ENFORCEMENT OF THE MONTESSORI TEACHING METHOD IN THE VERY BEGINNING OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: A TEACHING UNIT

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Abstract

Maria Montessori proposed an innovative way of teaching which was based on children’s autonomy and independence while they learnt. This master’s dissertation shows a proposal of a didactic unit for the first year of Compulsory-Secondary-Education for the subject of English under The Montessori Teaching Method. The topic of food and drinks has been designed in order to be taught from a different pedagogic methodology. The Spanish legislative framework has to be followed so the adaptation of The Montessori Teaching Method to the traditional methodology flows into a hybrid of both educative methodologies. The extracted conclusions show that pupils’ freedom and motivation must be the main core of a teaching methodology in order to make students feel enthusiastic while they are learning. Furthermore, the current educational system should undergo changes if we want students to feel more motivated and willing to learn.

Key words: autonomy, Compulsory-Secondary-Education, The Montessori Teaching Method, the teaching of English.

Resumen

María Montessori propuso una técnica de enseñanza que se basaba en la autonomía e independencia de los niños mientras aprendían. Este trabajo de fin de master muestra una propuesta de unidad didáctica para el primer año de educación secundaria obligatoria para la asignatura de inglés bajo el Método Montessori. El tema de la comida y la bebida ha sido diseñado para ser enseñado desde una metodología pedagógica diferente. El marco legislativo español tiene que ser acatado por lo que la adaptación del Método Montessori al método tradicional desemboca en un híbrido de ambas metodologías educativas. Las conclusiones extraídas muestran que la libertad y motivación de los alumnos debe ser el núcleo principal de un método de enseñanza para hacer que los alumnos sientan entusiasmo y motivación mientras estos aprenden. Además, el sistema educativo vigente debe sufrir cambios si queremos que los estudiantes se sientan más motivados y con ganas de aprender.

Palabras clave: autonomía, Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, El Método Montessori, la enseñanza de inglés.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Justification of the topic

The main reason why I have decided to focus my master’s dissertation in Maria Montessori’s methodology is the fact that my end-of-degree-project was devoted to The Montessori Teaching Method from an applied linguistics’ point of view. After several months having been researching and exploiting this topic, I decided to collaborate with my project’s prefect by writing one chapter that belongs to one of her books. Her name is María Aurora García Ruiz and she was the one who encouraged me to study and investigate about this topic. She has been working persistently on the production of this book called *Lenguaje científico en el ámbito académico* and I adapted the material compiled in my end-of-degree-project to take part in the book. I wrote a chapter called *La terminología del Método Montessori*, which was a Spanish version of my project, but focused on the specific terms used my Maria Montessori in her methodology.

As a consequence, I would like to thank María Aurora García for having given me the opportunity to develop and rise a deep interest in this subject. Her support and care made me feel comfortable while I was learning and discovering about The Montessori Methodology.

Thus, at the time of having to choose the main core for this dissertation, I thought about amplifying the sight from my end-of-degree-project to an extension of The Montessori Teaching Method implemented in Secondary Education. Firstly, the historical framework of this master’s dissertation will be mostly based on the theory assembled in my degree’s project, although I made considerable and sharp changes in several sections and adapted some information to the new project such as the main core of the topic; the proposal of a didactic unit for Secondary Education. Later on, I will be attending a Montessori School located in Jaén under the name of “Vereda Montessori” which will be my guide in order to analyse how an actual Montessori School works, how it is organised and the materials and methodology which are involved. Finally, I will propose a didactic unit adapted to the first year of Compulsory Secondary School, as this method is thought to be applied only during the very first years of life of children my attempt is to formulate a resumption of the Montessori Teaching Method up to the beginning of Secondary Education.

The matter of creating a didactic unit which is not that commonly found among the current Secondary Education, is not an easy task, as the legislation of the Spanish education must be followed and, moreover, the traditional methodology is the most used in Spanish education by the majority of schools and academic centres. Perhaps, the enforcement of a different educative programme may cause several disagreements with
people from the field of education. Furthermore, by changing the traditional methodology for a totally different one students who are currently studying will have to adapt themselves to the new teaching method and this would be a difficulty. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the struggles this implementation would entail, I believe it would also befall a crucial advance and innovation at the time of dealing with pupils’ emotions, feelings and motivation.

The legal framework in which the educative system is based on is composed by the Organic Law LOMCE¹ 8/2013 of December 9th and the Law for Education in Andalusia (LEA) 17-2017 of December 10th as our project will be focused on Jaén.

Apart from these education-laws, a didactic programme must also be consequent upon the Royal Decree 1105/2004 of December 26th (BOE² January 15th / 2015) which describes the normative for Secondary Education in Spain and, more precisely, the Decree 111/2016 of June 14th (BOJA June 28th) based on the Andalusian education; and the Order ECD/65/2025 of January 26th which imposes the application of key competences and the evaluation criteria for Primary, Compulsory and Non-Compulsory Secondary Education.

Finally, yet importantly, the official document named CEFRL (Common European Framework of References for Languages) establishes the different levels of teaching, learning and evaluating the languages spoken along Europe. It also assesses the linguistic level of a person in all the macro-skills.³

Apart from all the issues implied in the justification of the choice of the topic, I may also defend my position by adding a brief summary of the design of the didactic unit and all the possible consequences that might be carried. The didactic unit will be devoted to the first year of Compulsory-Secondary-Education. It will be based on the topic of food and drinks; its name will be “Healthy diet!”, so the vocabulary involved will be mainly the one dealing with aliments. Likewise, the grammar of the lesson will deal with a short review of the present tenses (simple and continuous) plus the explanation of the past simple tenses accompanied by some of the first irregular verbs from the irregular-verbs-list. Although the components of the unit are the ones extracted from an ordinary textbook, the development of the lesson will imply several projects (such as drafting a recipe in groups) and the explanations and exercises are going to be evolved through

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1 Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa. (Organic Law for the Improvement of the Quality of Education).
3 Reading, listening, writing, speaking and spoken interaction. Recently, mediation has been added.
The Montessori Teaching Method (children’s freedom, real contact and manipulation of materials, children’s autonomy…)

To sum up, there are several ideas that have made me realise why I wanted to study and analyse the topic of the Montessori education. However, by the production and realisation of a lesson planning to support my research, I have understood how important is to make children feel free and motivated to learn and discover the world which surrounds them, not only during the first years of life, but also during their adolescence stage.

1.2. Objectives of the investigation

First and foremost, the main objective of this project is to demonstrate that The Montessori Teaching Method may not only be applied during the first years of education but during the following ones also. This methodology is usually used since the child is born until s/he is six years old, although some Primary schools have adopted this technique and have prolonged its use until the end of Primary Education.

Another goal to be achieved within the proposition of this project, is the fact of highlighting the importance of the autonomy and independence of children and adolescents during their years of school-formation. As The Montessori Teaching Method establishes, the self-sufficiency of children while learning is one of the most important points that helps them acquiring information and new ideas more easily. Pupils must be autonomous, but always being controlled since, sometimes, an overdose of freedom can be reflected as a negative behaviour.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Maria Montessori

In order to present the main subject of this research, its founder and its main character should be introduced. Maria Tecla Artemisia Montessori was the responsible for giving name to the teaching method under scrutiny. When she got famous, she shorted her real name into Maria Montessori, the one which the world identifies her.

Maria Montessori was born in August 31st –1870 in Chiaravalle, a town located in the province of Ancona in the north of Italy. It was a small abbey which did not have many inhabitants and, as a result, in 1923 Chiaravalle was linked to the township of Milan.
Firstly, the decade of the 70’s must be highlighted as there were many changes in the political, social, religious and cultural life. The role of women during this period of time was not as important and identified as the men’s one. Maybe that is one of the reasons why Maria Montessori supposed such a big change for the women of that time. She was seen as a female leader for those girls who did not dare to achieve their goals because it was not well seen by society.

She was an ordinary girl who belonged to a middle-class family and grew up in a home with certain possibilities that not everyone of this epoch could afford. In fact, she was able to receive education, a privilege only for families with economic resources. Her academic degree was full of ups and downs since her father wanted her to become an engineer and, after having started engineering studies at the age of fourteen, she tried to be a biologist although, she ended up by being graduated as a doctor. She was the first Italian woman to be graduated in the medicine field. Moreover, some years later, in 1901, she got other studies as an anthropologist and philosopher, a fact which made her to be interested in people’s minds and their way of behaving and thinking.

During her years working as a doctor, she devoted most of the time to children with mental illnesses; children with difficult behaviours and problems that, as Maria Montessori defended, medicines and drugs could not remedy. For her, pedagogy and teaching were the most effective resources to take care of such problems. That is why after having expended a long time analysing, observing, and treating people with that kind of mental-health disturbances, Dr Montessori attended many conferences along Italy in which she exposed her thoughts and conclusions about children’s behaviour. After all, she decided to dedicate herself to the area of education. Many quotes reflect this way of dealing with children’s minds: “After analysing results, it was concluded that the school has an important influence in the construction of the mental images children have about difference and otherness (…)” (Turrent et al., 2009: 2).

Our author proposed an education based on the continuous observation of the child, every move and every progress s/he achieved; in other words, by examining the actions of children, teachers and parents could adapt their environment to their necessities. From this way of thinking The Montessori Teaching Method was born. In order to develop this method, Maria Montessori created her own educational atmosphere under the name of Casa Dei Bambini⁴; a school which compiled the proper materials and structures for children’s education.

The influence of Dr Montessori in education was so deep that, by the end of the 19th century, the whole country of Italy was aware of Maria Montessori’s methodology and,

⁴ House of children.
at the beginning of the 20th century, other European countries such as France, Germany or Switzerland (among others) started to adopt this teaching method. Because of globalisation, the Montessori methodology outspreaded through the rest of the continents reaching parts of the world such as EEUU or the north of Asia. Many famous entities like politicians such as Mussolini decided to support this educative system and, although many schools were being bombed because of the continuous wars, the Montessori’s ones did not suffer any kind of attacks or assaults.

To conclude with this section of the project, I may mention how important the figure of Maria Montessori has been through the history of women and the education field. After many years fighting to achieve her goals, she discovered her interest in children and in the way people see, set, and understand the world. For this reason, she launched her teaching methodology which is going to be deeply explained in the following step of this dissertation.

### 2.2. The Montessori Teaching Method

The figure of Maria Montessori has been introduced as well as many biographical data and support in the educative area. Additionally, her teaching methodology must be deeply analysed in order to carry out this project.

As it has been mentioned in the previous section, The Montessori Teaching Method is born through research, study and investigation about children during their very first years of life by Maria Montessori. Consequently, this methodology is especially applied since a baby is born until the sixth year of life, although it was developed into several stages that are going to be explained later on.

Before the full development of this section, the main aspects of The Montessori Teaching Method must be listed:

1) The crucial period of a person’s life: The Imaginary
2) Children’s surrounding and environment
3) Casa Dei Bambini
4) Individual teaching
5) Children’s personal circumstances

The most important fact to be taken into account to apply the method is the child’s environment and atmosphere. How children behave and interact with what surrounds them is the main core for considering a proper education. With this idea in mind, independence has been taken into consideration as the first applicable feature for the method. When a child feels free to discover the world and to learn from it, the process
of teaching-and-learning is easier and more effective than if this person thinks s/he is obliged to do so and, consequently, s/he will not be willing to be taught. From my point of view, this is something that is currently happening in the modern education. Many children who are under-sixteen have the duty of going to school until they are sixteen but they do not feel motivated enough for it and their behaviour is not good. This fact must be taken into account and make us (young teachers) think about the way we teach and what we transmit to children. A motivated person will learn much more than a non-motivated one.

According to Maria Montessori, when a person is just born, the three first years of life are the most crucial period for a person’s mind. In other words, during this period, a baby’s brain is capable of acquiring and extracting whatever information s/he is confronting to. This process receives the name of “the imaginary” as this is the procedure how children arrange all the information they are taking in and give shape to it in their minds. That is to say, children organize what they learn in their own way, although this procedure does not necessarily establish the real meaning of things.

Consequently, not everyone can learn by sharing the same environment and atmosphere because of the age, physiognomic conditions, matureness, etc. In order to carry out Maria Montessori’s methodology, she decided to create a perfect environment to develop children’s education. Accordingly, she created the so-called Casa Dei Bambini, an adequate atmosphere which contained suitable stuff and materials. These schools firstly appeared along Italy and, later on, they became so famous that got expanded all over Europe and then, all over the world. The main features of such educative centres can be summarised in the presence of amplitude in the common areas and rooms in which children could be constantly in touch with nature and the external medium by, for example, having big windows. The use of vivid colours was also present among the material of the school inasmuch as the order of colours gives us a sense of harmony and calm. Furthermore, every single part of the furniture (desks, chairs, tables…) was adapted to children’s needs in terms of height and weight. Besides all these features, Casa Dei Bambini received such name as its construction was similar to an ordinary house; strictly speaking, the building of a Montessori school imitates a house. All these characteristics were thought for children to feel as most comfortable as possible; to feel as if they were at home.

Every single aspect that surrounds a child will affect this person whether in a bad or a good way. But, not only is the material stuff what determines the child’s relation with education, but also the circumstances that coexist together with that person. Illustrating this, a person can be born with some health problems like Down Syndrome, Autism, or any other type of mental illnesses that, in one way or another, will affect her/his
education. That is why The Montessori Teaching Method is focused on the individual and not on the group-work. A child has to be instructed by being aware about all the issues that can have repercussions in the teaching-learning process. “However, the more she [Maria Montessori] came in contact with the children and had the chance to observe them, the more she began to view their perceived mental deficiencies as a pedagogical problem rather than a medical one.” (Thayer-Bacon, 2012: 4).

Moreover, despite having a health issue or not, the relationship with their relatives is one the most crucial factors in child’s living progress. The situation at home is fundamental at the time of connecting with the child and transferring him/her good values and will to learn.

Having summarised what Maria Montessori believed were the most important steps to accomplish her methodology, a single term can be said to encapsulate it all; the term *pedagogy*. Once the idea of education is considered, it can be applied within the intentions and aims that the docent has; in other words, education is a set of instructions that can be received both in academic life and in personal one. Education can also be practised by determining some goals to educate an individual so that s/he can become the type of person the teacher wants; that is why many teachers are said to be “influencers”, because they guide children’s education during a period of time. Moreover, the method’s roots are reflected on the concepts of “nature” and “freedom”. Both are the main core for a child’s educative progress by applying the Montessori Teaching Method as the pupil must be in contact with the natural environment and s/he has to be free enough to act and take decisions. These terms contradict the previous definition of education so, in some way, Maria Montessori tried to break with the current view of education. The following quote confirms Montessori’s principles of teaching based on nature and freedom:

> María Montessori es una de las figuras más representativas de la pedagogía moderna, conocida en todo el mundo por sus ideas sobre la infancia, vigentes hoy en el día, y por su *método*. En el centro de su pensamiento, se encuentran las ideas de naturaleza y libertad. La educación no es impartida por el maestro, si no que se trata de un proceso natural a través del cual el niño crece y se desarrolla experimentando de forma directa con el mundo que le rodea. Naturaleza y libertad se unen: educar es promover la autoeducación. El método para comprender al niño debe ser científico, basado fundamentalmente en la observación y en el respeto de sus propias leyes de desarrollo. (Santerini, 2013: 1)

In conclusion, The Montessori Teaching Method was born as a result of a continuous analysis focused on children and their learning process. Maria Montessori’s intentions were reflected in many different academic works and congresses in all over the world.
She created a methodology composed by a required set of materials, several stages, a different evaluation criteria from the traditional one based on exams and the implication of the four macro-skills\(^5\) in her teaching system.

### 2.2.1. Materials

In order to carry out this teaching methodology it must be mentioned that Maria Montessori wanted to create a track of materials and tools that were adapted to children’s stimulations.

Before introducing the set of required materials used in The Montessori Teaching Method, their common features must be listed:

1) They are made from natural materials.
2) They are colourful.
3) They are manipulative.
4) They are adapted to children in terms of height and weight.
5) They stimulate the five humans’ senses.

When we refer to “children’s stimulations” we talk about the five main human senses: hearing, sight, taste, smell and touch. These have to be stimulated in order to be developed while the child is growing. Because of this, Dr Montessori established a set of features that compose the basics of the Montessori’s materials. For instance, every single corner and tool had to be colourful and jazzy; with colours such as red, pink, yellow, green or blue in order to “catch” children’s attention. Another main feature is the size of the furniture, windows and doors. They are adjusted to children’s height and strength with the intention of facilitating them the management with their surroundings. To stimulate the sense of touch, children also deal with many different textures and weaves which let them have contact with diverse surfaces. These characteristics are associated to the senses of sight and touch and, for other human senses like the smell one, Maria Montessori attempted to make the children be surrounded by a natural atmosphere in which they can deal with nature with such resources as aromatic plants or flowers. For the sense of taste, pupils are allowed to eat whatever they want as far as their parents let them but, normally, they are taught to eat healthy and natural food like vegetables and fruit. By trying different type of food, they develop their taste buds.\(^6\) Finally, for the sense of hearing Dr Montessori used musical instruments like triangles, bells, or drums in order to cultivate a person’s inner physiognomy.

Despite all these ordinary tools that could be found in a child’s life were not eliminated, for example balls or dolls which were non-educative toys, Maria Montessori wanted to

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\(^5\) Listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

\(^6\) Parts of the tongue which allows the sense of taste.
join the way of teaching-and-learning with fun and diversion. Considering this all, every school which supports the Montessori Teaching Method includes a set of tools that were created by Montessori. These tools were all made with special materials and resources that made them harder and longer-lasting than any other normal toy, they were accurately finished and neither too heavy nor too light. The list of the mainly used Montessori materials is:

a) **Brown stairs:** a set of ten prisms made of wood all painted in brown but containing different sizes. The dimensions decrease gradually as if they were forming a stair. The child has to order them from the biggest to the smaller step. This instrument was a way of stimulating the visual sense.

b) **The pink tower:** this tool is a series of ten square blocks all in the same shade of pink and, again, they are of different sizes. They have to be ordered by letting the biggest one being the base of the tower and then, the rest must be collocated by decreasing the size.

c) **Cylinders blocks:** this tool is composed by four dissimilar blocks. Each block is different because of their cylinders; the first one counts on ten cylinders with different height that has to be fitted in the wooden block; the second one is more or less the same but the cylinders have different broadness; the third one is a mixture of the first and the second block since the cylinders have different height and broadness; and, finally, the fourth block is composed by ten cylinders with the same shape and size. This helps the child to have a hierarchical vision of the forms.

d) **Touch boards:** this toy consists on a set of some boards which are made of different materials since they represent diverse textures and surfaces. One board is soft, another one is hard, another board is rough or wrinkled, etc. The main goal of this tool is to make the children be in contact with some different surfaces to develop the sense of touch.
e) **Red rods**: this game consists on a series of ten long sticks or rods all painted in red colour. Each stick decreases ten centimetres from the previous one. The child has to order them stepwise so that s/he can stimulate the brain with the logic of order and forms.

f) **Colour tablets**: this toy is formed by several small containers and different sets of seven tablets all with a different shade of one colour (one darker, one lighter, etc.) The colours are normally the primary and secondary ones: yellow, red, blue, pink... The main goal of this material is to collect all the tablets from the same colour and try to order them by shades and tones.

g) **Geometric cabinet**: this toy is a piece of furniture composed by several drawers. Each drawer has a sticker which indicates a given geometrical form and, moreover, each drawer has few holes which have the shape of the geometrical form from the sticker. The child has to introduce a series of wooden geometrical pieces in the correspondent drawer. This stimulates the sense of sight and the common sense of children’s brains.

These toys or tools are just a brief example of what Maria Montessori created in relation to the material which was used in her schools or educational institutions. Although she made use of such stuff, she did not want to eliminate the ordinary games and materials from a child’s life, but only try to teach them by enjoying and having fun since they were born. Furthermore, this type of materials can be used both at home and in school since they are not too big or heavy. To summarize, Maria Montessori designed a set of toys that were manipulative, sensory, ludic, repetitive, progressive, made of natural resources like wood or metal and adapted to children’s necessities and abilities.

### 2.2.2. Stages

In order to develop the Montessori Teaching Method, an important part of it is the way in which it is divided. This methodology bases its principles on the age of children and how their abilities and capabilities are developed and improved through time. As a result, three stages are found along the method and, although they are three different periods, they are linked from the first to the third one. Moreover, each stage receives a name which defines in what they consist.
First of all, the beginner stage given in the Montessori Teaching Method is the one under the name of *The Absorbent Mind* or even by the name of *The Construction of Individuality*. This concept defines the process in which a person is just born and that person’s brain starts taking shape and acquiring any kind of information from its surroundings. The time this stage takes is from zero to six so that it lasts the first six years of a child’s life. Aristotle used to say that people are born and their brains are like “clean slates”\(^7\) or, in other words, the brains are an empty space which starts keeping data from the beginning of someone’s life. Concurrently, this process formed by two different sub-categories, the unconscious stage and the conscious one. The former is the one which goes from zero-age to three-age so that takes place during the very first three years of children’s lives and is in charge of keeping or stocking the information in the short-term-memory, giving place to the brain only keeping the most important data and eliminates the unimportant one. That is to say, the brain has the ability to classify the information a person confronts. By the other hand, the conscious period is the one which lasts from the third year of live until the sixth one and it takes care of keeping the information in the long-term-memory facilitating people not to easily forget what has been learnt.

Secondly, the following stage in this teaching methodology is the *Acquisition of Culture and The Cosmic Plan* one. This second stage is so important in a person’s learning progress since it is the transition from the first period to the one in which the child starts to be a more mature person and determined in terms of thoughts and ideas. As a result, the *Acquisition of Culture and The Cosmic Plan* stage comprises from the age of six until the age of twelve so that it lasts six years. The way in which a person starts thinking during this stage will fix how of their future ideas and how to order information in their brains must be taken into account. As it is a period of transition, it is the second most important one of the three stages of The Montessori Teaching Method.

The final stage is the one called *The Development of Personality and Earth Children* and, as its own name expresses, it is the process in which people become an adult. Consequently, this stage embraces from the age of twelve until the age of eighteen; period of life in which a person is supposed to be conscious enough of their behaviour and conduct and, moreover, in some countries such as Spain, at the age of eighteen a person is free and responsible of what s/he does (smoking, drinking alcohol, driving a car...). Accordingly, this stage is the last one but not less important; at the end of it, a person’s process of being educated as a human becomes independent from whatever type of education s/he has received.

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\(^7\) Latin expression: *Tabula rasa*. Meaning that a person’s brain is a dry sponge which absorbs any kind of information.
In a nutshell, The Montessori Teaching Method is divided into several stages with the same importance but containing different features regarding a person’s mind. The first one is the most crucial one since a baby’s brain has more plasticity than an adolescent or an adult one. Then, the second and the third one are just differentiated because of the level of matureness of a person; the older s/he gets the more developed s/he becomes.

2.2.3. Evaluation

As almost every teaching method, the Montessori one accomplishes an evaluation process in which students are assessed depending on the goals and successes they achieve. But one of the most remarkable features of this method is that Maria Montessori wanted to eliminate the ordinary way of evaluating children and with this, she aimed to create an educational system in which pupils didn’t have to study subjects “by heart” and expose their knowledge in an exam that was going to assess their intelligence. As a consequence, Montessori’s intention was to evaluate the child in every step s/he achieved depending on several dexterities like letters, numbers or art.

From the very beginning, children who are in a Montessori school are being observed and analysed in detail. Teachers are the ones who collect this information in several ways like writing down every aspect in a notebook which is divided into different sessions; every session belongs to a child and every child’s session is divided into several abilities or competences. In this notebook or agenda, teachers write how a student is developing their own skills, how s/he interacts with others and their behaviour (since they are very young-aged), and anecdotes or special moments from the daily routines. Filming videos or taking photos focused on a child’s evolution is another way of storing that kind of data. Moreover, in Montessori Schools, every pupil has its own drawers where s/he keeps all the material, activities, exercises, paintings or whatever type of production done in class.

Apart from storing such information in different ways, at the time in which teachers have to give a feedback to children’s parents about their kids’ progress, the data compiled in the teachers’ agendas are used for answering a final questionnaire about the student. These questionnaires are the closest way of assessment that parents receive from their children’s educational process.

There are some final consequences of such evaluation method. Children are not obliged to study subjects in an unpleasant manner since, as they think they have to study compulsory, sometimes there are not motivated enough to achieve the results you want. By implementing The Montessori Teaching Method, children feel free and motivated to start learning and enjoying their didactic period. The major problem is found when a student from a Montessori school moves to an ordinary Primary or Secondary School; since they start being evaluated by numerical marks so that they,
sometimes, feel frustrated and compare themselves with their classmates and it causes an impact in a student’s life.

2.2.4. Linguistic components and the four macro-skills

Concerning the Montessori Teaching Method, the field of linguistics has to be explored for a better understanding of how children develop the ability of communicating with their surroundings. First of all, the concept of “linguistic” must be exploited and then, all its components and how they interfere in the communicative process.

One of the most important linguistics’ authors is Noam Chomsky born in 1928 and is still alive. This author defined “language” as “a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements” (Chomsky, 1957: 13). His theory supported the idea that children were born with an innate ability to develop the speaking skill and, later on, they could assimilate some linguistic rules and theories. Given these points, the fact of seeing the speaking skill as something intrinsic in a person’s nature, make Maria Montessori and Noam Chomsky agree in their thoughts about linguistics. “So the obvious hypothesis is that our language is the result of the unfolding of a genetically determined program” (Chomsky, 1993: 26).

Another key thing to remember is that linguistics is defined as the science that studies the structure of languages or literally retrieved from a dictionary:

The scientific study of language and its structure, including the study of grammar, syntax, and phonetics. Specific branches of linguistics include sociolinguistics, dialectology, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, comparative linguistics, and structural linguistics. (Oxford Dictionary, 2019: 113).

Firstly, following the steps of Hartwell “grammar” can have multiple definitions but having chosen one of them:

The first thing we mean by "grammar" is "the set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings. It is not necessary that we be able to discuss these patterns self-consciously in order to be able to use them. In fact, all speakers of a language above the age of five or six know how to use its complex forms of organization with considerable skill; in this sense of the word-call it "Grammar 1":they are thoroughly familiar with its grammar (Hartwell, 2008: 109).

(In other words, grammar is the way in which language is structured in order to make a correct use of it.

Secondly, the term “syntax” is academically defined by Robert Valin et alii in their book Syntax. Structure, Meaning and Function (1997) belonging to Cambridge University Press:

The term "syntax" is from the Ancient Greek syntaxis, a verbal noun which literally means "arrangement" or "setting out together". Traditionally, it refers to the
branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence. (Matthews 1982:1). The expressions of a language involve a relationship between a sequence of sounds and a meaning, and this relationship is mediated by grammar, a core component of which is syntax (…). (Van Valin et al., 1997: 1)

(Summarizing their words, “syntax” is a part of linguistics in charge of forming sentences and grammatical structures in order to give meaning to the language. Connexion⁸ and cohesion⁹ are also important when dealing with syntax.)

Thirdly and finally, the definition of “phonetics” is also required when dealing with linguistics. When we talk about phonetics, we refer to the speaking-auditory part of the language. Better defined by Raymond Hickey in his book Language History and Linguistic Modelling. A Festschrift for Jacek Fisiak on his 60th Birthday. (1997) and more deeply in the chapter Phonetics and Phonology

Phonetics is the study of human sounds in general without saying what function which sounds may have in a particular language. The term ‘phonetics’ is, however, often used with reference to one language when the emphasis is on the pronunciation of this language. (Hickey, 1997: 1)

(Having dealt within linguistics and its components,) the communicative process can also be analysed from a different perspective. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a document which provides the assessment on any European language depending on four macro-skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

To begin with, the listening skill or the ability of listening is the first skill to be developed by humans since the first way in which we receive input from the outside is by hearing. Due to the fact that this mechanism is unconscious, by hearing and listening we learn and acquire information. It is firstly produced in our native language and then we can learn new languages by listening to them. This skill is denominated as receptive skill as they all can be divided into receptive or productive skills; people cannot produce “listening”, but can perceive it.

The relationship between the listening macro-skill and the Montessori Teaching Method is present since the first and main way of teaching-and-learning is by listening. A baby starts listening since s/he is born and, by repeating this process, this person can learn new data and start being in contact with their surroundings. Moreover, Maria Montessori wanted to improve and stimulate the listening skill by being so repetitive with the

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⁸ Language needs the use of linkers in order to be meaningful.
⁹ Connexion among ideas and intentions are required when communicating.
activities she proposed e.g.: at the time of learning the alphabet, she used to put emphasis on the repetition of the sounds of letters and not on the way they are written.

Secondly, the following skill to be analysed is speaking. Speaking is the act of producing language allowed by the organs of speech. Although people can communicate by different language resources (signs language, mimics, oral language, written language...), the spoken way is the most found among humans. Since people start receiving input by hearing, then they are able to produce language by speaking (unless any health issue). So, consequently, this skill is a productive one.

Maria Montessori considered this macro-skill as the most important together with the listening one. By understanding what has been listened and being able to answer to it, the communicative process is occurring. But, at the time of implementing the Montessori methodology, children are not given the same date among them. As this method shows different stages, children from each stage receive a different charge of spoken input. The older the child is, the higher level of spoken information s/he receives.

Thirdly, the ability of writing is found. This reflects the act of producing language reflected into paper; that is to say, that language this time is not produced orally, but written. This is also a productive skill, since a person can create and produce written language.

Maria Montessori defended the idea of learning the writing skill before the reading one since a person is meant to be effective when producing language. This study appears in numerous researches and this allows us considering a thesis belonging to T. Ryan under the title of The importance of writing before reading; How Montessori materials and curriculum support this learning process (Wisconsin, 2015). This thesis shows a deep analysis of how children develop the writing skill before the reading one and why. The author analysed Maria Montessori’s point of view and the final outcome says that once the child is familiarized with the alphabet, it is easier for them to start reading.

At the time of learning how to write, children learn the alphabet (first orally and then written), not in capital letters but in lowercase letters. Furthermore, they do not learn the alphabet in the ordinary or traditional way: “a, c, b, d...”, depending on the shape of each letter. To be precise, children learn the alphabet by drawing dots; each letter is represented with a series of dots giving the shape of a letter. Also, they study letters in groups (some consonants and one vowel) so that they can start forming easy words, for instance cat, dog, or pot.

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10 Lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, hard palate, soft palate (velum), uvula, and tongue.
To finish with the macro-skills, the reading skill may be introduced as the most complex one since the child needs to know how to pronounce and understand the written language. This ability is a receptive one as children receive information (printed and not orally) and, for Maria Montessori, it is proposed as the final skill to be acquired because, to be executed, the other macro-skills need to be learnt before this one. By listening we learn how to speak and, later on, we are taught how to write what we pronounce and, finally, we should know how to read what we write.

As a brief summary of this section, the order in which the four macro-skills are learnt is important and determinant since not all of them can be acquired at the same time. Some skills take more time than others and some others need to be learnt before the rest in order to facilitate the rest of the skills to be developed.

2.3. Teaching methods and approaches: the Montessori Teaching Method

Having dealt with the main issues and features of the Montessori Teaching Method, an outstanding section are the extracted theories from numerous studies and researches carried out before and after the existence of Maria Montessori and her didactic proposal.

The theories already established before the one under scrutiny can affect or influence it and it happened the same with many psychologists and anthropologists who were a deep influence for Maria Montessori.

One of the main influences for Maria Montessori was the entity of J. Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), who exposed his main idea about educating children with freedom and not giving them a big charge of data; children should discover and learn by themselves. In a nutshell, his pedagogical theory can be summarized as "individualism". Furthermore, this author supported public education.

I would take school instruction out of the hands of the old order of decrepit, stammering, journeymen-teachers as well as from the new weak ones, who are generally no better for popular instruction, and entrust it to the undivided powers of Nature herself, to the light that God kindles and ever keeps alive in the hearts of fathers and mothers, to the interest of parents who desire that their children should grow up in favour with God and man. (Pestalozzi, 1801: 97).

This quote shows Pestalozzi’s vision of how children should be educated. He defended his ideal by supporting an education based on Nature and not in all the laws and instructions imposed in the education of the XIX century. Moreover, Pestalozzi also supported a religious education between God and man.

The second figure that appeared reflected in Maria Montessori’s theories and studies is Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1774-1838), also known as the father of psychology, who came up with the idea of obliging children to go to school; in other words, school had to be
compulsory for every child. Itard also proposed the need of an adapted set of materials for pupils depending on their needs and necessities.

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) was also a strong influence for Maria Montessori or at least, one of the most influential ones. Froebel’s ideas were related to philosophy and psychology more than to pedagogy. The most remarkable issue that Maria Montessori highlighted in her works and ideas was the differentiation between mind and object. This theory of “the abstract” and “the real” stuff made Maria Montessori develop her personal point of view about a person’s brain; that is why the very first period of her didactic project was called “The Absorbent Mind”. In addition, Froebel brought new items to the word of education, for instance, the term kindergarten implemented for preschool education for children. Froebel’s words about education appear in some academic works by different authors who studied his ideal. “Children are like tiny flowers: They are varied and need care, but each is beautiful alone and glorious when seen in the community of peers”. (Sull, 2012: 39).

Edward Seguin (1812-1880) was one of the most powerful physicist from that time. He supposed an impact in Maria Montessori’s pedagogy since he tried to make a change in the education field; for example, he proposed his theory of “the physiological method” based on the human physiognomy which is able to control a person’s reactions. This made Maria Montessori reflect about the human’s behaviour and reactions. They also met in Paris in order to exchange some ideas they shared in common.

Also Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) belonged to those who caused consequences in Maria Montessori’s point of view. Freud was a philosopher who was present in Montessori’s books and works. Both, Montessori and Freud believed and agreed that humans’ first years of life (five or six more or less) are the most sensitive and determinant part of people’s developing process. It must be mentioned that Maria Montessori spent several years of her early life studying philosophy and she was so interested in theories like Freud’s. “No, our science is no illusion. But an illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere.” (Freud, 1927: 58).

This quote reflects Freud’s thought of going beyond science and discovering the world within imagination and illusion. Children’s brains are full of illusion and ideas that are present in the real world so, the author expresses his will of not to lose the creativeness of children’s minds.

The strongest entity whom Dr Montessori followed most was John Dewey (1859-1852). Dewey was a philosopher and a pedagogue who appeared reflected in every single step Maria Montessori achieved during her years of research. This author based his ideas on discipline as the main basis of education. Moreover, he proposed schools to be centres in which students were analysed and observed. Although both agreed in the way discipline carried out pedagogy, Maria Montessori was against some other issues
dealing with Dewey; for instance, Dewey believed that education foundations were found in science but Montessori was a defender of letters and philosophy. Consequently, both authors are nowadays important figures since they both created their own educative programme. Dewey set education as the main way of living: “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” (Dewey, 1916: 239).

The already mentioned academic entities were crucial for Maria Montessori’s ideology letting her inspire and analyse some themes related to anthropology, philosophy, pedagogy or psychology. It might be said that the result of the Montessori Teaching Method was a mixture of ideas and dogmas coming from some principles that belonged to these authors. Nevertheless, Montessori’s thoughts caused an impact for later authors giving place to some followers of Dr Montessori goals or, by the other hand, to some figures who did not agree with the author’s ideology. For instance, Ovide Decroly disagreed with Maria Montessori on the relationship between children-school since he did not sustained the idea that the child had to adapt himself to school, but vice versa. Vygotsky was also a detractor of the Montessori System as he focused his methodology on an education based on nature leaving aside Maria Montessori’s ideal about the relationship between education and nature; the relationship between environment and education was important but not the main core of the methodology. Vygotsky only focalized his method on nature. Some of these authors are going to be more deeply analysed below.

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948) was one of these people who wanted to be in contact with Maria Montessori. Both of them first met in London were they became friends because they shared some interests, for instance, the aim of promulgating the value of peace in the educational field. Some years later, they coincided once again in India as Maria Montessori spent some years living there. In fact, Montessori and Gandhi delivered many public speeches all over the world trying to make people conscious about wars and fights among countries. Finally, both were nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize, although none of them got it.

You [Maria Montessori] have very truly remarked that if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won’t have the struggle, we won’t have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering. (Speech At Montessori Training College, 1931, Gandhi)

Do we believe and constantly insist that cooperation among the peoples of the world is necessary in order to bring about peace? If so, what is needed first of all is collaboration with children.... All our efforts will come to nothing until we remedy the great injustice done the child, and remedy it by cooperating with
him. If we are among the men of good will who yearn for peace, we must lay the foundation for peace ourselves, by working for the social world of the child.” (International Montessori Conference, 1937, Montessori)

Both quotations show the concern of both authors about the situation of education during the decade of the 30’s. They thought that struggling for a better educative system was going to be a solution for all the non-educated children of that era. Furthermore, fighting for children’s justice was their main goal since children were meant to be the future of the world.

A similar relationship regarding thoughts was shared with Alfred Adler (1870-1937), who wanted to accomplish a peaceful education. As both, Adler and Montessori were born in the same year; they grew up during the same decades, what leaded them sharing some ideals and theories reflected in some academic works related to the figure of humans by the side of children.

Other individuals such as Ovide Decroly (1871-1932), a Belgian pedagogue, psychologist and doctor did not agree within Maria Montessori’s way of teaching and educating. The main difference between both authors was the position of children facing school; for Decroly the school was made for children and, in this way, children did not have to be adapted to it and, otherwise, Montessori believed exactly the contrary; the school had to be adapted for children’s needs. Both ideologies are different and after years of research, the Montessori’s one has been positioned as more effective than the Decroly’s one.

William Kilpatrick (1871-1965) was one of the main authors who deeply analysed The Montessori Teaching Method. In 1914, he wrote an academic work called The Montessori System Examined as he was a Montessori System’s supporter and he aimed to demonstrate its effectiveness among children.

Lev Semiónovich Vygotsky (1896-1934) a Russian psychologist who devoted his interests to the analysis of the relationship between a child’s education process and nature. As Dr Montessori wanted the child to be constantly in contact with the environment, Vygotsky tried to develop this issue to the fullest although his short life did not let him fulfil his aim. In the end, as a result of comparing both systems: the Montessori’s and the Vygotsky’s ones, The Montessori System resulted to be as more coherent than the Vygotsky’s system. “A child’s greatest achievements are possible in play, achievements that tomorrow will become her basic level of real action.” (Vygotsky, 1978: 100). This quotation reflects Vygotsky’s ideal of learning by being contact with the environment; children are supposed to learn by the experiences they face and the “real actions” they commit while they are in touch with the external world.

The famous psychologist Jean William Fritz Piaget (1896-1980) was so interested in the very first periods of The Montessori Teaching Method that he wanted to observe
children from a Montessori school. After several years of investigation, he developed
the theory of “cognitive development” based on how people structure things in their
minds when we are children. This theory was so connected to the Montessori’s first
period of The Absorbent Mind and that is why both authors agreed in some perspectives.
“When you teach a child something you take away forever his chance of discovering it
He is thus advocating not to interrupt the growing stage during The Absorbent Mind
period by letting them discover the world by themselves and avoiding any kind of human
help.

The last academic entity to be mentioned in relation to Maria Montessori is Paulo Freire
(1921-1997). He was a Brazilian educator who wanted to standardize the educational
system all around, this means that his aim was to make every country have their single
educative rules leaving apart their governments or the political systems. According to
Maria Montessori, children should coexist in a proper environment and atmosphere
based on their needs as children. Freire also wanted to make adults live together in an
adequate social environment. These adapted atmospheres facilitated the vision of
reality that children and adults had.

As can be observed, many different authors from different educative fields were
connected to Maria Montessori and her methodology. Some of them did not fully agree
with what the she aimed to accomplish, but the majority were influenced by her and her
ideal of changing the education all over the world. Today, in the first decades of the
2000’s The Montessori Teaching Method is under observation by many different
researches and investigators who extract more and more conclusions about its
implementation in the current educational systems in different parts of the word.

To deepen into more details about the educational system currently implemented in our
world, the UNESCO compiles a wide range of data from international, national, and
regional situations. Internationally, the educational system is mostly adapted to the
majority of the parts of the world; and, consequently, this education is based on a
worldwide comprehension devoted to all human beings. More accurately, the Spanish
educational system is nowadays supported by the Organic Law of Education (LOE)11
based on a compulsory learning process until a person is aged sixteen. This type of
education allows all the population to be educated at public schools. Lastly, in regional
terms, the current teaching-and-learning system stablished in Andalusia is the one
launched by the Andalusian Education Law (LEA)12 and it is quite similar to the national
one although it counts on several changes. For instance, in Andalusia the textbooks and
other school teaching-materials are provided by the Andalusian government or even the

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11 Ley Orgánica de Educación.
12 LEA: Ley de Educación Andaluza.
different number of grants that the Andalusian parliament offers is different from the national one. This information will be more deeply detailed in the following section.

3. The Montessori Teaching Method and the current teaching situation

This part of the project is going to deal with the current educational system globally established; then it is going to deepen into the Spanish one; and, finally, a closer section which is going to be based on the Andalusian educational situation, more specifically, in Jaén, the province where I live.

3.1. Global educational system

To analyse the educational programme established in one part of the world, a general view of education must be introduced. Paradoxically, education is supposed to be one of the points that push people away from poverty and sure way to make money. Several studies and investigations led by an international non-profit organization called World Learning Inc have come up with some interesting data. For example, 20% of the school-year population will no longer be able to reach the fourth grade of school. 20% of children leaving school shows that something is going wrong within the international educational system.

Confrontations among countries are the main reason of school-destructuring by provoking negative effects such as gender inequality, poverty, religious conflicts, etc. which lead to the destruction of human fraternity. Taking this scenario into consideration, to change the educational situation, the general world’s circumstance must be changed although this is very difficult issue because it all depends on politics.

Leaving social problems aside, as Terry Heick establishes on his online post Characteristics Of Global Learning, the main features of the global education must be introduced has the main core of the different educational situations set in different parts of the world (Heick, 2019: 1)

First of all, education should deal with cultural identity. Cultural otherness is one of the most crucial factors for human’s relationships all over the five continents. People from different parts of the world live in countries which are not their home-lands so they live and grow with people from other races and cultures. By intruding cultural integrity in class, we are helping humanity sisterhood to develop and evolve by following a set of moral values. Sadly, this situation does not always happen and that is why the world is full of wars and fights because of cultural ideologies. Furthermore, trying to avoid racism is an impossible task; a utopia.

Following with the second characteristic of global education, teachers not only should teach school subjects but also life-values. It is said that a teacher is everything except a
teacher but a family member, a doctor, a psychologist, or even sometimes a friend. Many people can get high marks, but this does not mean this person is better or worse than anyone else since marks are not related to identity.

Thirdly, teachers should encourage their students to learn about the place they live in, in other words, students should study about our planet because it is the engine which maintain us all and, unhappily, we are destroying it by polluting and mistreating the environment. If students learnt more about the Earth, maybe citizens would be more conscious about the current situation of our planet.

In fourth place, making use of real-life examples by adopting natural resources and materials as the key to exemplify. Every part of the world counts on a different source of material so that real-life examples in each place are different. For example, the way of eating in South Africa (with their hands) is different from the way we eat in Spain (with cutlery)

The next characteristic is related to social reactions. When something serious happens and it becomes a “trending topic” it appears all the time in social media. Students must also be educated to be responsible not to defame about social issues. For instance, where there is a terrorist attack, people tend to spread out the news giving their opinions and criticising in social media (posting photos and comments on Twitter, Facebook) instead of respecting those who are suffering and undergoing such problem.

The sixth and last feature is based on encouraging people to study and to train themselves in order to ensure a future. Not everyone can afford to study a degree at university but this feature is not related to university studies but to the fact of becoming adults and designing our own lives. Many people leave school since they think it is a boring task and they just stay at home and do nothing for their futures. Nevertheless, other people leave school because of economic issues and start working in whatever job they are offered. Those people have enough maturity to fight for building a better life.

Global education’s main intentions depend on these six main features which, in summary, want to accomplish a peaceful, integral and respectful education all over the world. Of course, not all of them are fulfilled and that is why the international teaching programme is too difficult to investigate although its main purposed are clearly analysed (Pike, 1997: 33-37).

In relation to the Montessori Teaching Method, the main characteristics of the global education were followed by Maria Montessori since her teaching methodology was mostly focused on peace, respect, integrity, fraternity and freedom. Moreover, she wanted to spread out her educational system as she became famous in many different countries all over the world, so she could implement The Montessori Teaching Method in the five continents.
Several publications as one which belongs to the Andalusian newspaper *Vivir* (Abril, 2017: 1), show precise data, that is, the number of active Montessori schools in all over the world is around 150,000 and it exceeds three million people who are being taught under this school discipline.

As the situation of global education is not an easy task to achieve, the second part of this section is going to deal with a more accurate situation in the field of education; the teaching situation in Spain.

### 3.2. Spanish educational system

To start talking about the educational system established in Spain, its structure must be analysed. The current structuring of education changes from one country to another. In the case of Spain, children are not allowed to go to school until they are three years old.

Then, from three years up to six-aged children course the so-called Pre-Primary School. During these three years of school, children face how to cope with the teaching-learning process and how to share it with more people like them. In many countries, during the first years of life, children go to kindergarten (0-6 years) but in Spain, the very first three years are not compulsory. Later, children go to Primary School from the time when they are six until they are twelve; they spent six years in this school period which are, at the same time, organised into three cycles: first cycle from 6 to 8, second cycle from 8 to 10 and the third one from 10 to 12.

During Primary School, children deal with subjects such as Spanish language, Maths, Natural Sciences, English or Art. They have a very first contact with the most important subjects which, later on, will be more deeply developed. After Primary School, in Spain there is a school period called “Secondary School” which is divided into two: compulsory and Non-Compulsory Secondary Education. The former consists of four years of “ESO”\(^{13}\) (12-16 years) and is also classified into several cycles: first cycle (first, second and third of ESO) and second cycle (fourth of ESO). On the other hand, the Non-Compulsory Secondary Education consists of two school years: first and second of *Bachillerato*\(^{14}\) (16-18 years).

This is the ordinary order of courses but, in case a child fails more than three subjects at the end of one course, this person will have to take part in the same course once again. Consequently, categorizing Spanish education by age would not be correct since children might retake several academic years.

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\(^{13}\) *Educación Secundaria Obligatoria.*  
\(^{14}\) Name of Non-Compulsory Secondary Education in Spain.
The Montessori Teaching Method structures its school years in a different way. As it has been mentioned in section 2.2.2., Maria Montessori divided the academic years into stages (several years) depending on the age of children. She attached different names to the stages: The Absorbing Mind or The Construction of Individuality (0-6), The Acquisition of Culture or The Cosmic Plan (6-12), and The Development of Personality and Earth Children (12-18). Each stage comprises a period of six years in which children develop themselves as more mature people.

The Spanish educational system is headed by the government. The legislative framework of education has been changing within the passing of the time depending on the leader political party. Every time the Spanish government changes, the educational system suffers variations. As a result, from the implementation of the Spanish Constitution from 1978 up to now (2019) several legal reforms have been applied:

- LODE\textsuperscript{17} (1985): Organic Law of the Right to Education.
- LOGSE\textsuperscript{18} (1890): General Organic Law of the Educational System.

\textsuperscript{15} Ley General de Educación.
\textsuperscript{16} Ley Orgánica de Organización de Centros.
\textsuperscript{17} Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación.
\textsuperscript{18} Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo.
\textsuperscript{19} Ley Orgánica de Participación, Evaluación y Gobierno de los centros docentes.
- LOMCE\textsuperscript{22} (2013): Organic Law of Improving the Quality of Education.

The current Organic Law is still LOMCE since, although the leader political party has changed, they have not changed it. This Law is based on a set of features:

- Global exams at the end of ESO and Bachillerato.
- Two options in fourth of ESO: letters / sciences
- Programmes for the improvement of the school results in ESO.
- More importance to the main subjects (the ones designed by the government)
- Subjects must be imparted in Spanish language.
  - Multilingual education.
  - Religion is also a subject.
  - Job training: basic and dual.
  - Possibility of edification of the public areas for private schools.

These are the main features of the Organic Law which is in force in the Spanish Educational System and, at the same time, they help school centres to be organised and cooperate with the rest of schools from Spain.

The Montessori Teaching Method does not have to do with Public Education since it is a system created by Maria Montessori and, today, it is only implemented in public or concerted schools. In Spain, although Montessori schools tend to be private, they have to follow the most general rules imposed by the government, for instance, since Montessori schools only cover the Pre-Primary-School period, after finishing it, children must attend Primary and Secondary School. Only \textit{The Absorbent Mind} stage is headed and controlled by Montessori schools and their own rules.

In addition, the number of Montessori schools in Spain is about 105 and, more specifically, there are eight Montessori Secondary Schools in all the country. This number leads us to the conclusion that The Montessori Teaching Method in Secondary Education is not as active as in lower levels of learning.

Despite the organisation of the Spanish education is clear, the current situation, from my personal point of view, is not the ideal one. Today, as I could appreciate during my teaching-training period in Secondary School, many teenagers do not feel like they want to attend Secondary School and, as they have to go to class obligatorily and, consequently, they may rebel against their school atmosphere and it could affect their academic situation. Overall, these kind of people tend to fail a wide number of subjects,

\textsuperscript{20} Ley Orgánica de la Calidad en la Educación.
\textsuperscript{21} Ley Orgánica de Educación.
\textsuperscript{22} Ley Orgánica de la Mejora de la Calidad en la Educación.
they normally have to retake one or several school years and might have social problems with the teachers and the rest of their classmates. This is a serious problem with which teachers have to cope and, from my personal point of view, something has to be done. Children need to feel motivated and willing to work for their futures and not to think they are obliged to study. The Montessori Teaching Method is one of the educative methodologies which tries to avoid demotivation among young learners since its main principle is to encourage and stimulate children’s minds to work and learn.

One of the most serious problems in the Spanish educational system is bullying. Many children feel harassed when they are at school since their schoolmates disturb them by insulting or underestimating them and even, sometimes, by hitting them. The consequences generated by this problem are so serious that many teenagers (even children) tend to suffer strong depressions, mental illnesses among other self-stem problems which lead them to suicide. This type of social snags should be removed from our daily routines if today’s teachers taught respect and moral values in their lessons. Furthermore, there should be a strong emphasis on such problems at the time children are born in order to make them conscious about the seriousness of bullying. On the other hand, The Montessori Teaching Method averts school-harassment by influencing children how to behave properly and respectfully with others teaching them the most important ethics of humans (love, respect, peace, care). Once children who belong to a Montessori school move to an ordinary Primary School centre, they show a high level of politeness which not all young learners have.

To summarise the situation of the educational system in Spain, just mention that, although there are many political laws and rules that aim to order and carry out the best educative program in our country, the social circumstances impedes the field of education to be developed. These issues should be solved by parents and teachers since a person is born in order to avoid such serious problems at school but also in the daily life.

This is a general view of the Spanish educational system, but the next section is going to cover an even deeper situation of education: the education in Andalusia, specifically, Jaén.

3.3. Andalusian educational system: Jaén

This last section of the third part of the project is going to deal with education in Andalusia from a general point of view and, more precisely, in Jaén, the capital city where I live.

First of all, education in Andalusia is mostly based on the Spanish educational system which has been explained previously but, as each Autonomous Community, Andalusia has its own government, that is, the so called “Junta de Andalucía”. Although the
educative programme is based on the Spanish legislation, the Andalusian parliament has the power of imposing its own rules. The law 17/2007, 10th December, heads education in Andalusia under the name of Andalusian Education Law (LEA). This law follows LOMCE’s principles, but changing and adding some other issues. The main characteristics of LEA are:

- General procedures based on pedagogy.
- Coordination of the curricular contents in every area.
- Attention to diversity.
- Orientation plan and tutorial action.
- Objectives based on the improvement of the academic results.
- Plan to educate teachers.
- Time and place organization criteria.
- Internal evaluation criteria.

Apart from these common guidelines established by LEA, there are some other variations in the Andalusian educational system. For instance, in Primary and Compulsory-Secondary Education textbooks are offered for free by the “Junta de Andalucía”. Only children who take part in the Non-Compulsory-Secondary-Education (Bachillerato) must buy the school material. Furthermore, there are 7,082 teaching centres all over Andalusia and 1,344 of them have the advantage of being offered free school transport. Moreover, the number and characteristics of grants are quite different from the Spanish’ government ones. In Andalusia, there are four main grants for students, which provide them a quantity of money to participate in the educative process without any economic problem: one which offers 6,000€ and three which offer different quantities of money depending on a person’s circumstances. The most positive point of grants for education is that a student can apply both for the Andalusian grants and for the Spanish government ones.

In The Montessori Teaching Method, there is no relation to the economic benefits of the government because it is a private association which is maintained and supported by families’ monthly payments. Perhaps, this is a negative fact from this methodology as it can be expensive for many people and, thus, they may not afford it. If The Montessori Teaching Method were given a little economic help by the government, many people could take their children to Montessori schools.

Following the Andalusian educational system’s main procedures, the educational situation in Jaén can be considered. To begin with, there 450 school centres (public, private, and concerted) from Pre-Primary School up to Secondary School and also at tertiary level. Statistics have provided some data about the circumstances of the educational programme in Jaén in the last decade.
Results lead us to the conclusion of an important percentage of school failure (around 21.50%), early school abandonment (26.09%), illiterate population (19.68%), 16-25 years old population with superior studies (16.84%) and 25-34 years old population with superior studies (30.20%). As a consequence, this sheds light on the main reasons why teenagers do not want to study and why they leave school before 16. From my humble point of view education should suffer a deep change from the very beginning in order to make children feel motivated to study and learn or, at least, to make them think about their futures as citizens of the world.

Maria Montessori tried to make children’s minds up to see how wonderful and amazing the world is and to take advantage of the place we live in. The academic results of children from Montessori schools are so positive that they tend to be “more successful” than people from traditional schools.

In Jaén, there are few Montessori teaching centres: several kindergarten schools for babies and one Pre-Primary School for 3-6 years old children. It is amazing how with the passing of time The Montessori Teaching Method is becoming more and more trendy and famous in our society. Perhaps, citizens are becoming aware of the current situation in our world, our own country, and even the city where we live. If we start to make small changes in the educational system, in the future, there will be improvements as children will feel comfortable with what they are doing and also the results would be much better than the current ones.

As the implementation of the Montessori methodology in Jaén made me feel impressed, I decided to investigate more about it and about the Montessori schools in my province. As the Pre-Primary School period is the most crucial one for children, I contacted the only Montessori Pre-Primary School in Jaén and requested appointment to go there and spend some time discovering how this centre works.

4. **Expending a day in Vereda Montessori School**

Having decided the main topic of my master’s dissertation, Antonio Bueno from the University of Jaén recommended me to attend Vereda Montessori School in order to obtain more information about this methodology. In fact, he facilitated me the access to the school so that they gave me an appointment for Monday, 25th March at 8:30 a.m.

Vereda Montessori School is an association denominated as an educative space for children from 3 to 6 years old. It is located in an urbanization near to the University of Jaén, in Torrequebradilla Road, Villa el Valle, num. 2, 23009 Jaén. This place is so big and it consists of a neighbourhood of few houses and Vereda Montessori School. It is all surrounded by trees and nature, fact which facilitates the implementation of The Montessori Teaching Method.
The school is headed by three main teachers in charge of a total number of 20 pupils. As this centre is private, families must pay a monthly quantity of money in order to take their children to the school. They all share a very nice atmosphere and relationship and the environment in there is so lovely. The daily timetable goes from 9:00 a.m. to 14:00 p.m. (with a brake at 12:00 p.m.) and if children want to have lunch there, the kitchen service is opened for them and they can stay there until 15:15 p.m.

As soon as I arrived there, they let me in to the school. The building has the shape of an ordinary house as Casa Dei Bambini tended to simulate a house in order to make children feel at home. It is surrounded by a big garden with many trees and plants, a swimming pool, and some stuff to play. Moreover, there was a cat in the garden as it was the school’s pet and children love him so much.

In the entrance, there is a porch with sofas, tables, and chairs. The house is divided into two floors; the first one is devoted to children of 5-6 years whose class is named “maximum concentration classroom”, to the kitchen where sometimes children prepare their own food, a toilet and a wardrobe for coats and shoes; the second floor was addressed to children of 3-4 years, a toilet, “a life-production classroom” and a “working classroom”. These classrooms are ordinary rooms devoted to different issues, for instance, one room is prepared for having lunch (the life-production classroom) and the other one was dedicated to work on different subjects (the working classroom). Everything inside the building is colourful and jazzy to stimulate children’s senses. Classrooms are prepared for five or six children; they count on several large windows in order to be constantly in contact with nature. Every room is composed by small desks and chairs adapted to children’s height and strength; furthermore, every child has their own desk to work individually. In addition, all the building is adapted to an adequate temperature (20º).

The “life-production classroom” is directed to children prepare their own breakfast; they normally take their breakfast prepared from home and they are used to eat healthy food such as fruit, peanuts or cereals. They all have lunch in a common table, but every student has an individual tray; adapted stuff like small glasses, plates, cutlery, and colourful napkins. Moreover, there is an individual table for those who do not want to share their lunch time with others, although teachers try to integrate all the students. Children picked up all their stuff and cleaned everything they had used (glasses, forks, spoons...) with no external help.

In this classroom, I was able to appreciate how independent children were since they all took their lunch boxes and started eating and sharing their food with their classmates. One of the girls from this classroom started to cry because no one wanted to share their food with her; consequently, the teacher came and hugged her. Then the rest of the
class apologized and shared their food with her. Sharing and taking care of others was notably present in this school.

In the “working classroom” there were several children working on different subjects. This room is divided into different corners and each corner was devoted to a subject (maths, art, language and sciences). All the corners are full of Montessori materials and tools and children are free to move from one to place to another if they want to change the subject. There was only one teacher per classroom, if children have any doubt, they try to help each other, and if not, the teacher tried to explain them.

The toilets are devoted to personal necessities and also to clean and wash the stuff used in class (paintings, plates, glasses, brushes...). There are no doors so children peed naturally with no sense of shame. Besides, the toilet furniture is adapted to children physical possibilities.

During school time, children are not allowed to wear shoes, but they have to wear house slippers or thick shocks to walk around inside the house. Furthermore, they have to dress adequate clothes such as tracksuits in order to make them feel relaxed and comfortable. Everyone in the centre has to speak quietly (screaming is forbidden) and in a relaxed way to create a lovely atmosphere. As I was there as an observer, I was not allowed to have eye-contact with children not to make them lose concentration. As it can be appreciated, not to interrupt the mechanism of the school is very important to progress in the teaching programme.

Children’s tasks and activities are all filed in different drawers; each student has their own drawer. Teachers compile their paintings and exercises in order to evaluate them. The evaluation criteria is the one imposed by Maria Montessori; teachers have an agenda with different sections (one section per student). Each section is divided into skills and abilities such as the writing or the speaking skills and the teacher had to write every single progress of the children. At the end of the academic year, parents are given a feedback about their children in which they can appreciate their development at school.

The experience of visiting Vereda Montessori School has made me reaffirm myself on all I had studied about The Montessori Teaching Method and how Montessori schools work. This has helped me a lot to continue discovering about this kind of teaching methodology and to take the decision to propose a didactic unit for my master’s dissertation. In addition, I am so interested in this topic that perhaps, in the future, I will take part in a Montessori Education master in Madrid.

As my end of master’s project had to deal with Secondary Education, I found appealing to design a didactic unit for first year of Compulsory Secondary school because this course is the transition from Primary to Secondary school. Furthermore, the number of
Montessori Secondary Schools in Spain is so little (even in Jaén there are no Montessori Secondary Schools up to now) so I decided to create a didactic unit in order to show other people the chance of implementing The Montessori Teaching Method in Jaén. The day I went to Vereda Montessori School, I discovered a new way of working with children and the way they reacted to this methodology. Moreover, the implementation of The Montessori Teaching Method in Secondary Education is not that common in Spain so, in a way, this would be an innovative and creative lesson planning for the current educational system.

5. A proposal: enforcement of the Montessori Teaching Method in the curriculum of English in first year of Secondary Education

Several studies have shown the present situation of education in our country leading us to the assumption that something needs to be changed in the field of teaching-and-learning as there are more and more teenagers who abandon school. For this reason, I have designed a didactic unit based on the curriculum of English from the first year of Secondary Education. That is to say, I have suggested a lesson plan following the contents of several actual textbooks moving from the traditional methodology to an adapted one based on The Montessori Teaching Method. The result has been a hybrid between the traditional and the Montessori methodologies since there is a mixture of features of both teaching methods. For instance, there is a test at the end of the unit since children in Secondary School tend to take exams at the end of every didactic unit, but the way of evaluating the results of the test is lower than in the traditional methodology as children from Montessori schools are not accustomed to take exams.

5.1. Didactic unit

The didactic unit I have designed is called “A healthy diet!”, it is based on the curriculum of the Spanish education, but it makes use of some Montessori materials and tools. Also, it is thought to be taught to students who have already left Primary School and have just started Secondary studies. These students are 12-13 years old more or less, and so it means that they are becoming teenagers during the puberty stage in which maturity is acquired. If a change in education were produced during this period of time, it could be effective for future academic courses in Secondary Education.

This unit consists of eight sessions which last 50-55 minutes more or less, since we have to be realistic and we cannot take advantage of the full hour (60 minutes). The grammar of the unit is going to deal with the present simple tenses plus the past simple tenses together with some irregular verb forms which are going to be studied by groups of ten

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23 The teaching materials selected from the textbooks focus of attention are included in the appendixes.
verbs. On the other hand, the vocabulary items will be mainly based on food and drinks, as the title of the topic shows.

The development of the didactic unit is thought to last around two weeks, since there are four English lessons per week. Furthermore, the distribution of the sessions is going to be done under The Montessori Teaching Method but, as this is a transitive period from Primary to Secondary School, some features of the traditional methodology must be taken into account. This proposal is only for the first year of Secondary Education so that the following years are supposed to be taught by the traditional methodology. For instance, there is going to be a short test at the end of the unit because children from Secondary School are accustomed to exams and in order to familiarize children with exams, as this is what they are going to have the following school years. Maria Montessori wanted to avoid exams and numeric marks but, this time, the didactic unit has to be adapted to the current educational system and it has to be realistic.

Apart from the distribution and contents of the unit, the State Official Newsletter comprises the entire Spanish legislative framework that has been taken into account at the time of designing it. The Organic Law for the Improvement of the Quality of Education, LOMCE 8/2013 of December 9th and, the Law for Education in Andalusia (LEA) 17-72007 of December 10th, have been followed as the implementation of this didactic unit has been thought to be done in an Andalusian Secondary School. The Royal Decree 111/2016 of June 14th sets the curricular contents which belong to the Compulsory Secondary Education in Andalusia. Moreover, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) has been taken into account at the time of levelling out the English subject.

Finally, the unit is going to be developed from Monday 12th of February to Friday 23rd of February (two weeks more or less).

5.1.1. Contextualization

Concerning the contextualization of the lesson plan, the secondary school which has been chosen for its enforcement is I.E.S. Miguel Sánchez López, an educative institution from Torredelcampo, Jaén. This school is a bilingual institute which covers all the years of Secondary Education (compulsory and non-compulsory).

Miguel Sánchez López is a Secondary School situated in Torredelcampo, a small town from Jaén, Andalusia. Torredelcampo counts on a population of 14.335 inhabitants and it is the nearest town to the capital city, Jaén. This town counts on two different Secondary Schools: one which is called Torre Olvidada and only covers the four years of Compulsory-Secondary-Education and Miguel Sánchez López.

The situation of this school is great as it is located in the town centre near the municipal park and some other places of interest. The neighbour is calm and peaceful so that it is
difficult to find troubles in this area. Furthermore, the police controls the place at the time of entering and leaving the centre.

The most wonderful fact about the situation of Miguel Sanchez López is that almost everyone knows each other and there are very big groups of friends. This is also a strong point to avoid school problems such as bullying or fights among students. For this reason, this academic centre is not a problematic one.

In relation to the organization of the centre, this secondary school counts on a wide range of facilities and materials. It is composed by a spacious teacher’s room; a canteen; a library within a great number of selected books; an office where all the most important documents are transferred; the head teacher’s office; the head’s office; a counselling where students receive information; thirty three classrooms where ordinary lessons are imparted; two laboratories, one for chemistry and another one for physics, one special area for music lessons; a devoted area for art lessons; three adapted classrooms for computer sciences lessons and three areas devoted to physical educations lessons: a gym, a football pitch, and a running track.

Apart from all the departments that belong to Miguel Sánchez López, this Secondary School is supported by many different types of materials. Every single classroom has an interactive board, a computer, a projector, a sound equipment, and a black board. The computer sciences’ rooms are all equipped with a set of twenty computers, a projector, and a sound equipment. The art workshop has a big space for students to work and stuff such as paints, a blackboard, a computer, a sound equipment, and large tables. The music area is supported by a wide range of musical instruments, a blackboard and a computer attached to an interactive board. The gym is supported by many different types of sport materials such as balls, rings, baskets, or mats. The laboratories are full of scientific instruments like test tubes, chemical components, microscopes, or encyclopaedias.

5.1.2. Objectives and key competences

The main objectives of this didactic unit are based on the Royal Decree 1631/2006 and the Decree 231/2007 that establish a set of key competences and series of objectives for foreign languages.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>EFL OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>KEY COMPETENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To learn the past simple tense (regular and irregular verbs)</td>
<td>If the students are able to formulate situations in the past simple tense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compare situations in which present simple and past simple can be used</td>
<td>If students are able to differentiate present situations from past ones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To practise the oral skill in debates and conversations</td>
<td>If students are able to produce oral speeches with their teachers and classmates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To practise the listening skill by hearing the native teacher</td>
<td>If students understand what the auxiliary teacher says</td>
<td>1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn new vocabulary items about food and drinks</td>
<td>If students learn about the field of food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn how to start a healthy diet</td>
<td>If students learn how to give up eating unhealthy food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn how to write a recipe</td>
<td>If students are able to write a recipe as part of the teaching project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be aware of some change in the curriculum from The Montessori Teaching Method to the traditional method</td>
<td>If students adapt themselves to the new changes in the curriculum and in the teaching-and-learning process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9: Pedagogical Objectives**
### Foreign Language Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To listen and understand specific information from oral texts in different communicative situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To express and interact orally in daily communicative situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To read and understand a wide range of texts appropriate to students’ abilities and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To use reading in different mediums as a source of pleasure and personal enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To write simple texts on different topics with different purposes using appropriate cohesion and coherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To make a correct use of the phonetic, lexical, syntactic-discursive and functional basic components of the foreign language in real contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To develop autonomous learning, habits of discipline, study and work, reflection on the learning process and to transfer knowledge and strategies acquired in other languages to the foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>To develop team work skills and to reject discrimination of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>To make an appropriate use of learning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>To value and appreciate the foreign language as a mean of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>To appreciate the foreign language as an instrument to access information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>To demonstrate a receptive and self-confident attitude when learning and using the foreign language creatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>To know and value specific elements of the Andalusian culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Competences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linguistic communication competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Competence in mathematics, science and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Digital competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Learning to learn competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social and civic competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cultural awareness and expression competences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Key Competences chart

Figure 11: Foreign Language Objectives by BOJA
Having dealt with the main objectives of this didactic unit, which are based on the State’s legislation, several issues are going to be developed in the following sections, such as contents or attention to diversity.

5.1.3. Contents

The contents of this didactic unit deal with the main four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As the main objectives of EFL\textsuperscript{24} establish, these skills need to be exploited to the fullest in order to accomplish a good level of the second language, in this case, English. The level of English for this course will be between A2 and B1, as they are bilingual and they are supposed to have been in contact with this language since they were in Pre-Primary-School.

In Secondary Education the teaching process of a foreign language has as its main goal to make students be able to communicate in a L2\textsuperscript{25}. For this reason, the contents of the unit cover as many types of activities as possible in which spoken interaction and written production are fully touched. Activities such as listening recordings, debates, mimics, or written compositions; in general, the child’s production, is the main core of the didactic unit. In addition, the creativity of the students is going to be taken into account, since this is part of the Montessori curriculum.

Furthermore, The Montessori Teaching Method is used at the time of teaching students. Although the curricular contents are the ones established by the government, the way in which they are going to be taught is a mixture between the Montessori system and the traditional one. We have to bear in mind that this is only a proposal for the implementation of The Montessori Teaching Method up to the first year of Secondary Education, as this is not a real teaching situation because this methodology is not currently active in Spain.

The following chart shows a summary of the contents of the didactic unit divided into the main four macro-skills. There is a varied selection of activities for each skill.

\textsuperscript{24} English as Foreign Language
\textsuperscript{25} Second Language
The main contents of the didactic unit have been collected into a set of activities which deal with reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All of them are set to develop and progress every single macro-skill by making the child have fun and enjoy of the learning process.

5.1.4. Cross-curricular issues

Not only through the development of this unit but also during the rest of the academic year, several elements out of the curriculum are going to be enforced.

The Montessori Teaching Method tries to create a harmonic atmosphere in class by speaking with lower voice, something which is present in the majority of traditional
schools. Improving students’ behaviour is one important part of this project because this facilitates the possibility of working both individually and in small groups.

Apart from creating harmony in class, one of the most serious problems in Primary and Secondary Education is bullying among young learners. Trying to avoid this sad issue is one of the main tasks of every single school all around the world, but it is being difficult up to now. Children need to be aware of the grave consequences that bullying carries; early depressions, suicide, anorexia, or many other health and mental problems. If people knew how to act in front of others since they are born, these kind of glitches would not exist nowadays.

I.E.S. Miguel Sánchez López has an agreement with the Andalusian government called “Education for Peace and School Coexistence”, which deals with the implication of teachers and students to carry out a peaceful and calmed education. All this entails the integration of every single person in the school, the respect to those who practice a different religion or those who were not born in Spain. Furthermore, violence and sexual harassment are completely punished by expulsing the person who causes them.

Another totally different cross-curricular element which does not have to do with moral and ethics are the exchanges with foreign Secondary Schools. For instance, there are two external agreements with two schools; one from Shaftesbury (The United Kingdom) for students from fourth grade and other one from Cologne (Germany) for students from first grade of Non-Compulsory-Secondary-Education. Because of this, teenagers live new experiences in foreign countries during a week and they meet new people who become their friends. With the years, many type of activities like these ones are being implemented giving place to a higher level of participation of students in cross-curricular activities.

5.1.5. Attention to diversity

Attention to diversity is one fundamental factor of this didactic unit. As it has been mentioned in the previous section, the integration of students is very important in order to create a peaceful education. For this reason, this lesson planning is full of activities which imply the union and relationship between all the students. Moreover, as this didactic unit deals with the different types of food, children from different parts of the world will be able to share their customs within the rest of their classmates.

Considering diversity, this is one of the most important elements in the world of teaching because teachers have to be the ones who encourage students not to discriminate other people because of having different ideologies, belonging to a different part of the world, or because of having a different physical appearance. In addition to this, the didactic unit does not count on activities which are characterised by
sexual disaggregation, so conflicts between boys and girls are going to be totally avoided.

In fact, at the end of every single lesson, I will write a quotation on the blackboard and I would like my students to copy them in their notebook. Such words will include a positive message with the will of making the children feel that they are able to cope with any circumstances during their lives by loving, caring, and working hard on themselves.

I have chosen such small task because I had one teacher at my English academy who used to do such thing and it had very positive consequences in our academic results, and also in our personal lives.

5.1.6. Interdisciplinarity

During the development of this didactic unit, the subject of English is not the only one taken into account. Actually, there are more subjects implied, for instance:

- **Music**: as several activities are related to songs.
- **Computer Sciences**: as the use of new technologies is that common, although they are not as used as in the traditional teaching methodology.
- **Ethics**: as moral values and principles are one of the main aspects of this didactic unit because of the influence of Maria Montessori.
- **Biology**: as the introduction to healthy habits belongs to the subject of biology. Furthermore, students will learn new characteristics about food and nutrition.

5.1.7. Methodology

The type of teaching methodology used in this didactic unit can be a little bit confusing because, as it has been mentioned throughout this project, it has been thought to be a transitive period of learning between The Montessori Teaching Method and the traditional methodology. As the enforcement of Maria Montessori’s system in Spain only covers the Pre-Primary-School period and the Primary School one, I wanted to be innovative and enlarge the implementation of The Montessori Teaching Method one year more.

The first year of Secondary Education is a very difficult period for many children because they realise that things have changed from Primary School to Secondary School. The academic level is harder than it used to be, their classmates tend to be different from the ones of Primary School and, of course, there is a notable change in the teaching system.

Students who come from a Montessori school are accustomed to work individually, not to ask for permission to do things such as going to the toilet or throwing a paper to the bin, not to stay in class with a large number of people (a maximum of 10 people), speaking in lower voice, and they are in the habit of working on several subjects
simultaneously. On the contrary, students who are taught under the traditional methodology are adapted to stay in big classes full of many people (around 30 people), they have to ask for the teacher’s permission to do things like going out of the class, they usually speak loudly and sometimes this can be disturbing. Furthermore, they normally dedicate one hour to each subject, so that they focus their working-time on one subject.

As a final result, this didactic unit has become a hybrid between The Montessori Teaching Method and the traditional one, giving place to a mixture of characteristics of both methodologies. For instance, in The Montessori System, students never take exams, but in the traditional system students normally take an exam at the end of each didactic unit. In addition, students from The Montessori Teaching Method always work manipulating materials and being in contact with real-life objects in order to bring them closer to reality. New technologies are totally avoided as children are losing the ability of touching and being in touch with stuff because they are getting used to devices such as computers, phones or tablets. In contrast, students from the traditional method tend to learn by listening and reading theoretical contents and not handling materials that can represent things in a more realistic way.

Lastly, the proposal of this didactic unit has ended up by a mixed methodology which formerly is not active in our country. That is why I have tried to be the most accurate to real life as I could at the time of designing the activities. This kind of methodology can be very useful for those students who have been educated at a Montessori school and have to move on to a public Secondary School (with no Montessori methodology). Furthermore, by enforcing this method in Secondary Education, we would be promoting a very different way of teaching in which children would feel more motivated and eager to learn. Everything that has been proposed is purely didactic, ethic, sane, and with the will of learning and being motivated at the same time.

5.1.8. Materials and resources

The materials required to carry out the didactic unit are the ones provided by I.E.S. Miguel Sánchez López and very few of the Montessori materials, for instance, the grammar box. As part of the transition from a Primary Montessori Education to a Public Secondary Education, the majority of the Montessori materials and tools have to be eliminated because children have to adapt themselves to the resources they are going to find in public school.

The materials needed are:

- A black board.
- A digital board (if possible, but not so important) with a sound equipment and a computer.
- Handmade materials by the teacher.
- Notebook, pencils, and any other kind of writing material.
- Grammar box
- Real food.

5.1.9. Evaluation

The traditional methodology normally evaluates students by giving them marks from 0 (the minimum) to 10 (the maximum); finally, their marks are handed to parents in a report-card. The Montessori Teaching Method evaluates students by compiling their achievements and developments in an individualised agenda. Each agenda belongs to a student and there, the different abilities and skills that students are improving and developing are described. Finally, agendas are handed to parents and in this way, they can observe their children’s accomplishments.

Different features from both methodologies characterize the evaluation criteria of this didactic unit. First of all, the marks go from 0 to 10 as in the traditional system because this assessment standard is the one that students are going to face during the rest of their time in Secondary Education. However, different issues are going to be evaluated during the unit; activities in class are a 20% of the final mark, the final project 30%, the final test 20% (not as much as in the traditional system where final tests tend to count a higher percentage of the mark), and attendance and participation 30%, since the presence of students in class is crucial for them to learn and deal with the new stuff.

As it can be observed, this unit devotes the majority of its final mark to the students’ cooperation to work, to a final project which will take a big part of the time of the unit, and then, the exam will not be so important because children are supposed not to be accustomed to take exams.

This evaluation criterion offers several benefits for those students who come from a Montessori school. These children will not be given a mark based on a final product like a test; but their marks will be divided into a balance percentage of their learning process. In this way, children will be evaluated for what they do during their school period and not mainly for what they do in the final test.
5.1.10. Lesson plan step-by-step account

This last section will deal with the distribution of sessions of the didactic unit systematically. The unit is divided into eight different sessions which last 50-55 minutes, more or less, and these eight sessions are going to take two weeks-time more approximately.

This chart shows a timetable of the subject of English through the academic year. There are four class-days during the school week and these hours are distributed in different times of the week, for example, one day the class starts at 8:00 a.m. and other day it starts at 13:30 p.m. This is not to make children accustomed to have English lessons at the same time every day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Brake</td>
<td>Brake</td>
<td>Brake</td>
<td>Brake</td>
<td>Brake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-13:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30-14:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13: Evaluation criteria percentages

Figure 14: English subject’s timetable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>GROUPING</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up</td>
<td>Brainstorming: SS have to tell words related to food and drinks and write them on the black board</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking + Writing</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- Black board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen and repeat</td>
<td>SS have to listen and repeat several words related to food. Then they will have to say which of them are used to make a salad, a fruit salad, or a sandwich</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- Interactive white board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose the correct answer: Healthy or unhealthy food?</td>
<td>Pictures of different kind of food are going to be given to SS. They will have to classify them into healthy and unhealthy food. One group will tell their classmates about what they have added to their healthy-list and vice versa</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking + Writing</td>
<td>Group work: 2 groups of 7 people</td>
<td>- Flashcards - Notebook - Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing task</td>
<td>SS will have to draw their favourite food and describe it. The handouts will be given to the T so that s/he knows if they</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- White paper - Pencil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
have learnt and developed the new topic

Figure 15: Session 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>GROUPING</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up</td>
<td>Volunteers to tell the rest of the group about the pictures s/he drew the day before</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Black board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Geometrical figures (Montessori material)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to grammar</td>
<td>Present simple tense review + Past simple explanation with geometrical figures (Montessori). Each figure represents a type of verb tense</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking +</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy and complete</td>
<td>SS have to copy the sentences and complete them in their notebooks with was/wasn’t, were/weren’t</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Reading +</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Box</td>
<td>One S does an action (mimics) and the rest of the class has to say the verb out loud (never screaming and respecting the rest of the class)</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English talk + lunch</td>
<td>SS will go to the canteen and eat their lunch and share it with the rest of the partners (moral values) while having a conversation in English. T is present all the time but</td>
<td>Rest of time + brake time</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Lunch box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>interrupts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 16: Session 2**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>GROUPING</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warm-up: Tutti-Frutti</strong></td>
<td>Different pieces of real fruit are shown to SS in order to make them be in contact with their real shape, smell, and weight. Each S has to say a different adjectives describing a piece of fruit such as apples, oranges, bananas or mangoes</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- Pieces of fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to grammar</strong></td>
<td>Modal verbs’ explanation. Can/can’t, must/mustn’t. Together with their oral pronunciation + repetitions + examples</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking +</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>- Black board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete the text</strong></td>
<td>SS have to complete a texts dealing with the already explained modal verbs</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roll play: situation in a restaurant</strong></td>
<td>SS have to prepare a situation in a restaurant. T gives them photocopies with common sentences and vocabulary</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work: 2 groups of 7 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final project’s explanation

| T asks the SS to prepare a recipe (whatever they want). They will have to work in pairs during the following lessons (and at home). The deadline will be the 22nd of February | 10 minutes | Speaking | Group work |

Figure 17: Session 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>GROUPING</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up: What did you have for breakfast?</td>
<td>T asks SS about what they had for breakfast in the morning. Some volunteers speak out loud and tell the rest of the class about their breakfast.</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of a situation in a restaurant</td>
<td>The previous day SS prepared a representation of a situation in a restaurant. In this session SS have to represent it to the rest of the class.</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work: 2 groups of 7 people</td>
<td>- Classroom stuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song: Do you like Broccoli ice cream?</td>
<td>SS have to listen to a song, fill in the gaps of the lyrics, and write down new vocabulary.</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Listening + Reading</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- Handouts with the lyrics of the song - Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project’s preparation</td>
<td>T gives SS time to prepare the recipes they have to bring as a final project of the unit. During the preparation SS can ask for help to the T.</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking + Writing</td>
<td>Group work: 2 groups 5 people and 1 group of 4 people</td>
<td>- Notebook - Pencil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Session 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>GROUPING</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warm-up:</strong> What did you do during the weekend?</td>
<td>T asks SS about what they had done during the weekend. Volunteers tell their plans to the rest of the class</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar review: past simple tense</strong></td>
<td>SS remember the explanation of the past simple tense by giving examples</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irregular verbs song</strong></td>
<td>T sings a song while introducing the very first 10 irregular verbs of the list of irregular verbs. SS have to write them in order to learn them</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Listening + Writing</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>- Notebook - Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative reading: Bugs for Dinner – An Article</strong></td>
<td>SS have to read a text divided into two groups. Each S has to read several sentences and try to explain it to the rest of the group. Then, both groups have to share their information. The text contains different verbs tenses (present simple, present continuous, and past simple)</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>- Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading activities</td>
<td>SS have to complete three exercises related to the text they have already read. They will do it individually and will share the results with the rest of the class.</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Reading + Writing + Speaking</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- Textbook - Notebook - Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project’s preparation</td>
<td>T gives SS time to prepare the recipes they have to bring as a final project of the unit. During the preparation SS can ask for help to the T</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking + Writing</td>
<td>Group work: 2 groups 5 people and 1 group of 4 people</td>
<td>- Notebook - Pencil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 19: Session 5*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>GROUPING</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up: Last summer’s plans</td>
<td>T asks SS about what they did during their last summer holidays. SS have to answer by making use of the past simple tense + 10 new irregular verbs</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular verbs: story</td>
<td>Introduction to the following 10 irregular verbs forms of the list by telling a story. T tells the story to the students and they have to note down the irregular verbs forms</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking + Writing</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>- Notebook - Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading activity: The history of Cake</td>
<td>SS have to read a text aloud (one by one up to a full stop). After reading the text, they will have to answer several questions</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Reading + Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>- Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project’s preparation</td>
<td>T gives SS time to prepare the recipes they have to bring as a final project of the unit. During the preparation SS can ask for help to the T</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking + Writing</td>
<td>Group work: 2 groups 5 people and 1 group of 4 people</td>
<td>- Notebook - Pencil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Figure 20: Session 6]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>GROUPING</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up: Do you prefer salty of sweet snacks?</td>
<td>T asks SS about what type of snacks they prefer (salty or sweet) and give example of them</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief summary of the lesson</td>
<td>Review of present simple and continuous + past simple with the first 20 irregular forms; modal verbs <em>can</em> and <em>must</em>; vocabulary of food drinks.</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>- Textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project: recipes</td>
<td>SS bring their recipes written and cooked to the class. They explain the rest of the class what they have done and how</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work: 2 groups of 7 people</td>
<td>- Cooked meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular element: trip</td>
<td>SS and T go on a trip to the countryside for a picnic with the recipes made by the SS. Sharing food as a value and speaking English during the trip as a lesson’s rule</td>
<td>Extra time</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>TIMING</td>
<td>SKILLS</td>
<td>GROUPING</td>
<td>RESOURCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Test of the unit “A Healthy diet!” divided into several parts: reading activity, writing activity, and a listening activity</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
<td>Reading + Writing + Listening</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
<td>- Exam - Pencil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 22: Session 8*
5.2. This didactic unit vs the traditional method

As this didactic unit has been adapted from The Montessori Teaching Method to the curriculum established by the Spanish legislation, it is essential to compare how this unit would have been designed or staked out by the traditional educational system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Healthy Diet!</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Montessori Teaching Method</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Traditional Method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eight sessions</td>
<td>- Eight sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 50-55 minutes per session</td>
<td>- 50-55 minutes per session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fourteen students</td>
<td>- Thirteen students (approximately)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Real life objects</td>
<td>- Photocopies and printed material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scarce use of the textbook</td>
<td>- Continuous use of the textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tries to avoid the use of new technologies</td>
<td>- The use of new technologies is very common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Manipulative material: real fruit, geometrical figures, etc.</td>
<td>- Students do not manipulate materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No homework</td>
<td>- Homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No need of extension + reinforcement activities</td>
<td>- Extension + reinforcement activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Extracurricular elements: trip, English lunch in the canteen</td>
<td>- Extracurricular activities: not very common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Final project</td>
<td>- Not necessarily a final project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Little relevance to tests: small percentage in order to make students be in contact with tests</td>
<td>- Tests are a high percentage of the final mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- An active participation of the students is very important for the final mark</td>
<td>- An active participation of students is not so important for the final mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Everything is taught in English</td>
<td>- Not everything is taught in English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 23: The Montessori Teaching Method vs The Traditional Method*

26 Green fonts: similar in both methodologies.
27 Red fonts: different in both methodologies.
6. Conclusions and considerations

To conclude my master’s dissertation I would like to reaffirm my position saying that I totally support the enforcement of The Montessori Teaching Method up to Secondary Education.

After having done my end-of-degree dissertation about The Montessori Teaching Method and contributed with a chapter about it, the continuous research about this topic made me want to go on studying about it in my master’s dissertation. The way of deepening into the subject has been through the design of a didactic unit for the first year of Secondary Education. This has led me to several conclusions.

The first one is that, children who start their learning process under The Montessori System tend to suffer an overwhelming feeling of lack of coordination and unfitness when they get to Secondary Education with the traditional methodology. They are used to work on their own, not to ask for permission to do something, to leave the classroom whenever they want and to have enough freedom to distribute their time in the way they prefer. Once they are in Secondary School, they realise that everything has changed from the way they were being taught and, then, they will have to ask for permission, to work all together in group, to face written and oral exams in order to get a mark, etc. In general, they may feel a bit lost when they are learning. A teacher from Vereda Montessori School told me that the main problem of moving from one method to another was this feeling of bewilderment. For this reason, I think that my proposal is a very nice idea to start eluding such problems.

The second conclusion extracted from this project is that the number of Montessori schools in the world is increasing within the passing of time but, more specifically in Spain, there is an important number of Montessori centres in which children are educated. The problem is that these schools are mainly devoted to the Pre-Primary and the Primary stage of learning. That is why this proposal of enforcing The Montessori Teaching Method in Secondary Education seems to be quite innovative.

The third conclusion is that trying to adapt The Montessori System to the traditional one is not an easy task, since both methodologies do not agree in several points of teaching and adjusting them is difficult. However, a good possibility is to mix them by choosing the most important features of both methods bearing in mind what children are going to face in future years.

From my point of view, students from today’s teaching-and-learning programmes do not feel motivated enough to focus their lives on learning and dedicate several years to train themselves as citizens ready for life. The fact that education is a compulsory issue for children may make them not to feel like attending to school, studying, learning, or even having an appropriate behaviour while being at school.
Eventually, teachers should realise what children need to face and the way children need to learn from birth time until they become adults. Giving a child freedom to learn and to grow as a human being may be one of the most important features of teaching. We have to take into account that teachers are not the only ones in charge of children but also parents and the rest of people who belong to a person’s environment. However, teachers are a fundamental piece in children’s growth period, since they are the ones who spend most of the time with them and the ones who have to face difficulties while teaching them. A good teacher not only teaches subjects but also should teach children moral values and ethics in order to show them positive life perspectives.

I have spent several years studying a degree followed by a master and in few months, I am going to take part in the State’s competition test in order to definitely become a teacher. I have made up my mind and thought about the things I will have to face in the future and I have realised that helping children to organise and to find what they want to be as they get older, is one of the best experiences I will be able to live. I love helping people and encouraging them to fight to achieve their dreams and goals. Overall, this is what made me realise I wanted to become a teacher. I hope one day my students will be happy with the person I am and with my way of teaching because it is going to be what will make me feel alive.

“Within the child lies the fate of the future” (Montessori, 1936: 8).
7. Bibliographical references


Real Decreto 1631/2006, de 29 de Diciembre, por el que se establecen las enseñanzas mínimas correspondientes a la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria. Available at: https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2007/01/05/pdfs/A00677-00773.pdf (last accessed on 18/04/2019).


8. Appendix

8.1. Appendix A: SESSION 1: Monday 12th February, 2019 9:00-10:00

- Listen and repeat:²⁸

- Choose the correct answer: Healthy or unhealthy?²⁹


²⁹ Extracted from Google Images: https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwie6LP91u7iAhWB2eAKHXmGC04QJR6BAgBEAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fexchange.smarttech.com%2Fdetails.html%3Fid%3D5dbcc8de-4263-48c7-8fc9-ae57b6d5f3c0&psig=AOvVaw3lJRGmIJ4CozJ0JhQgttwg&ust=1560797409343837
8.2. Appendix B: SESSION 2: Tuesday, 13th February, 2019 10:00-11:00

- Introduction to grammar

![Grammar Chart](http://www.alisonsmontessori.com/v/vspfiles/photos/PL22-2.jpg)

- Copy and complete

![Copy and Complete](http://www.alisonsmontessori.com/v/vspfiles/photos/PL22-2.jpg)

- Grammatical Box

![Grammatical Box](http://www.alisonsmontessori.com/v/vspfiles/photos/PL22-2.jpg)

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- Introduction to grammar: modal verbs

Complete the text

Do you think ironing clothes is boring? Then you try extreme ironing! This unique sport is originally from Leicester, UK. To do it, you first choose a location. You be afraid to go far from home, because that is part of the fun. You do extreme ironing in many places, including on top of mountains and under water. After you choose the place, you check the weather conditions carefully. You do this sport in bad weather, because it be dangerous. Don't forget to take your equipment. You use an iron and an ironing board. You also have some clothes to iron. Do you want to iron on a mountain? You do that, but you have mountain-climbing equipment. You also iron under water, but you do it without a mask. Have you got everything? Then you're ready to have fun!


- Roll play: A situation in a restaurant\textsuperscript{35}

- **Song: Do you like Broccoli Ice cream?**

  Do you like 1?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 2?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 3?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

  Do you like 4?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 5?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 6?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

  Do you like 7?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 8?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 9?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

  Do you like 10?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 11?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like 12?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

  Do you like broccoli?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like ice cream?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like broccoli ice cream?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

  Do you like donuts?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like juice?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like donut juice?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

  Do you like popcorn?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like pizza?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like popcorn pizza?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

  Do you like bananas?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like soup?  
  Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

  Do you like banana soup?  
  No, I don't. Yucky!

---

36 Extracted from YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frN3nvH1HUk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frN3nvH1HUk)
Grammar review: Past simple tense

- **Irregular verbs song**

  **Irregular verbs song**

  come came come
  become became become
  run ran run
  break broke broken
  choose chose chosen
  freeze froze frozen
  speak spoke spoken
  drink drank drunk
  ring rang rung
  sing sang sung

---


38 Extracted from YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMPgMH-7-jU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMPgMH-7-jU)
Collaborative reading: Bugs for Dinner – An Article + reading activities

Reading An article

1. Look quickly at the article and find the following information.
   1. a date  2. a city in Italy  3. a country in South America  4. a country in Oceania

Bugs for Dinner

Did you know that 14th October is National Chocolate-Covered Insect Day in the US? On that day, instead of their usual meal of chicken or steak or ham, some adventurous people eat insects with chocolate on them! Why insects? Well, they are very good for you and they are usually free. In the ancient world, insects were a common food for this reason. They were popular in ancient Greece and Rome. Today, most of us prefer hamburgers, but people still eat insects and other bugs in 80% of the countries in the world.

Thailand and Colombia are countries with large jungles and large ants. Not surprisingly, these hard-working insects are a popular snack in both places. In Cambodia, tarantulas are a favourite street food. Why tarantulas?

At one time, there wasn't much meat in Cambodia, but there were many tarantulas. The huge spiders were a good solution for the hungry Cambodians. The people of Cambodia still love them today. A large part of Australia is desert, and food was also a problem for the first Australians, the Aborigines. Witchetty grubs, a type of insect, were a common Aboriginal dish. Today, people on trips with Aboriginal guides eat the grubs, and many restaurants in Australia have got them on their menu. According to some people, they taste just like chicken!

So, what do you think? Do you want to have bugs for dinner tomorrow?

Did You Know?

Eating insects is also good for the environment. Farm animals cause global warming because they produce greenhouse gases. Insects don't do this, and they are also cheaper to feed than farm animals.

English in Use

In English we write the date 14th October, but we say the fourteenth of October.

3 Answer the questions.
   1. What happens on 14th October?
   2. Why were insects a common food in the ancient world?
   3. Where do people buy tarantulas in Cambodia?
   4. Why were grubs a popular Aboriginal food?
   5. Which food does the writer compare to grubs?

4 Find words in the text to match the definitions below.
   1. ordinary (lines 5-10)
   2. like better (lines 5-10)
   3. a small meal between the main meals (lines 15-20)
   4. an answer to a problem (lines 15-20)
   5. they show tourists interesting places (lines 20-25)

5 There are six countries in the text. Find them on pages 140-141.

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8.6. Appendix F: SESSION 6: Tuesday, 20th February, 2019 10:00-11:00

- Irregular verbs: story

**The Hare and the Tortoise**

One day the hare and the tortoise decided to have a race. The hare (know) that he (can) run faster than the tortoise, but the tortoise interface (be) more intelligent than the hare. ‘Yes, I’ll race you,’ (say) the clever tortoise. The tortoise (have) a clever plan. He (find) his brothers and sisters and he (tell) them to wait in different places along the path of the race. So they all (hide) behind the trees along the path. The race (begin)! The tortoise (run) as fast as possible. But the hare (be) faster, of course. This will be a very easy race.

- Reading task: The history of Cake

![Image of The History of Cake](image)

8.7. Appendix G: SESSION 7: Thursday, 22nd February, 2019 13:30-14:30

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- Brief summary of the lesson[^42]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODAL</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>- You can take a taxi. <strong>You can take me to Victoria Station?</strong></td>
<td>Ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suggestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN’T</td>
<td>That story can’t be true</td>
<td>Certainty that something is impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUST</td>
<td>You must be back at 10 o’clock.</td>
<td>Obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Certainty that something is true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSN’T</td>
<td>You mustn’t drive without a licence</td>
<td>Prohibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHOULD/SHOULDN’T</td>
<td>You should go to the doctor</td>
<td>Advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You shouldn’t eat too many sweets</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Verb Tenses**

- **Present Simple and Present Continuous**
  - The present simple is used to describe:
    - A permanent state or situation: *I live in the town where I was born*
    - A fact or something which is always true: *The Earth revolves around the Sun*
    - An activity which happens regularly or occasionally: *He gets up at six o’clock every day*
  - The present continuous (is + present participle) is used to describe:
    - A temporary situation: *I’m living with my uncle while the builders finish decorating my house*
    - An activity happening at the present moment: *I’m sorry you can’t talk to her at the moment. She’s having a shower*
    - An activity in progress but not exactly at the present moment: *I’m studying three foreign languages, so I’m quite busy nowadays*
    - A situation which is changing or developing: *Lots of people are coming to live here, so the town is growing quickly*

- **Past Simple**
  - The past simple is used for:
    - Actions or events in the past: *I visited Egypt last year*
    - Actions or events which happened one after another: *I saw the pyramids, then I went to the Cairo Museum and later I went to a restaurant*
    - Things which happened for a long time in the past: *She lived in Zurich for ten years from 2002 to 2012*

[^42]: Activity originally designed.
COUNTABLES

- Burgers
- Sandwiches
- Hot dogs
- Cherries
- Apple
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Olives
- Watermelons
- Carrots
- Tomatoes
- Peas
- Salads
- Vegetables
- Pancakes
- Sausages
- Eggs
- Potatoes
- Cookies
- Fries
- Candies

UNCOUNTABLES

- Bread
- Fruit
- Juice
- Meat
- Rice
- Cereal
- Milk
- Coffee
- Tea
- Soup
- Salt
- Flour
- Sugar
- Butter
- Cheese
- Honey
- Water
- Chocolate
- Jam
- Seafood
- Mustard

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43 Extracted from Pinterest: [https://i.pinimg.com/originals/4c/38/9b/4c389b735d9061c1816e69eb2c63373d.jpg](https://i.pinimg.com/originals/4c/38/9b/4c389b735d9061c1816e69eb2c63373d.jpg)
Unit 5 - A healthy diet!

Name: ___________________________  Mark: __________

1. Read the text and answer the questions

AT HARRY’S HOUSE

It’s Wednesday afternoon. Harry’s mother isn’t at home right now because she’s buying food for dinner. But Harry and his brothers and sisters are all in the house. Harry is in the kitchen. On Mondays and Wednesdays, he cleans the kitchen after school. Right now, he’s washing the dishes. Harry’s brothers are in the kitchen too, but they aren’t helping. Pete is eating a sandwich and Tony is talking on the telephone. Harry’s big sister, Sue, and some of her friends are in the living room. The girls usually do homework together, but today they’re listening to music. Sue’s baby sister, Alice, is also in the living room. She’s sitting on the white carpet and eating chocolate. The chocolate is in her mouth and on her hands. It’s on the carpet, too!

a) Does Harry clean the kitchen every day?

b) Does Sue usually do her homework with her friends?

c) Is the baby eating chocolate now?

2. Write a composition about your favourite dish (50-60 words)

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

44 Activity originally designed.
3. Listen and answer the following exercises

Do this exercise while you listen. Circle True or False for these sentences.

1. The customers want two tables.  
2. There are two customers eating together.  
3. The two customers order the same starter.  
4. Both customers order the Thai chicken for their main course.  
5. The customers order cold drinks.  
6. Both customers order a dessert.

Do this exercise while you listen. Complete the gaps with a word from the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>would</th>
<th>ready</th>
<th>for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A table ________ two, please.
2. Are you ________ to order?
3. What would you ________ for your starter?
4. I’d ________ French onion soup, please.
5. What ________ you like to drink?
6. I’ll ________ a fresh orange juice.