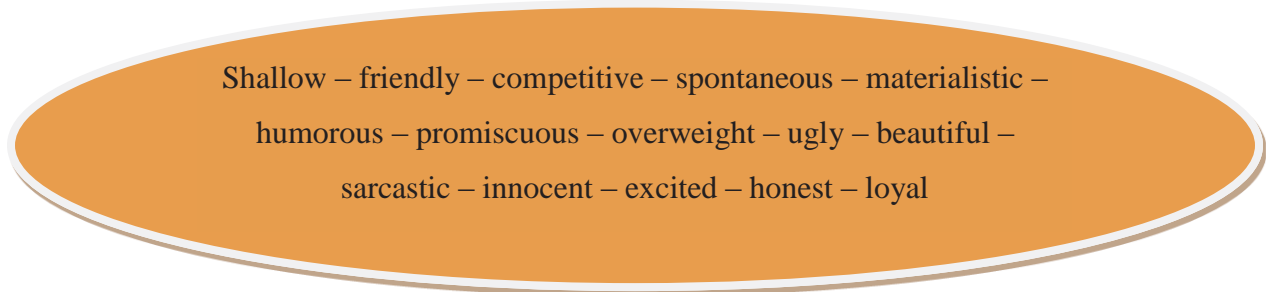
Warm – up



Activity 1: Make a list of the words learned from last class. Then, interchange your notes with the classmate sitting next to you.

Note: You should keep the list in mind, because you will need it for the following activities.

Activity 2: Complete the chart below. Classify the following concepts in physical or psychological human characteristics. Then, next to the word, put a ticket (✓) if they are considered positive characteristics or a cross (✗) if they are considered negative.



Physical characteristics	Psychological characteristics
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

Activity 3: According to the previous activity, predict what the segments you are going to watch will be about. Share your predictions with the classmate sitting next to you.

Practice

Activity 4: Watch three different segments of *Friends*. Then, discuss in groups of four the activities the characters were doing or talking about. Once the discussion is over, individually, list the actions discussed and present them to the class.

- For example: Joey was saying the entire time: “How you doing?” / Rachel is always asking about her hair style.

Follow- up

Activity 5: Work in pairs and answer the following questions:

-
- a) We already know sitcoms present real life situations but in an exaggerated way. But, do you think the way characters act (the characters actions) in *Friends* are completely fictitious or they can actually exist in real life? Provide examples from your own experience.
 - b) The actions performed by the characters are quite easy to distinguish. According to this, is it possible to “stereotype” a person in relation to their actions and lifestyle? Why?
 - c) Can you make any relation between the actions performed by the actors and the physical and psychological characteristics previously classified in **Activity 2**? How?
-

Unit 1: Getting in touch with sitcoms and some *Friends*.

Lesson 3: May these new friends be part of your life.

Warm –up

Activity 1: Pay attention to these three set of concepts and think when and / or how they can be used.

1.-To conclude, as I have said, therefore / 2. - Thus, definitely, obviously, in fact, indeed, absolutely / 3. - First, second, third, Next, then, following this, now, at this point, finally

Activity 2: Now, match the transitional expressions according to their relationship (from column 1 to column 2).

Column 1: Transitional expressions

First, second, third

Therefore, thus

Indeed, absolutely

Obviously, in fact

Finally, consequently

To conclude, as I have said

Following this

Next, then, now

Definitely

Column 2: Relationship

To emphasize

To show sequence

To summarize or conclude

Practice

Activity 3: Work in pairs. Watch the following episode and take notes of the character's actions and what is going on in the segment.

Note: The episode will have no audio, so do not get anxious if you find that some parts are confusing.

Activity 4: Watch the episode for the second time, but this time you will listen to what is going on in the segment. Check your previous ideas and add new ones.

Activity 5: Considering your notes, order the sequence these events happened in the episode. You are allowed to work with your partner if you want to.

1. - ----
2. -----
3. -----
4. - ----
5. - -----

Follow –up

Activity 6: Reflect on the last two activities:

-
- a) Were there any changes in your notes when you watched the video for the second time? What were these actions?
 - b) Could you identify certain actions performed by the characters only by looking at the screen without sound?
 - c) Compare those actions with some of your own routines. Are they similar? Completely different? Explain how.
-

Unit 2: Getting used to new people. Meet How I met Your Mother

Lesson 1: Getting even closer to the new culture.

Warm- up

Activity 1: Pay attention to the following pictures and answer these questions:



- What do the pictures represent?
- What are they eating?
- Two pictures show people in different situations, but eating the same food. What do you think it could mean? May it happen in a formal, informal situation as a repetitive one? For example: once a week, every week, every day?

Note: You have to support each answer. You can relate these pictures to your own life or to a friend's life or routine.

Practice

Fill in the gaps. You are going to watch and listen to a segment of *How I Met You Mother* called: *The Best Burger in New York*. Write the **word** or **words** missing in each sentence.

At McLaren's:

Ted: So, what do you guys want to do for _____?

Wendy: Oh, we just got a new cook. You have to _____, its _____.

Robin: Great, we'll take five of those.

Wendy (taking note): Five burgers.

Ted: Really? You want to eat here?

Robin: Yeah, I'm freaking _____. I just finished a seven-day cleanse.

Marshall: I thought you started that yesterday.

Robin: I finished early, OK? (To Wendy) Five of those.

Wendy: Five burgers.

Ted: Wait. What about sushi?

Lily: We had sushi _____.

Barney: Italian.

Ted: I had Italian for _____.

Wendy: I can come back.

Robin: No. We always do this. We spend an hour arguing about where to eat, and we _____ here _____. I haven't eaten for two days. Can we please, for the love of God, just order something now?

Ted: Chinese?

Robin: Oh.

Barney: I don't like Chinese.

Ted: Indian?

Barney: I just said I don't like Chinese.

Ted: Indian isn't Chinese.

Barney: _____, funny music, side of rice. Why are we splitting hairs?

Ted: Mexican?

Barney: I just said I don't like _____.

Robin: God.

Wendy serves everybody except Robin.

Wendy: Robin, yours will be right out.

Robin: Of course, mine comes last. _____, start without me.

Everybody: Sweet! You shouldn't have. That's so kind of you.

Lily: My God. This burger is so good. It's like Christmas in my mouth, _____.

Ted: It's like an angel from heaven landed in the _____ at McLaren's. Where the chef killed it and ran it through the meat grinder.

Barney: I love this burger so much, I want to sew my ass shut.

Marshall: It's okay.

Everybody: Are you kidding me?

Marshall: Guys, guys, guys. When you've had _____ in NY, every other burger _____ like my grandpa's feet. But you guys eat up, enjoy my grandpa's feet.

Robin: And you've had the best burger in New York?

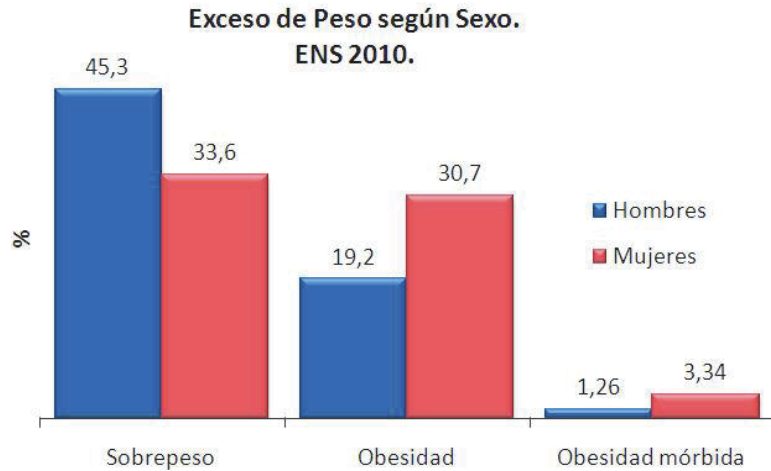
(Taken from: Sitcoms as a Tool for English Language Teaching, p.88-89)

(link: <http://cookiesandcream.me/how-i-met-your-mother-season-4-episode-2-the-best-burger-in-new-york/>)

Follow –up

After checking the missing words, read the whole segment and reflect on these questions:

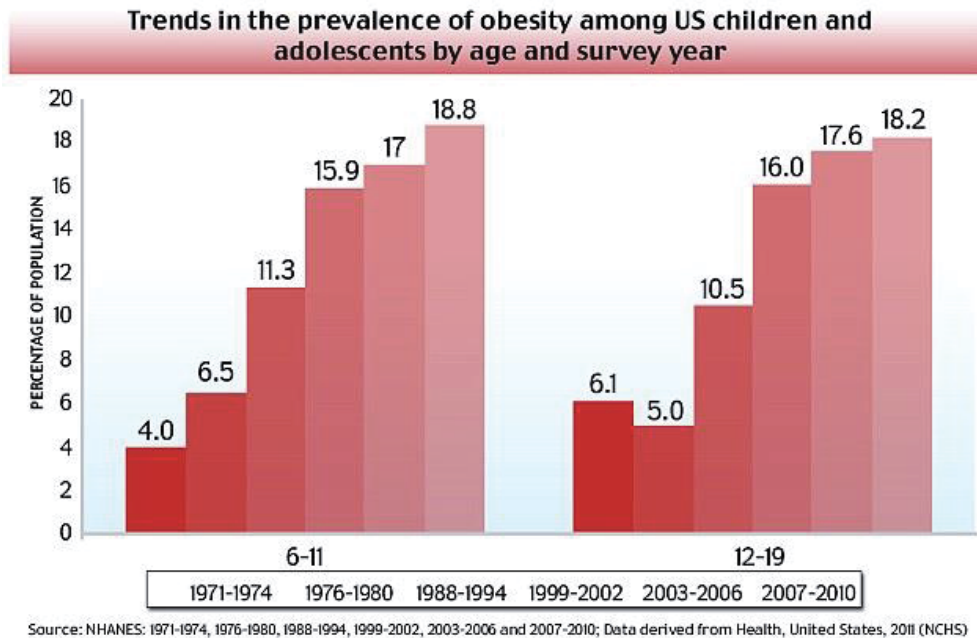
-
- How do the characters describe this “special Burger”? Doesn't it make you feel their sympathy for junk food is exaggerated?
 - Do Americans take care of themselves in terms of nutrition? Meal choices? Why or Why not?
 - Take a look at the graphs and express differences and similarities between Chile and the United States. Are we close to American reality? Do you think eating unhealthy food is just part of that country? What about ours?
-



2003: 61% 6.800.000 personas
2010: 67% 8.900.000 personas

1.-Situation in Chile.

(Retrieved from: <http://srnutricionista.webnode.es/tematicas/obesidad/>)



Situation in the U.S.A.

(Retrieved from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2540248/Study-reveals-parents-poor-eating-habits-blame-childhood-obesity-NOT-fast-food.html>)

Unit 2: Getting used to new people. Meet *How I met Your Mother*.

Lesson 2: Festivities, Festivities Everywhere!

Warm- up

Activity 1: Look at these pictures and write the name of the festivities they represent.



Activity 2: After identifying each festivity, answer these questions in groups of three:

- Do we celebrate these festivities? When? How?
- The last picture represents a festivity that unites people like in *Christmas*. Do we really celebrate this? What do you know about this particular festivity?

Practice

Activity 2: Watch the following scenes and name each festivity shown.

1. - Halloween

2. - Thanksgiving

3. - Christmas

4. - New Year's Eve

Activity 3: Now, look up these words and classify each celebration according to what they represent. You can make use of the chart expressing “values”.

Note:

- Remember that festivities may represent more than one aspect of life.
- You may add new values and/ or ignore some of the ones in the chart if needed.

Values:

Honesty- Respect- Friendship- Acceptance- Affection – Comfort- Excitement- Generosity-
Happiness- Expectations- Perseverance- Recognition –gratitude –Religiousness –
cheerfulness .

Example:

1.-Halloween: It represents enjoyment because some people like to wear costumes and have fun together

Halloween:

3.-Christmas:

4.-New Year's Eve

Follow-up

Activity 4: Choose two of the four festivities already shown and think of the characteristics they have. Write a brief paragraph describing each festivity in **Chile**, including the key words previously used. Use transitional expressions related to the sequences, as needed.

Note: You can compare and contrast the festivities celebrated in Chile with the ones in the United States.

Activity 5: Read the description to the classmate sitting next to you.

Unit 3: Let's have some fun! Be the character you always wanted to be

Lesson 2: Creativity is in our hands.

As this is the final unit, you must put into practice what you have learned, but in a creative and engaging way, to amuse your audience (classmates and teachers) and yourself!

The idea is to role play aspects that characterize the American Culture and the Chilean one. But, first you need to start by following some previous steps.

Before getting into practical work:

Activity 1: Form groups of four and choose one of the three comedy shows reviewed this semester— *Friends*, *How I Met Your Mother* or *Modern Family*. Then, think of the concepts already compared and analyzed in the semester and decide on which episode you would like to focus on, so you will be able to answer the questions below:

- a) Why did you choose those concepts?
- b) How do you relate them with Chile (remember previous classes)?
- c) Can you remember the scenes worked in classes that represent those concepts chosen by your group? If yes, name the episode. If not, do some research and find a representative episode for your concepts, then, name it and write it in your copybook.
- d) Which character would you like to be, if it was real life? Write down the reasons for the choices of each member of the group.

Getting a little bit closer to the practical work:

Activity 2: Once you have selected the episode, find out the script of the dialogues of that particular episode. You need either to google your sitcom and look for the episodes with the English subtitles or you can go to YouTube and find out excerpts with the subtitles as well. Then, select each character's intervention to determine who is going to represent that character later on.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S

Practical work:

Activity 3: Now that you have chosen your character to perform and her or his corresponding script, read out loud the dialogues taking turns when needed. Imagine the situation and try to make it as real as possible. Practice the scene reading your scripts and take the role of the character. Now you are acting!

Note: If there are some parts of the script you do not think that are appropriate to the aim of the project, adapt some interventions. Remember there will be monitoring during all the classes—as usual— so do not hesitate to ask questions your teacher.

Activity 4: After practicing the hypothetical situation, develop the story by acting as if you were presenting the role play to your audience. Create a hypothetical situation based on the dialogues chosen from the sitcom selected.

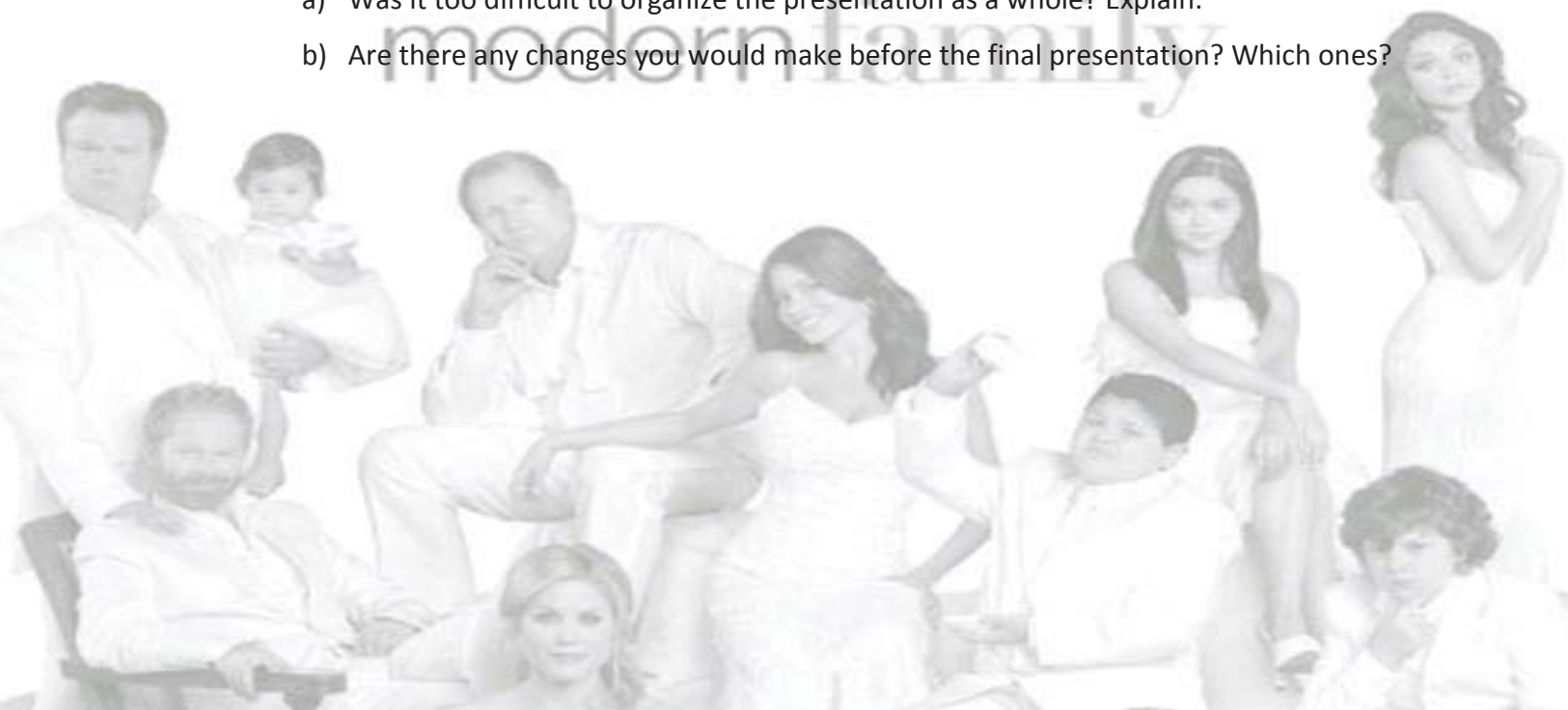
Activity 5: Now it is the moment in which you have the chance to use the classroom itself to rehearse your performance. Think of it as if it were the dress rehearsal before your presentation.

Choose the corresponding position for each character and be aware of the space you have to act.

Activity 6: Finally, the practice is over. This time you reflect on what you have done.

Discuss the following:

- Was it too difficult to organize the presentation as a whole? Explain.
- Are there any changes you would make before the final presentation? Which ones?



Lesson 4-5:

Before acting!

Activity 1: Get together with your group and take your corresponding place to act. Be prepared before the music starts.

Time to act!

Activity 2: Now, it is time for you to act. Represent a scene from the sitcom you have chosen, performing the characters reviewed throughout the semester.

Remember that the performance should

- Demonstrate characteristics of at least two aspects compared and contrasted between America and Chile.
- Show some of the values learned in the previous unit.
- Follow the rubric given at the beginning of Unit 3.

After acting

Now that you have all shown your abilities as actors and comedians, as a class, discuss the following (Raise your hand to give your opinion):

-
- a) Did you feel closer to the foreign culture? How or why?
 - b) Did you feel more aware of your own culture? Analyze positive and negative aspects.
 - c) Finally, evaluate yourself by applying the self-evaluation guide provided.
-

APPENDIX 1

The following questions will be of great help for my graduation project that will be presented at the end of this semester.

Instructions:

Answer the questions presented below and justify when necessary.

Questionnaire:

1.-Do you like the English class in your school?

2. - Is your English class entertaining?

3.-Do you watch videos in the English class or listen to radio excerpts?

Other:

4.-Do you like watching TV programs? If so, which one (s)?

5.-Do you think listening can improve pronunciation? Why or how?

6-Do you think listening can help acquire more vocabulary? Why or how?

7. - Which of the four skills is the one you feel more comfortable with?

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

How so?

8. - If you had to choose among these TV programs, which one would you choose?

- a) Science fiction
- b) Crime
- c) Love
- d) Comedy
- e) Other

9.-Is it entertaining for you to watch comedy programs?

10. - Do you feel interested in learning about other countries' cultures?

11. - Do you think comedy shows can reflect a country's culture?

12. - Is it easier for you to work:

- a) Alone
- b) In pairs
- c) In groups or
- d) I don't mind

13. - Have you had opportunities to talk about your own culture in class? (History class, chemistry, physical education)

14. - Would you like to learn about another culture? Why? Why not?

15. - How do you prefer being assessed? (You may choose more than one alternative)

- a. Test
- b. Oral presentations
- c. Dialogues
- d. Other_____

16. - Have you heard of any of these comedy shows?

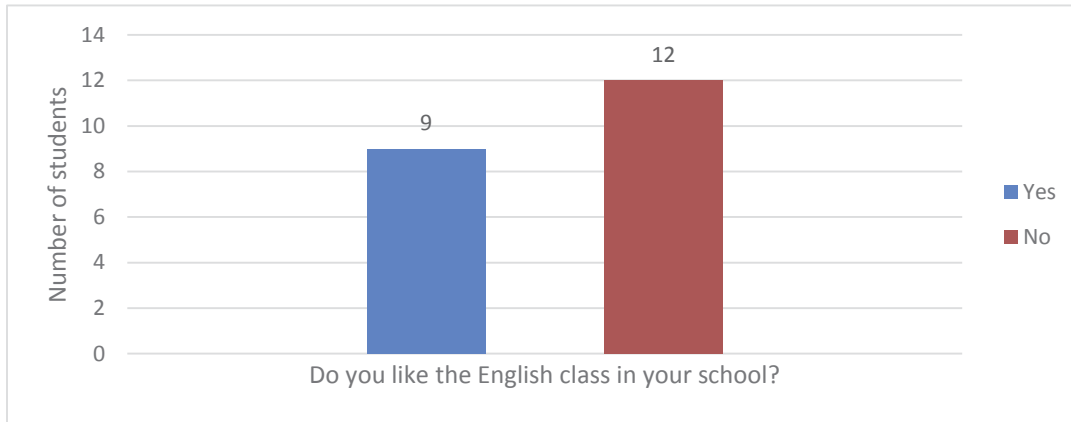
- | | Yes | No |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| a. Friends | _____ | _____ |
| b. How I met your mother | _____ | _____ |
| c. Modern family | _____ | _____ |

- d. The big band theory _____
- e. Two and a half men _____
- f. Undateable _____
- g. Two broke girls _____
- h. Mom _____

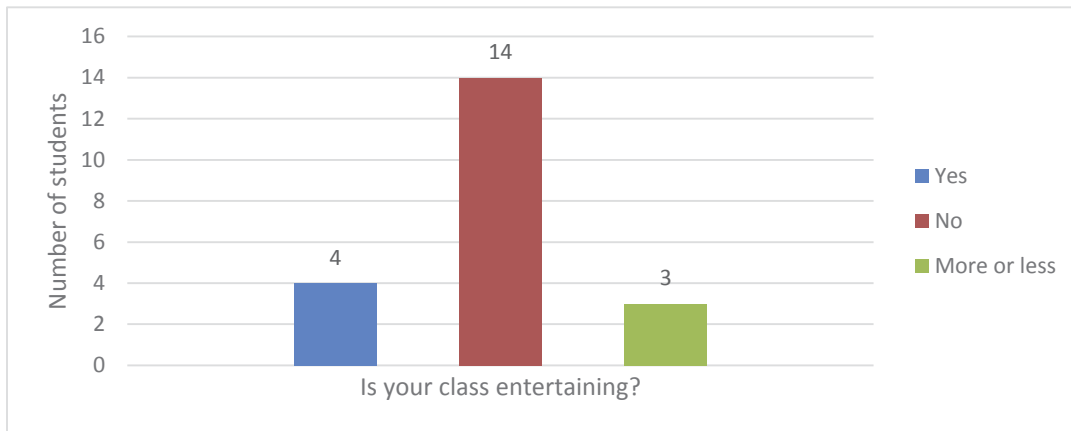
Thank you for your help

APPENDIX 2

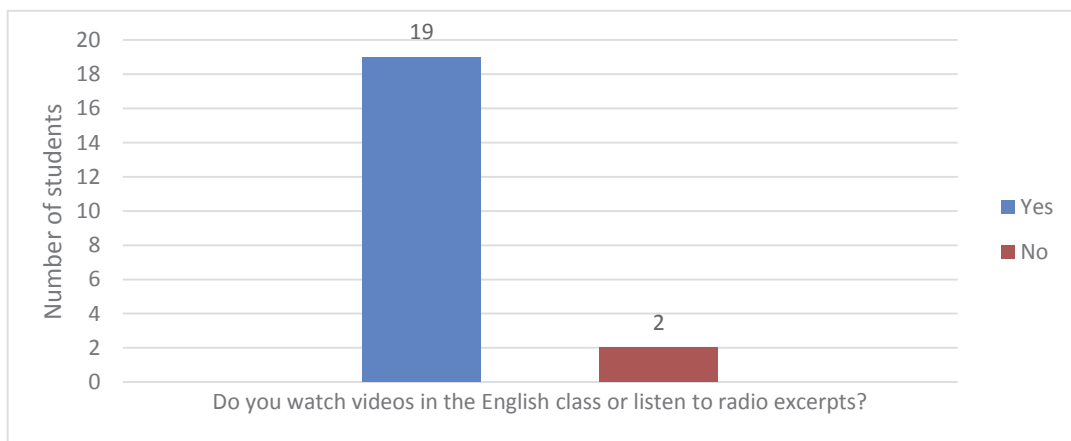
Graph 1



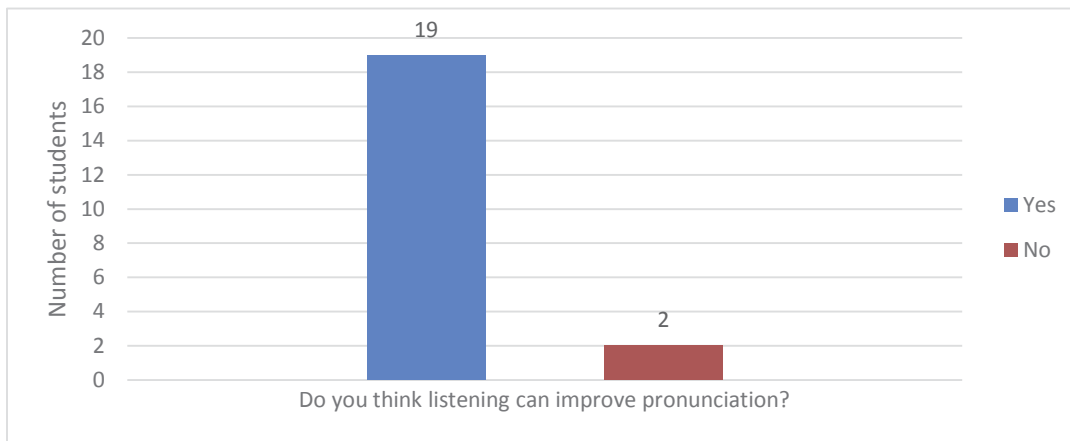
Graph 2



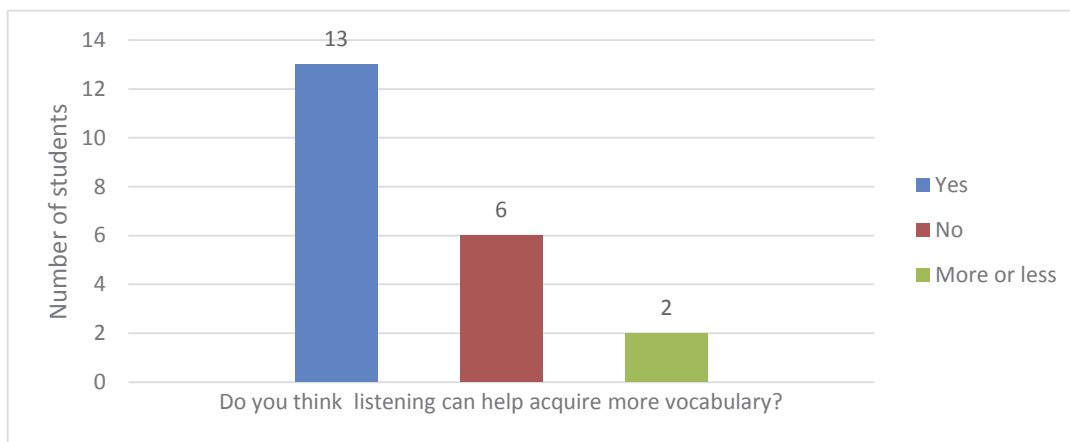
Graph 3



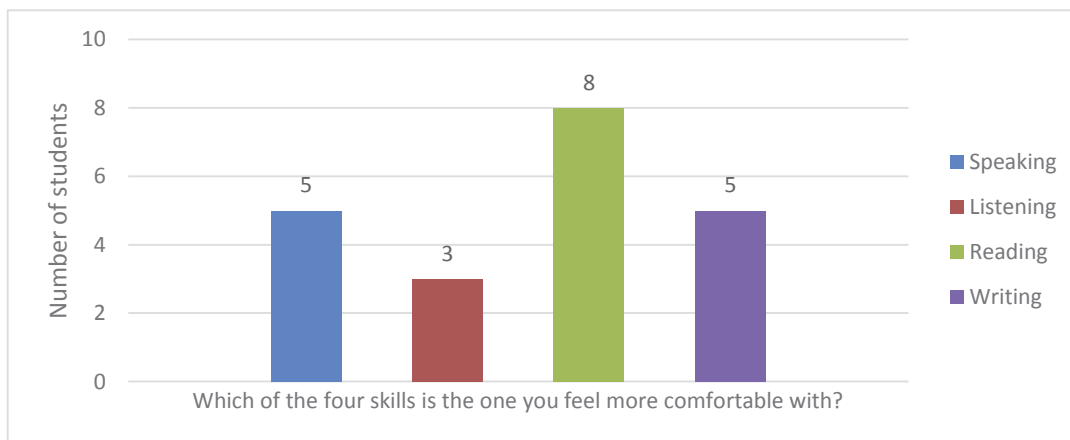
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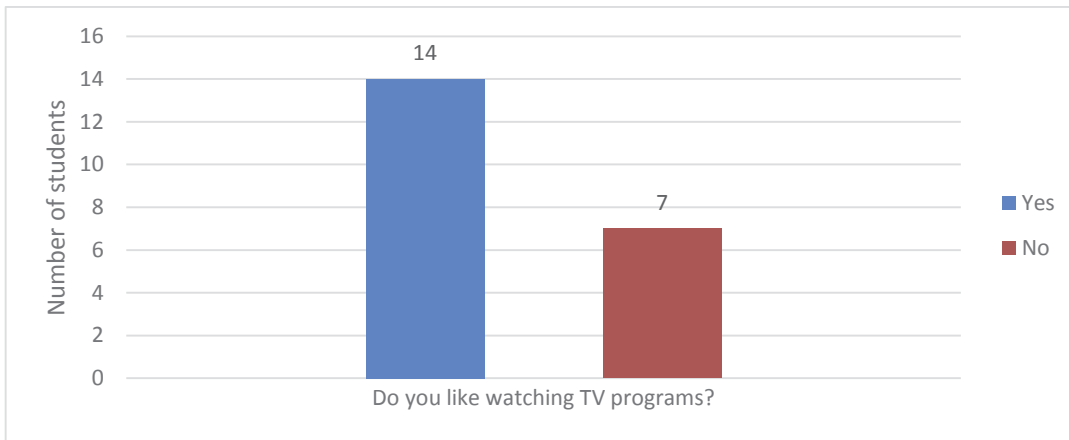
Graph 5



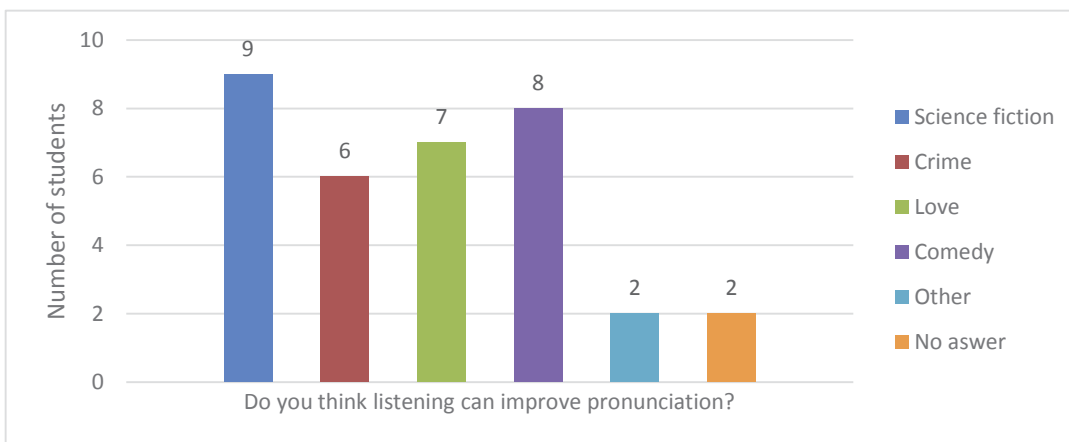
Graph 6



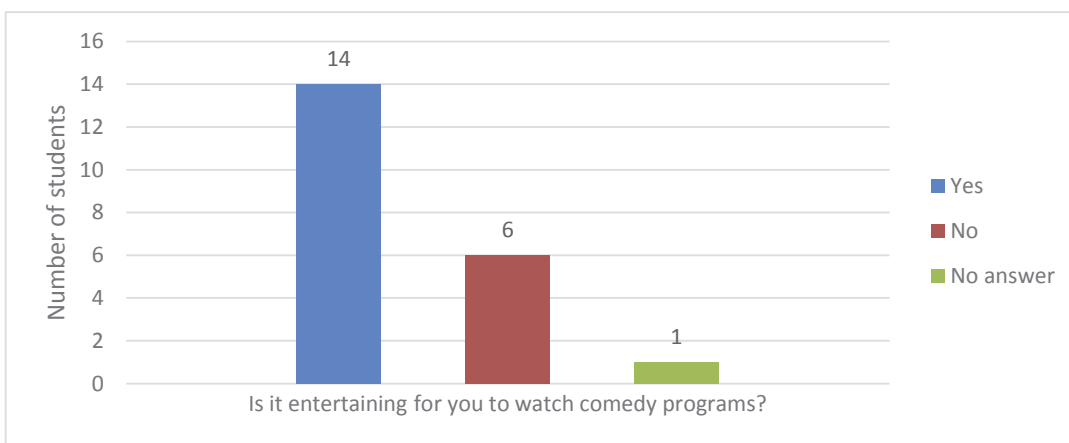
Graph 7



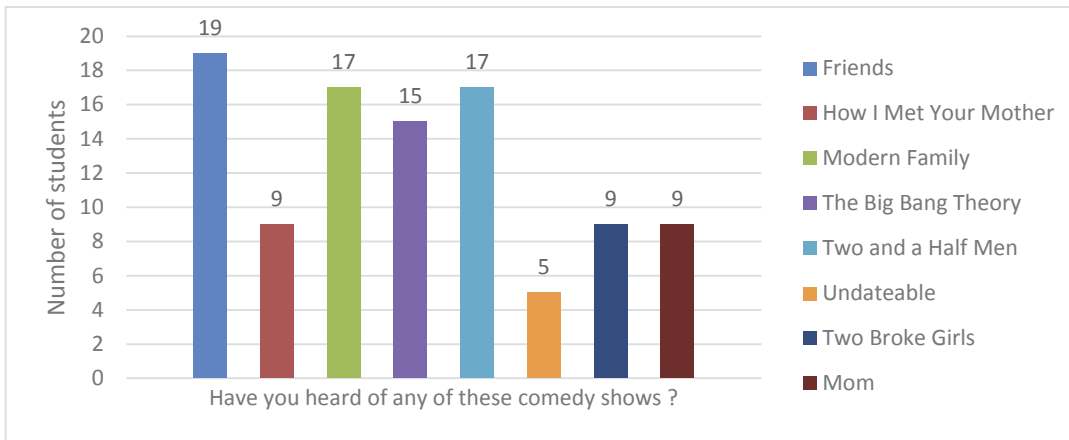
Graph 8



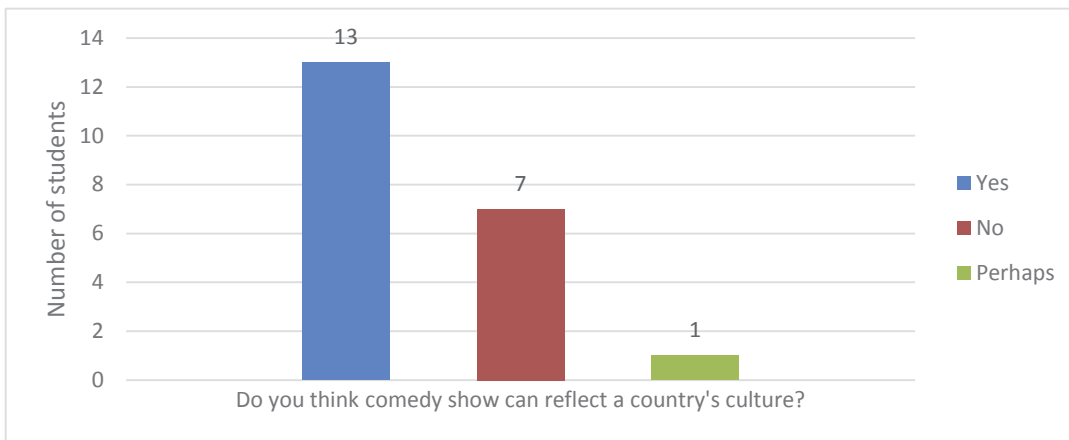
Graph 9



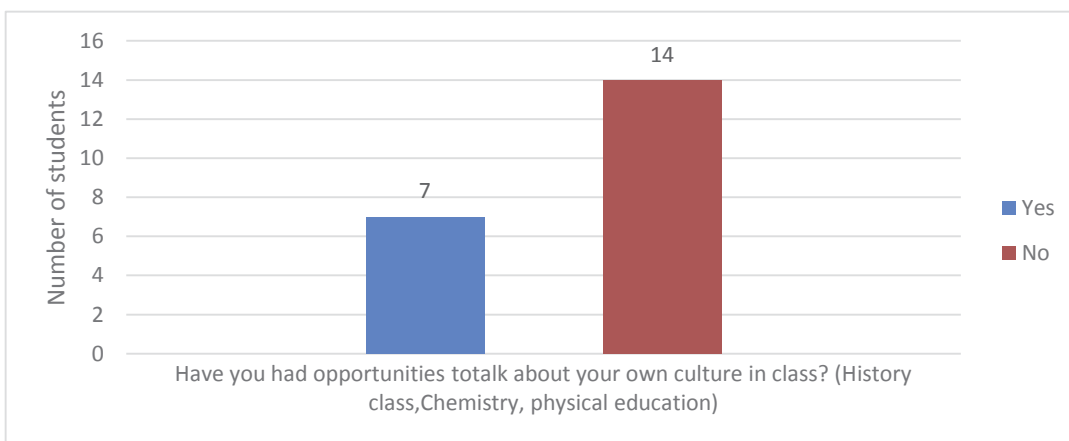
Graph 10



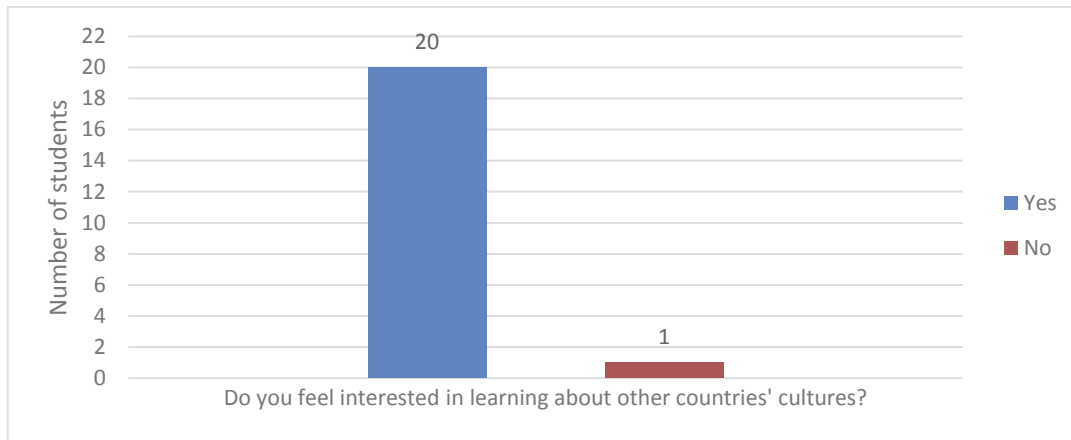
Graph 11



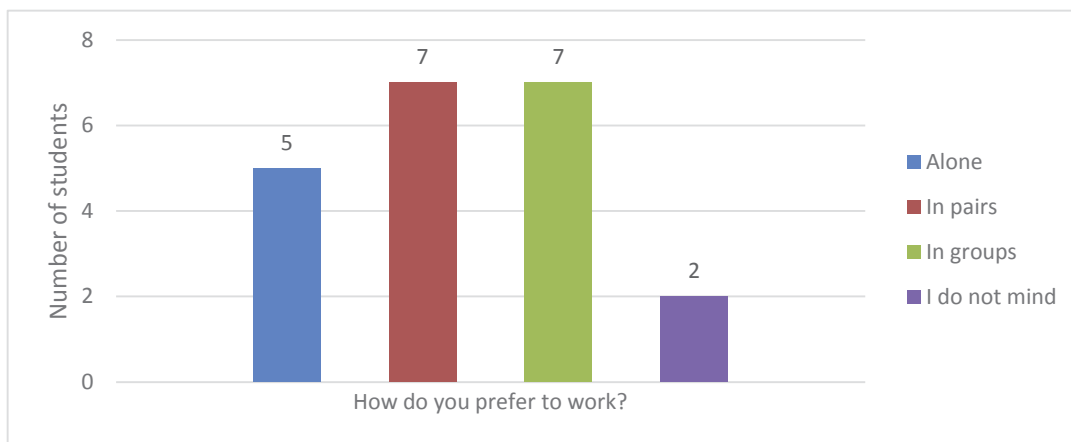
Graph 12



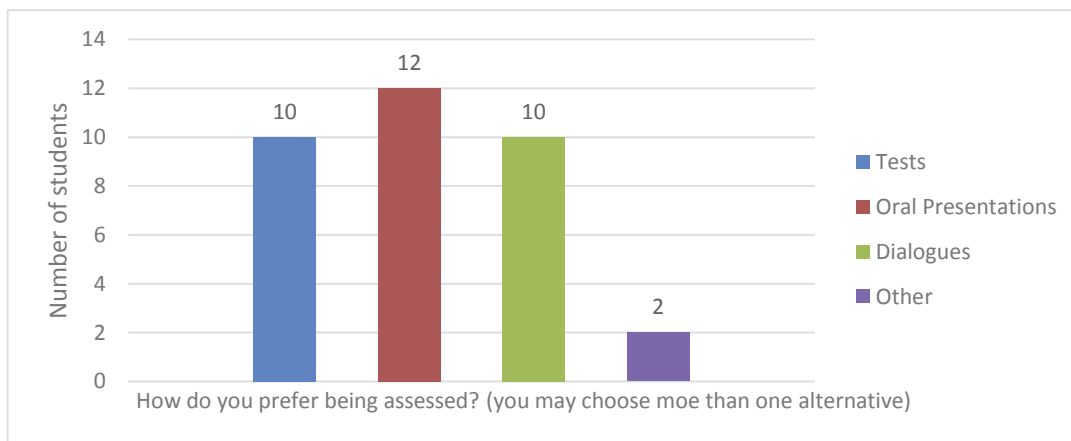
Graph 13



Graph 14



Graph 15



APPENDIX 3

Writing Assessment and Evaluation Rubrics

Rubric for Holistic Evaluation

Score	4	3	2	1
Focus/Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responds to the prompt • appropriate to the audience • single, distinct focus • generally well-developed ideas or narrative • logical flow of ideas or events • opening that draws in reader; effective closing •sense of completeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responds to the prompt • appropriate to the audience • focus not clear at every point • some main points underdeveloped • ideas may not be in the most effective order • an opening, but not necessarily focused or attention getting; attempt at a closing •sense of completeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responds partially to the prompt but is off target in some way • may not show evidence of attentiveness to audience •focus on topic not consistently sustained • some lack of distinction between main ideas and details • order of ideas not effective • may be no opening sentence; no attention to closing • piece seems incomplete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of attempt to respond to prompt • no evidence of attentiveness to audience • focus on topic not sustained • no opening or closing • piece is not complete
Elaboration/Support/Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each main idea supported by details • all details related to topic • choice of details effective • ideas/events related by effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each main idea supported by details but details in some paragraphs may be sketchy ; narrative details sufficient to flesh out events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uneven development; narrative details sketchy • details may appear to be listed rather than integrated into coherent flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • half or more of main ideas not supported by details • half or more details may be irrelevant • no transitions • sentence style choppy

	<p>transition words and phrases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • varied sentence style • precise, interesting, and appropriate word choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all details related to topic • some details not used effectively • transitions used • varied sentence style • word choice adequate to convey meaning; some precise, vivid words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some details are irrelevant • few or no transitions • most sentences simple; overall style choppy • word choice adequate to convey meaning but few precise or vivid words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocabulary limited
Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sophisticated and consistent command of Standard English • free of spelling, capitalization and usage errors • precise syntax; competence in coordination and subordination • few, if any, errors in punctuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and type of errors not sufficient to interfere with meaning • consistent command of Standard English • few, if any, spelling, capitalization, or usage errors • competence in coordination and subordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and type of errors may interfere with meaning at some points • weaknesses in command of Standard English • some spelling, capitalization, or usage errors • some fragments or run-ons • some errors in punctuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and type of errors obscure meaning • inadequate grasp of Standard English • frequent errors in spelling, capitalization and usage • many run-ons on fragments • serious and frequent punctuation errors

(Taken from: Writing Assessment and Evaluation Rubrics, p. 11-12)

APPENDIX 4

Speaking Assessment

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Participation in preparation and presentation	Always willing and focused during group work and presentation.	Usually willing and focused during group work and presentation.	Sometimes willing and focused during group work and presentation	Rarely willing and focused during group work and presentation.
Presentation of character	Convincing communication of character's feelings, situation and motives.	Competent communication of character's feelings, situations and motives.	Adequate communication of character's feelings, situation and motives.	Limited communication of character's feelings, situation and motives.
Achievement of Purpose	Purpose is clearly established and effectively sustained.	Purpose is clearly established and generally sustained.	Purpose is established but may not be sustained.	Purpose is vaguely established and may not be sustained.
Achievement of Purpose	Purpose is clearly established and effectively sustained.	Good variety of non-verbal cues is used in a competent way.	Purpose is established but may not be sustained.	Limited variety of non-verbal cues are used in a developing way.
Imagination and creativity	Choices demonstrate insight and powerfully enhance role play.	Choices demonstrate thoughtfulness and completely enhance role play.	Choices demonstrate awareness and developing acceptably enhance role play.	Choices demonstrate little awareness and do little to enhance role play.
Pronunciation	Shows accuracy of phonological features at both utterance and word levels, scarcely making errors.	Shows some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	It poses some stress on the listener by mispronouncing some key phonemes, however, meaning is	It poses a lot of stress on the listener because of inaccuracies in key phonemes and lack of control on supra-segmental features.

			enhanced by showing a degree of control of supra-segmental features.	
Use of English: Grammar / tenses for intermediate level	Shows a degree of control of simple grammatical forms.	Shows control of simple grammatical forms and attempts some complex grammatical forms.	Shows a degree of control of complex grammatical forms according to the linguistic context.	Shows accuracy in the use of complex grammatical forms according to the linguistic context, scarcely making any errors.
Use of English: Grammar / function words	Shows rather limited control of function words both in range and meaning.	Shows a degree of control of function words both in their range and meaning.	Shows a degree of control of function words both in range and meaning, relevant to the context.	Shows accuracy of function words both in range and meaning, scarcely making any errors.
Use of English: Lexical items	Conveys meaning by using mainly basic lexical items; scarcely any core vocabulary and expressions.	Conveys meaning by using basic vocabulary but she /he is able to show a degree of control of core vocabulary and expressions.	Conveys meaning by using some low-frequency words, core vocabulary and expressions but tends to lack sensitivity to register.	Conveys meaning by using low-frequency words, core vocabulary and expressions; student is sensitive to register in most cases.

(Adapted from: Centre for Holistic Teaching and Learning and Rubric for Speaking LCL460/ 2014)

APPENDIX 5

Self-reflective evaluation: Questions to ask

Here is a list of questions that can help you in the elaboration of your self-reflective evaluation.. You won't need to answer all of them – ideally focus on three questions that you find the most relevant, or simply write one coherent reflection that addresses some or all of the points mentioned here. Write no more than one typed page.

1. Evaluation of the presentation:
 - a) Did I meet the objectives of the presentation? Did I engage the other students? Did I address the detected problem of the presentation?
 - b) If I could do the presentation again, would I make any changes?
2. What can I do in the future to improve my weaknesses?
3. How did I feel before, during and after my presentation?
4. What teaching material / resources / technical facilities or equipment did I use? How effective were they? Did I have any problems with them?
5. What kind of interaction with my classmates occurred? What did my classmates like the most about the presentation? What didn't they respond well to?
6. Which parts of the presentation were the most successful? / Which parts of the presentation were the least successful?

(adapted from : ESP Methods class 2013)

APPENDIX 6

Peer – evaluation rubrics

Category	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
Contributions	Always or most times provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion.	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.
Problem-solving	Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems.	Refines solutions suggested by others.	Does not suggest or refine solutions, but is willing to try out solutions suggested by others.	Does not try to solve problems or help others solve problems.
Attitude	Is never publicly critical of the project or the work of others.	Is rarely publicly critical of the project or the work of other.	Is occasionally publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group.	Is often publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group.
Focus on the task	Consistently stays focused on the task and what needs to be done.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time.	Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done.
Working with others	Always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others.	Usually listens to, shares, with, and supports the efforts of others.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others.

(Adapted from:http://www.qu.edu.qa/casplo/documents/CAS_PLO_Rubrics/Outcome_d_TeamworkRubrics.doc)