SOME TIPS TO HAVE AN AWEzoom CLASS

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DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Is a new language institute in Viña del Mar offering individual synchronous online courses based on an emerging curriculum that is specifically personalized to fit every student's needs and interests.

THE LEARNERS		
AGE	● Children & Teenagers (8-15 yo).	● Adults (28-45 yo).
OCCUPATION	● School students.	● Professionals (healthcare, optics, education, mechanics, journalism).
INTERESTS	● Videogames, TV Shows, Music bands, Crime stories, superheroes, animals.	● Traveling, living abroad, professional research in their areas, sports, job requirements.

Table 1. General characteristics of the learners.

MATERIALS

● Videogames, used as experiential materials that encourage learners to use the language towards a clear outcome (advancing in the story of the game).



MATERIALS

● Boardgames (created by the learners), used as elicitative to promote interaction.



Table 2. Some examples of the pedagogical materials.

After a needs analysis (Table 1.), the learners and the teacher select and create the plan for their course, as well as the different pedagogical materials to be used during their course (Table 2.).



Fig 1. Needs Analysis: On their first lesson, the learners are asked to do a speaking activity where they add pictures to a diagram representing their interests and personalities.

Fig 2. Blind Picture Description: Activity where two participants take turns to describe a picture while their partner is drawing it without seeing it. A major favorite activity of my teenage learners.



DATA & METHODOLOGY

Even though the present intervention was not intended to be part of a research project, the learners had been answering a survey* related to their satisfaction and feedback of the process that–after their informed consent–could be used as evidence. This survey was presented in Spanish and sent to them through Google Forms as it had to be answered individually outside of class. Additionally, they were asked to respond to some SWOT analyses as part of an in-class speaking activity, where they had to evaluate the methodologies, the teacher, and their own learning role at least twice during their course.

**The survey involved 6 open-ended questions, with an additional optional item for comments.*

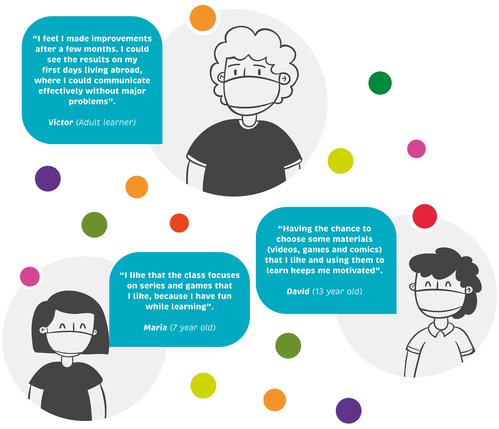


Fig 3. SWOT Analysis completed by the learners and the teacher during class, which was later socialized and discussed.

RESULTS

Up to this point, the learners have expressed great preference for the 1-on-1 distance learning methodology, particularly because it helps them learn at their own pace. Additionally, there has been some consistent agreement on the beneficial aspects of an emerging and flexible curriculum that effectively suits their needs and interests.

The possibility of creating and selecting their own pedagogical materials has also shown higher levels of acceptance, with the only exception being the learners who had previous problems related to using technological resources. With some guidance, flexibility and support from the teacher, even these learners also favored the possibility of designing and developing their own pedagogical materials.



CONCLUSIONS

Although this intervention took place in 1-on-1 settings with an emerging and flexible curriculum designed in collaboration by the teacher and each of the individual learners, there are still some insights that could enlighten and encourage some pedagogical practices on different settings, such as:

1. We should not take for granted that our students are "digital natives". Sometimes they need some support and guidance on the use of some unfamiliar tools and platforms (e.g. Google Drive).



2. Empowering the autonomy of our learners by giving them a voice on material selection and design can have a highly beneficial effect on their motivation, participation, and attrition.



3. This new context can give us the chance to connect on a deeper level with our students and to learn from them. This could become the best time to start questioning our own assumptions about teaching and learning roles and identities.

