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A Novel Context for Project-Based Learning
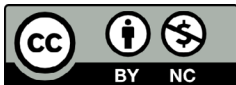**A language school for adults in Spain (EOI) & An applied higher education institution (college) of a university in Estonia**

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the European Union's Erasmus Plus (E+) Program has resulted in the possibility of joint initiatives across-borders led by teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), who can bring classroom practice closer to education as a key area for employability and prepare students for work and communication in multicultural and multilingual settings. Thus, a novel context for project-based learning (PjBL) has emerged, which allows for experimentation, innovation, and research in the classroom. To illustrate this concept, Project Estonia is presented in this paper, introducing interconnected project work to provide a purposeful, real-world experience that extends the classroom setting beyond national frontiers.

Keywords: project-based learning, English (second language), second language instruction, job shadowing, educational innovation

A Novel Context for Project-Based Learning

As English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors belonging to two different educational institutions (an applied higher education institution in Estonia and a language school in Spain), we embarked on a project-based learning (PjBL) innovative approach in the 2016-17 school year that crossed the borders of our national education systems. The resulting experience, named Project Estonia, engaged students, teachers, and educational organizations from two different European countries in a common effort to transform their educational practices.

Because establishing cooperation between different learning settings helps promote a variety of learning approaches and contexts (Council of the European Union, 2018, p. 7), we intended to promote PjBL as a learning approach to EFL in the European Union (EU). In addition, we identified a novel context and opportunity for PjBL that has emerged through educational partnerships fostered by the European educational program, Erasmus Plus (E+). As an example of experimentation in this novel context, we will justify and define Project Estonia based on standards of good practice.

This article will begin by providing a European background in which EFL and employability will be connected. In fact, we believe competence in EFL has become pivotal for employment. We will later explain how EFL is action-oriented in our countries. In Project Estonia, we can consider PjBL as an action-oriented approach to EFL that can foster students' employability. In a novel context provided for this approach, teachers will be able to lead the implementation of PjBL across national borders by developing educational partnerships.

Project Estonia will then be explored in depth. We will highlight its origin in the interconnection of project work, the optimal authenticity it provides, the competence-based approach to EFL it entails, and the conditions of Project Estonia which qualify it as a PjBL approach. The article will conclude with a final section that reports on the impact of the experience on the EFL teachers and suggests its consideration as a good practice.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and Employability in Europe

Fighting high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people, has been identified as one of the most urgent tasks for European governments (EC; European Commission, 2018, p. 5). Ten years after the 2008 market crash hit the world, unemployment is still a major challenge that many European adults and young adults currently face in EU countries, such as Estonia and Spain. European education and training policies have outlined education as a key area for employability, considering the latter as a "combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during their careers" (European Center for the Development of Vocational Training, 2008, p. 70).

The Key Competences (KC) for Lifelong Learning were defined in the European Reference Framework as necessary for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion, and employability in a knowledge society (European Parliament and the Council of Europe, 2006). Defining a competence as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (The European Parliament and The Council of the European Union, 2006; Council of the European Union, 2018), communication in foreign languages—renamed multilingual competence in a 2018 review of the Framework—is the key competence that grounds the development of communicative competence in EFL in European educational institutions.

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2006)	Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018)
Communication in the mother tongue	Literacy competence
Communication in foreign languages	Multilingual competence
Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology	Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
Digital competence	Digital competence (DigComp)
Learning to learn	Personal, social and learning to learn
Social and civic competences	Citizenship competence
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship competence (EntreComp)
Cultural awareness and expression	Cultural awareness and expression

Table 1. Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

The provision of language learning in the Reference Framework profits from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001). According to the CEFR, communicative competence in a second or foreign language (L2) implies having the knowledge, skills, and attitude required to use the language effectively in various domains, including the occupational one, which "embraces everything concerned with a person's activities and relations in the exercise of his or her occupation" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 15). In addition, an L2 is viewed "as a vehicle for opportunity and success in social, educational and professional domains" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 25).

The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4) acknowledges the dominant position of English in international communication; the EC (2013, p. 6) recommends the use of English to teach content in European universities as part of "internationalization strategies." This key priority was established by the EC to foster mobility for higher education institutions and Member States. Not only has English acquired a new status quo in the world but a de facto special status in Europe (Graddol, 2006, p. 91).

English has become necessary for personal and professional communication in the EU and is required for career opportunities in many occupational areas. Consequently, communicative competence in EFL can be considered a key competence for employment since it involves knowledge, skills and attitudes that—in the EU context—are crucial for effective communication in the occupational domain.

An action-oriented approach to EFL

With the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and its companion volume (Council of Europe, 2018) as common inspiration for planning of language learning programs in Europe, educational institutions and teachers intend to foster employability by an action-oriented approach to teaching and learning EFL. The CEFR action-oriented approach "views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9). This approach involves emphasizing the learner as an active person, which connects to Van Lier's "action-based teaching and learning," a concept that is "closely connected to a number of well-established approaches that are widely practiced today" (Van Lier, 2007, p. 48). PjBL or English for specific professional purposes (ESP, which is considered a subset of EFL [Hutchinson & Waters, 1987]), are some of the approaches this author includes on his non-exhaustive list.

ESP and PjBL in an Estonian Applied Higher Education Institution

In the 2016-17 academic year, 20 students in their first year of Entrepreneurship and Project Management at University of Tartu Pärnu College—an applied higher education institution in Estonia—enrolled in Business English, a mandatory ESP class. Estonian students were aged 20-21, had a very limited content knowledge, and had an overall B2 level of English, as described by the CEFR.

In order to provide an action-oriented authentic experience that could link content and language, the instructor implemented PjBL in her class. She planned a month-long module to implement what Stoller (2006, p. 21-23) names as a semistructured PjBL approach to L2 learning, in which a project results from progressively developing specific tasks. Not only did a semistructured project satisfy students, but it provided an opportunity to develop transversal competences that could increase their employability, in line with the strategic plan of the University of Tartu Pärnu College for 2015-2020. The project goal was to deliver an oral presentation by which groups of students would introduce, as if they were marketing teams, new services, and products for the market. Groups of students worked in class and collaborated and communicated online via Zoho, while being encouraged to be creative and own their project.

All presentations were published on the University of Tartu Pärnu College website. Some of the new services and products included a service to drive passengers to places while they sleep at night (Sleepify), or an application for anyone using public transport in the countryside (Buston). Assessment of the students' oral presentation included peer-to-peer review, self-assessment, and teacher feedback. As we will see below, Project Estonia was originated to enrich this final assessment.

EFL and PjBL in a Language School in Spain

EFL instruction in Spain is also influenced by an action-oriented approach. In particular, the Spanish educational system has a unique network of 329 state-funded schools for non-compulsory education named Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas (EOIs). These schools are exclusively dedicated to action-oriented L2 teaching of students over 16 years of age.

Despite the variety of languages offered at EOI level (currently 21), English prevails as the dominant L2 chosen by students. Considering competency in a foreign language is one of the professional competences repeatedly identified as most demanded in the Spanish labor market (Corduras et

al., 2013), the choice for English supports the consideration of communicative competence in EFL as a key competence for employment.

Furthermore, in the academic year 2016-17, general aims of teaching L2 at local EOI level referred to the consolidation of students' professional and personal development. This approach involved empowering students' cognitive, linguistic, affective, aesthetic, and cultural abilities to prepare them for international mobility and cooperation required in the 21st Century (Decreto 31/2007). Under the overarching principle of lifelong learning, students can acquire, update, complete, and extend their capacities, knowledge, abilities, and aptitudes for their personal and professional development (Ley Orgánica 2/ 2006). In short, educational provisions interlaced communication in a foreign language with the occupational domain, in a context of international mobility.

Whereas content and action-oriented tasks can take place in the classroom to link EFL to the occupational domain and develop cooperation among students, EFL teachers find it difficult to prepare students for international mobility since they cannot approach students to the use of English in an international context. Neither can they develop authentic tasks in such context. The Spanish instructor chose PjBL as an approach to advance students' EFL alongside other KC necessary for employability, and she extended the local learning context to provide an authentic international context by establishing a partnership with the Estonian teacher through the E+ program.

Providing a Novel Context for PjBL Practice Through Erasmus Plus Partnerships

E+ is the EU Program in the fields of education, training, youth, and sport for the period 2014-2020. This program originated within the Horizon 2020 Plan, seeking transformation to fulfill the EU policy agenda. E+ supports actions, cooperation, and tools consistent with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The key benefits of E+ include increased international visibility of participating educational institutions, joint initiatives, and preparation of students for work and communication in multicultural settings (EC, 2018).

Since foreign languages have a prominent role among the skills that will better equip people for the labor market and make the most of available opportunities, the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity is a specific objective of the E+ Program (EC, 2018). In the light of common goals for European educational institutions to develop learning skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will contribute to an

increase of employability of adults, the E+ Program offers an opportunity for educational partnerships. Job shadowing activities, which are practical learning experiences funded by E+, are of particular interest for teachers. A job shadowing activity is "a short stay at a partner organization in another country with the aim of receiving training by following practitioners in their daily work in the receiving organization, exchanging good practices, acquiring skills and knowledge and/or building long term partnerships through participative observation" (European Commission, 2018, p. 317). Mobility for staff to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country can be granted by E+ Key Action 1 (KA1) projects. KA104 projects involve mobility of adult education staff and K103 involve higher education staff and learners (EC, 2018).

University of Tartu Pärnu College stresses the importance of mutually beneficial international co-operation having bilateral partnership agreements with 72 partner universities from 26 countries. The E+ program has opened a great opportunity to widen transnational co-operation between higher education institutions by promoting mobility for students and teaching staff. On the contrary, Spanish EOIs have a local/national impact and a very limited European dimension. For this reason, the Spanish language school applied for an E+ grant in 2016.

Thanks to a job shadowing activity funded by a KA104 Spanish E+ project, the two instructors who authored this article met to share practices along with their interest in fostering PjBL in their English classes to adult learners. In addition, they established institutional and professional links that would allow collaboration between them and interaction among Estonian and Spanish adult students. A second job shadowing activity funded by a KA103 University of Tartu E+ project turned the initial two-month long PjBL experience into a large-scale project.

Accordingly, E+ provided an opportunity to shape a novel context for PjBL, in which this approach to learning is implemented in a European context. This approach crossed the borders of our national education systems and engaged students, teachers, and educational organizations from different European countries in a common project to transform their educational practices. This common project was named Project Estonia.

Communicative competence in L2 is interlaced with the occupational domain in a context of international mobility, as we have previously underlined. Therefore, as Project Estonia contextualized within a distinctive model of international mobility, it aimed at developing students' employability skills by improving their competence in EFL, for which linguistic and transversal key competences for lifelong learning would

be developed. Moreover, Project Estonia was conceived as an opportunity to extend teachers' European professional development as well as their institutions' European dimension.

PjBL in EFL

Educational approaches to PjBL as a methodological, student-centered approach for teaching an L2 have been advocated for over 40 years, thanks to a reborn interest in project work in the 80s (Fried Booth, 1982, 1986; Legutke, 1984, 1985; Haines, 1989). Thomas (2000) affirms that "the diversity of defining features coupled with the lack of a universally accepted model or theory of PjBL has resulted in a great variety of PjBL research and development activities" (p. 2). Moreover, he acknowledges that teacher-initiated "grassroot" models for PjBL may differ from those depicted in research studies, which tend to focus on "packaged" projects (Thomas, 2000, p. 35).

According to Stoller (2006), the difficulty to articulate one definition that encompasses the various ways in which the concept can be translated into practice may be due in part to the particularities of different instructional settings. With an innovative instructional setting that allows for PjBL across borders, the effects of European partnerships may transform L2 learning-teaching practices by providing experiences to both teachers and students that are genuine and based on real world connections, which maximizes the authenticity of tasks and language activities. The many configurations PjBL may take in L2 education reveal the flexibility of the approach (Stoller, 2006), which allows for varied experimentation and creative paths towards the implementation of PjBL in and beyond the classroom setting.

The Practice

The partnership between the instructors involved analyzing our curricula to look for opportunities to connect our work to our students' lives, while fostering their employability. We searched for motivational pills for both instructors and students that would encourage us to improve our teaching and their learning. After studying each instructor context and constraints established by national and local guidelines, we decided to interconnect our projects.

Interconnecting Project Work in Project Estonia

As we explained previously, the final task of Estonian students was to deliver an oral presentation in a semistructured PjBL approach to their Business English class. The origin of Project Estonia can be found in the idea of interconnecting European project work since these presentations of Estonian

students (audiovisual texts on a digital support) were used as a learning prompt to initiate a PjBL approach in the language school in Spain.

Spanish students participating in the experience were adults, aged 22-65 with an overall B2 language proficiency level, as described by the CEFR, who aimed to reach a—higher—C1 level by the end of the school year. As an authentic international audience, their initial task was to watch these presentations on the Estonian university web. However, the main objective for Spanish students was to assess Estonian students' oral production in English from a technical standpoint, as if they were professional language specialists. Their EFL teacher would facilitate the training and tools needed (see the assessment sheet students used in Appendix A), which would help them understand the way they would be assessed at the end of the school year. In addition, Estonian students' delivery skills would be analyzed. On the grounds of the outcome of this task, students had to write an assessment report (tangible product) that would be sent to Estonia as constructive feedback that could be useful to Estonian students and their teacher. (Appendix B shows an example.)

Spanish students worked in groups as assessors, both in class and through small groups created on Edmodo, and each group of assessors was assigned a presentation of Estonian students for analysis. Unlike traditional EFL approaches, Spanish students were not given specific guidelines on how to write an assessment report. On the contrary, students were encouraged to research and explore different text formats available in print and through online resources to find ways to convey the message respectfully, for which a lot of reflection and discussion was needed. Thus, the participation of Spanish students as external assessors of Estonian students' PjBL final products—consisting of oral presentations of products and services—enriched the assessment of the Estonian approach to PjBL. Their review included peer-to-peer review, self-assessment, and teacher feedback.

Interconnecting project work provided a purposeful, real-world experience that extended the classroom setting and increased the number of participating agents in an active learning and teaching process. The interconnection of the project work aimed at motivating both students and teachers to deepen their learning.

In this case, it was necessary to provide Spanish students with previous preparation for the experience. Although Spanish students were aware of the link between employability and EFL based on their professional experiences, the mindset for Project Estonia required official European acknowledgement that would go further into the issue and would show the vast EU territory as a broader setting for communication and employment. Thus, a representative from Europe Direct—a EU information and dissemination
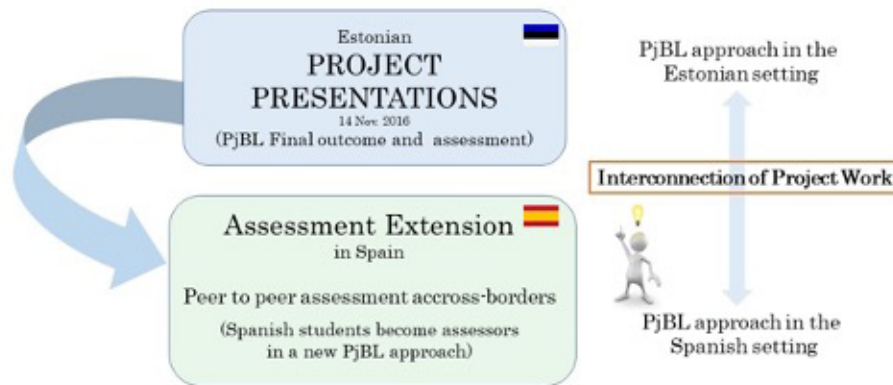
Figure 1. Interconnection of Project Work

center—was invited to visit the language school. He was asked to focus his presentation, held in English, on aspects connected to employability and mobility in the EU, including competence in foreign languages and plurilingualism.

Optimal Authenticity for a Real-World Experience

An immediate consequence of interconnecting project work in a genuine context across borders is the extension of the classroom setting as a learning environment and the increase of authenticity of the learning experience to optimal levels. The positive impact of multiple forms of authenticity that PjBL-experienced teachers report (Laur, 2013) makes authenticity not only a PjBL best practice but also one of PjBL's core elements (Larmer et al., 2015).

Other approaches to learning EFL that seek authenticity (for example, roleplays) cannot offer optimal levels of authenticity to advanced students, such as the Estonian and Spanish students participating in Project Estonia. High levels of authenticity for students aiming at a CEFR C1 level should require the introduction of variables that affect the way production and interaction happens. In this sense, Kramsch (2014, p. 251) refers to a) personal variables, such as interlocutors of a younger age, different country, or different historical heritage roots; b) variables affecting channels of communication in virtual or non-virtual environments; or c) the domains within language activities are contextualized for practical use by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 14), specifically, the public domain, the personal domain, the educational domain, and the occupational domain.

Stoller's (2006) meta-analysis on 16 publications covering different aspects of PjBL in L2 settings revealed that the authenticity of experience and language is the most cited benefit attributed to project work. Despite the possible inter-related meanings which emerged from the literature, as outlined by Gilmore (2007), Project Estonia shows an optimal level of authenticity regarding a) the task type, b) personal interaction, c) materials, and d) the target language. With the task type being the most common choice in project work (Breen, 1985; Bachman, 1991; Van Lier, 1996; Benson & Voller, 1997; Lewkowicz, 2000; Guariento & Morley, 2001, as cited in Gilmore, 2007, p.98), authentic tasks in the classroom help learners replicate or rehearse the communicative behaviors which will be required of them in the real world (McGrath, 2002).

To interlace communication in foreign languages with the occupational domain in a context of international mobility, in compliance with local educational guidelines, Spanish students became members of a panel of language "specialists," for which they would receive training in the classroom. The fact that students were not real specialists may cause some disbelief; however, the context of the project can be considered authentic because it matches what happens in the real world (Larmer et al., 2015). Thus, Spanish students would be required professional and real-world communicative behaviors and outcomes and also, to rely and develop transversal competences, such as Learning to learn or EntreComp to, for instance, develop multiple ideas that create value for others.

As a natural requirement for fulfilling the task type, personal interaction took place between and among teachers and students in various forms, as a "personal process of engagement" (Van Lier 1996, p. 128) to plan, organize, reach a consensus, elaborate, or implement tasks towards completing the project. As suggested by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), language users acted as social agents in the social world, thus promoting learning autonomy and ownership.

Audiovisual texts of Estonian students were authentic prompts that required authentic feedback in the form of an assessment report. The importance of authentic materials has been highlighted by the literature in the field of EFL (Breen, 1985; Fenner & Newby, 2000; McKay 2013). Authentic materials used appropriately in real learning environments can have many benefits in foreign language teaching, such as an increase on learners' levels of on-task behavior, concentration, and involvement in the target activity (Peacock, 1997), or a closed gap between classroom knowledge and students' capacity to participate in real-world events (Wong et al., 1995).

Finally, authenticity also affects the target language. The fact that English in Project Estonia was used by Estonian and Spanish students and non-native EFL teachers evidences English as a lingua franca that connects English users from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds in multicultural and international settings (Matsuda, 2018) and continues to displace Native Speakerism (Heimlich, 2018).

Learning Objectives in a Competence-Based Approach

The underlying idea underscored in the bulk of this contribution is that the general aim of Project Estonia was to foster employability of EFL students, considering the socio-economic context in which they are immersed. EFL was intentionally contextualized in a genuine learning environment that required students to develop more than communicative competence in English. While acquiring functional language abilities, students would activate and exploit interlocked transversal KC required to develop the learning project. Accordingly, the general learning objective of Project Estonia was to develop communicative competence in English alongside transversal KC that are important towards employability, such as entrepreneurship, learning to learn, or Digital competence.

With this general objective in mind, other general and specific learning objectives can be identified for task completion that will indicate behaviors in relation with KC. However, these behaviors will differ for the Estonian and Spanish group of students. In this respect, it is important to point out the diversity of the interconnected PjBL approaches. Whereas both the Estonian and Spanish approaches share the general aim and the general objective for Project Estonia, some

learning objectives established in relation with the development of KC will vary to suit the different lines adopted in each setting (Estonian ESP vs. Spanish general EFL). For example, some shared goals by both PjBL approaches include to appropriately use oral/written texts in communicative context (communication in foreign languages), to increase motivation (learning to learn), to develop multiple ideas that create value for others (EntreComp), and to collaborate through digital channels (DigComp).

Conditions for PjBL

The distinctiveness of Project Estonia reinforces the difficulty to articulate one single definition of PjBL that considers its various configurations in the field of L2 learning when the concept is translated into practice (Stoller, 2006). For effective PjBL as an approach to L2 teaching and learning to take place, Stoller lists the numerous conditions that should be present:

> "[It] should (a) have a process and a product orientation; (b) be defined, at least in part, by students, to encourage student ownership in the project; (c) extend over a period of time (rather than a single class session); (d) encourage the natural integration of skills; (e) make a dual commitment to language and content learning; (f) oblige students to work in groups and on their own; (g) require students to take some responsibilities for their own learning through the gathering , processing, and reporting of information from target language resources; (h) require teachers and students to assume new roles and responsibilities (Levy, 1997); (i) result in a tangible final product; and (j) conclude with student reflections on both the process and the product" (p.24).

Bearing these conditions in mind, we have previously explained how the interconnection of project work has caused two PjBL tangible final products to interweave: the Estonian presentations of products and services in Business English prompted the Spanish assessment reports in the EFL class. Project Estonia is oriented towards the process Spanish students must complete to participate in the assessment of Estonian students; however, it also encompasses the end of the Estonian learning process (final assessment of the Estonian product), enriching and giving purpose to the Estonian PjBL approach.

In Project Estonia, ownership of the project is present in both PjBL approaches. Whereas Estonian students were encouraged to create products and services, Spanish students were given the liberty to explore and choose the best way to perform their assessment report by gathering, processing, and reporting of information from target language resources. Creativity and ownership of the project were fostered in

both settings. Although project products were established by teachers, the expected outcomes were not clearly defined since students were expected to find and apply the knowledge and strategies to create them. In this sense, projects were "student-driven to some significant degree," incorporating student autonomy, choice, unsupervised work time, and responsibility (Thomas, 2000, p. 4).

In the process towards completing the project, students encountered difficulties that required their engagement in high-order thinking and the establishing of consensual parameters for shaping their outcomes. "A meaningful outside audience" (Laur, 2013, p. 80) was intended to increase the relevance of the tasks and promote ownership of the project. As for the extension of the project, the interconnection of project work provides a macro-vision of Project Estonia as a piece of a larger entity which extends from the moment the Estonian project started to the moment the Spanish students sent the assessment report to Estonia.

A micro-vision limits Project Estonia to the Spanish context, in which the project involved a preparation period and two major tasks (assessing oral production and delivery skills and writing an assessment report) that required over two months for completion. Regardless of the perspective taken scope-wise, language and transversal knowledge, skills, and attitude were naturally integrated.

Unlike Content and Language Integrated Learning settings, in EFL classes, the content is the language itself. Nevertheless, in Project Estonia, students acquired both linguistic and specific content as technical fields (business in the Estonian project and language assessment in the Spanish project), which were incorporated into the learning approach. Students in both settings had to work in groups and on their own, in class and online. Allowing for non-synchronic communication invited students to participate in classwork at their convenience, developing autonomy and responsibility for their own work and the work of their group/team.

Shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered learning in Project Estonia involved interdependence among students to make learning decisions. For this reason, in preparation for the project, adult students were taught cooperative structures that focused on learning/developing teamwork, how to give and receive criticism, and how to plan, monitor and evaluate their individual and joint activities with others. All these skills help teachers support and increase each other's learning. These methods also help develop students' employability, considering the partial delegation of authority, group management and cooperative skills which are increasingly required by modern workplaces (Walberg & Paik, 2000).

Despite complying in both settings with Stoller's (2006) condition of collecting student reflections on both the process and the product to conclude the project through questionnaires and, in the Estonian case, with an external assessment, students' perception was evaluated throughout the project with ongoing class observation, diary notes, or self-assessment tools. An extra tool was incorporated to the Estonian project since the E+ job shadowing activity implied a class observation on the part of the Spanish teacher.

Finally, teachers assumed new roles in Project Estonia. We have previously highlighted the important role of teachers' initiatives and collaboration in the new context open for PjBL, who will be able to become teacher-leaders in experimentation, innovation, and classroom-based research. Considering that PjBL is a student-centered teaching approach, one should not ignore the additional role teacher-facilitators have embraced. They will also act as classroom coaches, providing expert guidance, feedback and suggestions to better achieve the final product, according to learners' needs within the context of the project (Savery, 2006).

Furthermore, teachers' managerial skills will also be pivotal in the implementation of PjBL. Apart from their ordinary classroom management skills, teacher-managers may need to hold meetings with colleagues, administrators, and other agents in the community to ensure the development of the project within traditional course syllabi. What is more, teachers may organize meetings, events, or performances to set the mindset for PjBL or enrich learning goals.

The Aftermath

Having planned to analyze the impact of PjBL on students' competences and perceptions in a research-based contribution, we take the opportunity in this paper to address the impact of Project Estonia on us as EFL teachers who take on the roles of "reflective practitioners" (Schön, 1983, 1987, 1990). Even though reliance on self-report measures can be deceiving, sometimes this approach is the only reasonable way to measure changes in dispositions, attitudes, and social skills, when assessing the effectiveness of PjBL (Thomas, 2000). Due to the exploratory character of Project Estonia, its outcomes in terms of impact on teachers could not be open to prediction.

The main conclusion we have drawn from our experience is that we are inclined to believe Project Estonia entails many of the good practices the Council of the European Union identifies for European education. The 2018 Recommendation suggests Member States make use of good practices as a way to facilitate the acquisition of KC by promoting a variety of learning approaches and environments, by providing support to educational staff to enhance key competences of learners, by reinforcing collaboration between education, training and learning settings at all levels, or by developing innovative learning approaches (Council of the European Union,

2018). Consequently, Project Estonia might have turned us into "practitioners of good practice" (p. 189/5), adding value to our teaching and increasing our motivation.

The concept of good practice, however, must be considered in connection with the educational context, which will determine the way the practice needs to be shaped. As Walberg and Paik (2000) remind, "in any educational setting, suggestions or guidelines for practice require sensitive and sensible application, and continuing evaluation" (p. 4). In Project Estonia, the consideration of good practice can be questioned because there are three educational contexts at stake: the Estonian, the Spanish, and the international (European) contexts.

Suggesting Good Practice

The following points are indicative that Project Estonia might be considered a good practice in the European context, according the 2018 European Reference Framework:

• PjBL is a learning approach that contributes to provide a variety of instructional methods in European educational settings. We consider the interconnection of project work in Project Estonia as a conjoint initiative across borders, which is an innovative learning approach that has also provided a genuine learning environment in the EU.

• Project Estonia reinforced collaboration between education, training and learning settings at different levels, not only because two different educational institutions and students engaged in the experience but also because participating EFL teachers developed professionally through innovative, reflective practice.

• Teaching EFL to adult students in Project Estonia is oriented towards an integrated approach that enhances the development of transversal KC for lifelong learning.

• The job shadowing activities funded by the E+ Program contributed to generate Project Estonia. Consequently, we argue that they satisfied "the necessity of creating conditions that are conducive to collaboration between teachers" (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016, p.199), taking teacher collaboration to an international level that facilitates the exploration of PjBL in a novel context.

• Funding teachers' mobilities is a way to support educational staff because they create conditions that may or may not be conducive to teacher collaboration. This outcome will mostly depend on teachers' own entrepreneurship competence: "The capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others" (Council of the European Union, 2018, p. 23). In other

words, the teacher's ability to take opportunities for turning ideas into action is key, of which Project Estonia is an example (España, 2018).

• The promotion of learning mobilities on the part of the EC has resulted in unpredictable learning experiences for us. A short stay at a partner organization went beyond the exchange of good practices to building a long-term partnership that is currently still active. As a result, the job shadowing activities fostered intercultural and professional development that we willingly tailored to suit our innovation, experimentation, and research professional needs. This opportunity gave us agency on our learning and enabled us, as teacher-learners, to be stakeholders in our individual learning process—a principle identified for students by the Council of Europe (2017) for ensuring quality education.

Considering the above factors, we agree that an enhanced teacher collaboration and professionalism are the "unintended and seemingly beneficial consequences associated with PjBL experiences" that some studies report (Thomas, 2000, p. 34).

Impact on Teacher Motivation

Teachers in our countries usually lack time to reflect on their practices, and if they do, they tend to develop a focus on their own weaknesses. Bearing in mind there is always space for growth, our reflection on the impact of Project Estonia on us has caused us to develop more self-awareness of our strengths as EFL teachers and the importance of creativity in the teaching profession. Regardless of our eventual consideration of "practitioners of good practice," the project has had a positive effect on our motivation as EFL teachers.

Although educational authorities in Spain denied recognition of the innovative experience towards professional development, the national and international dissemination of the project has provided different kinds of institutional and peer recognition. These achievements encourage us to continue experimenting in the classroom with genuine professional development approaches such as the one Project Estonia has rendered.

Conclusion

The implementation of the E+ Program has resulted in the possibility of joint initiatives across borders led by EFL teachers who aim to prepare their students for work and communication in multicultural and multilingual settings. Thus, a novel context for PjBL has been created that allows for experimentation, innovation, and research in the classroom. In

this context, Project Estonia explores the possibility to bring EFL classroom practice closer to education as a key area for employability.

Interconnecting project work and a competence-based approach to EFL provides students and teachers with a purposeful, real-world experience characterized by optimal levels of authenticity that aims at motivating students and teachers, likewise. Self-reflection of teachers involved in this project are inducive to positive effects on their motivation and professional development.

Teachers' entrepreneurial competence has been identified as one fact that may influence the generation of good practice. Developing teachers' essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence, as defined in the European Reference Framework (Council of Europe, 2017, p. 23-24) may be a path towards enhancing PjBL in the EU.

Considering the 2018 Recommendation suggests Member States to make use of good practices to facilitate the acquisition of KC (Council of the European Union, 2018), Project Estonia shows that implementing PjBL may become a strategy to develop KC of both students and teachers.

The context for PjBL depicted in this article presents an opportunity for teachers from various disciplines and educational settings to establish countless partnerships that enable PjBL experimentation, innovation, and research across national borders. We chose interconnecting project work for our practice, but the options for educational partnerships to implement PjBL or related approaches, such as problem-based or case-based learning, are multiple. Being aware that many projects begin with "a gleam in a teacher's eye" (Larmer et al., 2015, p. 48), this contribution intends to inspire others in leading the way to explore a novel context for PjBL.

Addendum

The latest development of European educational policies favors the idea of a novel context for PjBL as described in this article. In 2020, the European Commission adopted an initiative to achieve the European Education Area by 2025 for which the current E+ Program for 2021-2027 plays a major role. Teachers are considered innovation agents, and their cooperation and professional growth are valued towards achieving the European Education Area: "Member States can shape a European Education Area based on freedom for learners and teachers to learn and work across the continent and for institutions to freely associate with one another in Europe and beyond" (EC, 2020).

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Appendix 1

C1 SPEAKING. ASSESSMENT SHEET (TASK 1; *Speaking production*)

Name of student: _____

Group: _____

Date: _____

|			
			COMMUNICATIVE EFFECTIVENESS 3 points
0	0,5	1	**Comprehension:** Clarity throughout the text.
0	0,5	1	**Communicative functions:** With effectiveness, sticking to the point; expressing, extending, defending opinions, considering the context.
0	0,5	1	**Sociolinguistic adequacy:** Register, confidence/conviction, can express ideas with added emotion or in an inexact way/ (humor, irony, etc.)
			DISCURSIVE ABILITY 2 points
0	0,5	1	**Organization and coherence:** Appropriate beginning, developing body (integrating ideas/examples) and closing.
0	0,5	1	**Discursive development:** Extensive, elaborated, appropriate information. Defending arguments and counter-argumenting.
			RANGE OF LANGUAGE USE 4 points
0	0,5	1	**Lexical range:** Extensive range (precision and clarity, idiomatic and colloquial expressions); explanation without ambiguity.
0	0,5	1	**Grammatical range:** Extensive, complex repertoire of oral language (clarity); reformulation without interruption.
0	0,5	1	**Cohesion:** Clarity; discourse is well-articulated. Adequate use of organizational structures, connectors or other cohesion devices.
0	0,5	1	**Fluency:** Fluent rhythm and natural fluency (also in extensive periods of time, except in the case of conceptually complex topics); spontaneous.
			CORRECTION 3 points
0	0,5	1	**Lexis:** Extensive and correct lexis. Sporadic mistakes; no important errors.
0	0,5	1	**Grammar:** High level of correction (oral language). Occasional mistakes are self-corrected.
0	0,5	1	**Pronunciation and intonation:** Clarity, adequacy, naturality. Use to express nuances.
Questions 1			Almost effortless, spontaneous, with convincing answers; adequate content.

TOTAL: _____ / 13

REMARKS

Appendix 2

Estonian PjBL Final Product: Presentation of Sleepify

https://panopto.ut.ee/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=2fe53ed0-539c-4915-bb65-099655be282e
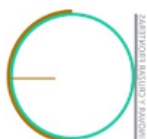
REPORT ASSESSMENT: SLEEPYFY

PURPOSE
The aim of this report is to give an overview of students´ English communication and presentation delivery skills, in order to help them to enhance their abilities.

COMMUNICATIVE EFFICACY
Although students' comprehensibility, in general, is more than acceptable, there are some aspects which need to be taken into account. Hence, it would be advisable to develop their self-confidence and self-control with the purpose of being more compelling. Therefore, the speakers should take under-control of their emotions for future presentations. However, they fulfil the communicative role of language successfully, clearly expressing their ideas and being capable of applying irony and humor as a resource to attract attention.

DISCURSIVE CAPACITIES
According to our assessment, a significant proportion of the speech is clearly organized. Despite the fact that the group provides appropriate developing ideas and try to explain the points, some of which are not evident enough, such as the audience or the price of the product. However, the sequence and structure are adapted to the purpose. Moreover, the fact of start mentioning the points, which are going to be developed, help to understand the ideas. They also write these points in their visual's, a strong point in our view. To our mind, they provide the information in a well-structured format with a start, core, and ending, and communicate in an organized way with coherence and appropriate information.

MANAGEMENT IN THE USE OF THE LANGUAGE
They show an appropriate lexical range, leading to an articulate and clear conveying of the message. Furthermore, this fact is deeply reinforced by the correct use of connectors and other mechanisms of cohesion. Moreover, the team use an extensive and complex grammatical repertory for their English level. In addition, they have a vast professional vocabulary. All in all, the students accomplish their communicative aims, the breakdown of the project was very good.

PRONUNCIATION

Appendix 2 continued

Firstly, the presentation can be clearly understood most of the time, with very few phonetic mistakes. In addition, they have the ability to speak without noticeable effort, intelligibly, fluently and using adequate word stress.

The general view is that the team members have a correct pronunciation and clear articulation, although on specific occasions some words were seem unclear to us. With regard to intonation patterns, speaking in a more dynamic tone of voice would enrich the presentation. It would be advisable for the students to recognise that they really have a good speaking skill, which will improve their self-confidence, and let them show a more enthusiastic attitude to enhance the impact on the audience.

CONCLUSION
To conclude, the students demonstrate an adequate competency in all the skills described in this report. We suggest paying attention to their nonverbal behavior, like eye contact, to make sure they stay engaged with the audience. Particularly, they are likely to need a little more time to memorize the speech to get their maximum potential. They should feel they are communicating meaningful content. Despite this limitation, the group was looking forward to broadly communicating with dedication and exertion, which implies having set up the right conditions to succeed in terms of communication.

M.C.A.
B.E.S.
J.M.L.
M.M.G.

————————————————