

**B-ELT**  
CONFERENCE

"CATCHY TRENDS IN ELT"



# Using WhatsApp for interactive tasks

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Escola  
d'Idiomes  
Moderns



# OVERVIEW

- Introduction
  - Out-of-class learning
  - Mobile learning
  - WhatsApp
- WhatsApp activities
- Results
- Recommendations



# Out-of-class learning

- TL Contact = Increased proficiency

Sundqvist (2009)

- Hours a week (B2, N=1,000+)

– 4h30/week

Mackay (2015)



# Mobile Language Learning

In a word.....





Potential

Motivating

Realistic

Convenient



- helps avoid '*motivational dissonance*'

Ushioda (2013)

- '*Teachers should catch up and teach with the tools our students really use*'

Brooks-Young (2010)



Artificial  
Intrusive  
Privacy



*- 'comparable with interactions within the walls of a face-to-face classroom'*

Lamy and Zourou (2013: 3)





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**"I suppose I'll be the one  
to mention the elephant in the room."**



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7.26.17



1 Billion

daily active users



1.3 Billion

monthly active users



55 Billion

messages sent per day



4.5 Billion

photos shared per day



60 languages

supported



1 Billion

videos shared per day



# WhatsApp - Research

- Gutiérrez-Colon et al., (2013): Improving learners' reading skills through instant short messages
- Han and Keskin (2016): *Using WhatsApp to Reduce EFL Speaking Anxiety*
- Jafari and Chalak (2016): *The Role of WhatsApp in Teaching Vocabulary to Iranian EFL learners at Junior High School*
- Andujar, A. (2020): *Mobile-mediated dynamic assessment: A new perspective for second language development.*

# The WhatsApp groups

Group	A (2017)	B (2019)	C (2020)	D (2021)
Level	B2.1	B1	B2	B2
Mode	F2F Summer intensive	F2F Saturdays	Blended/ Zoom	Synch./ Zoom
Nº students	N=23	N=13	N=10	N=17
Duration	100h	100h	40h	100h
Gender	11 F, 12 M	9F, 4M	6F, 4M	8F, 9M
Mean age	21	27	30	21

# The WhatsApp programme

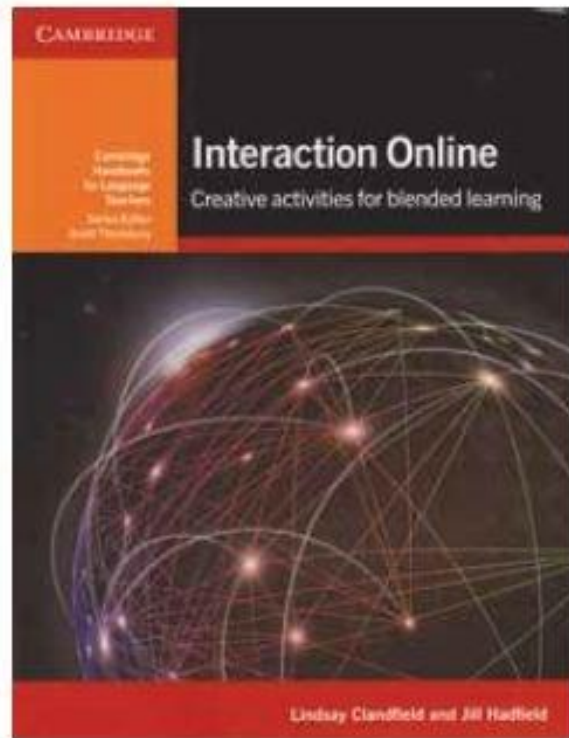
Group	A (2017)	B (2019)	C (2020)	D (2021)
Duration	5 weeks	4 weeks	5 weeks	6 weeks
Nº Tasks	8	4	5	21
Related to course?	No	Yes	Yes	No
Task types	Open/Drills	Open	Open/Drills	Open: Learner-generated prompts







# 'Independent' Tasks



## *Interaction Online*

Clandfield, L. & Hadfield, J.  
(2017) Cambridge  
Handbooks for Teachers  
(CUP)



# The WhatsApp programme

Clandfield & Hadfield (2017) recommendations:

- Set up like classroom tasks:
  - Demo first
  - Clear instructions
- Break task up into stages
- Set deadlines
- Be present and positive, withdraw support gradually





# The WhatsApp programme

## Interaction patterns

- Pass the parcel
- Confetti



# The WhatsApp programme

Pass the parcel

*This or That*



EIM level 4 summer...

Angel , Angels, Anna , Arosel...



Before you start, have a look at this list. These are some ways of agreeing in English (from emphatic to weak):

Definitely! (Emphatic)

For sure!

Absolutely!

Yes.

I guess.

I suppose (weak)

Task 1:

I'm going to write two things. You need to choose which one you prefer. Write the name of the thing you prefer and use one of the expressions from the list.



EIM level 4 summer...

Angel , Angels, Anna , Arosel...



For example, I write this:  
Travelling by bus or travelling by train?

You write:

Travelling by train, absolutely!

If you don't like travelling by bus and you don't like travelling by train, you can write:

Neither!

Ready? Let's start!  
Travelling by bus or travelling by train?

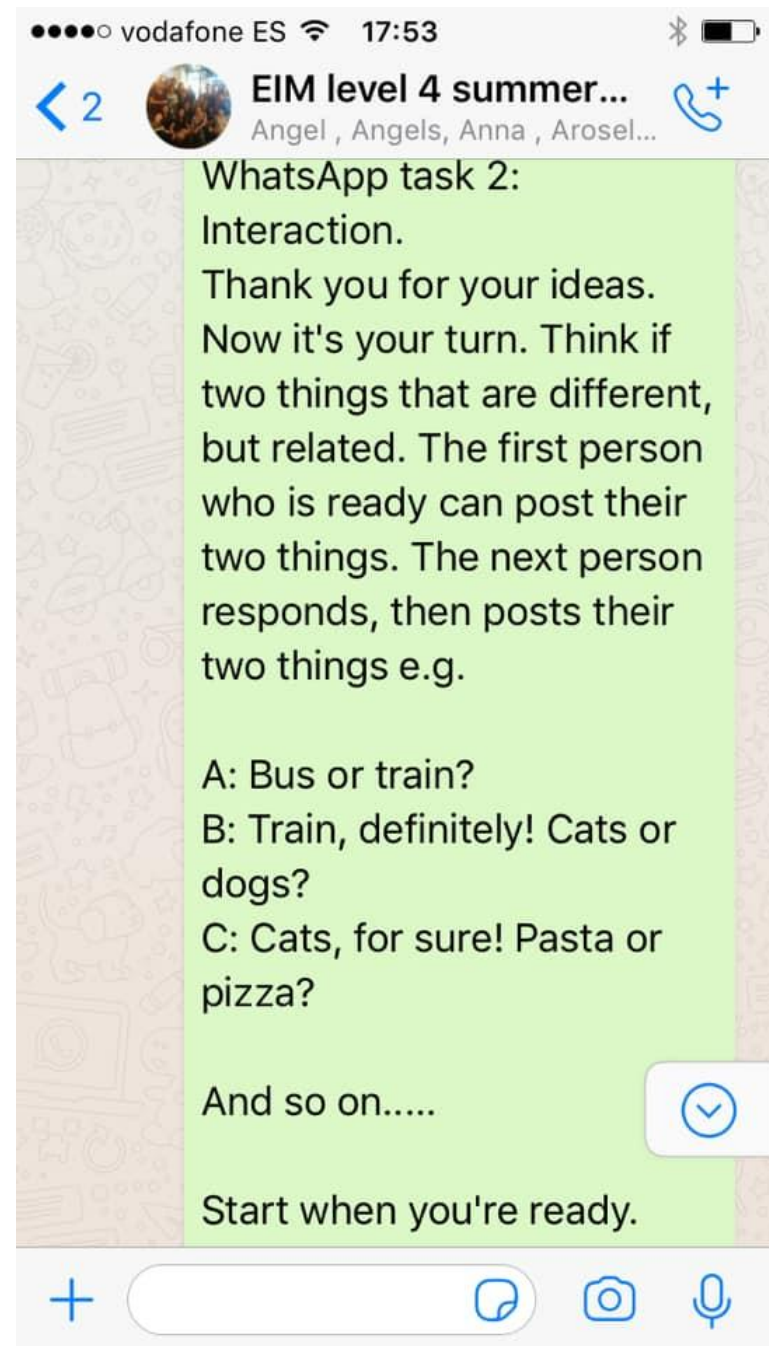
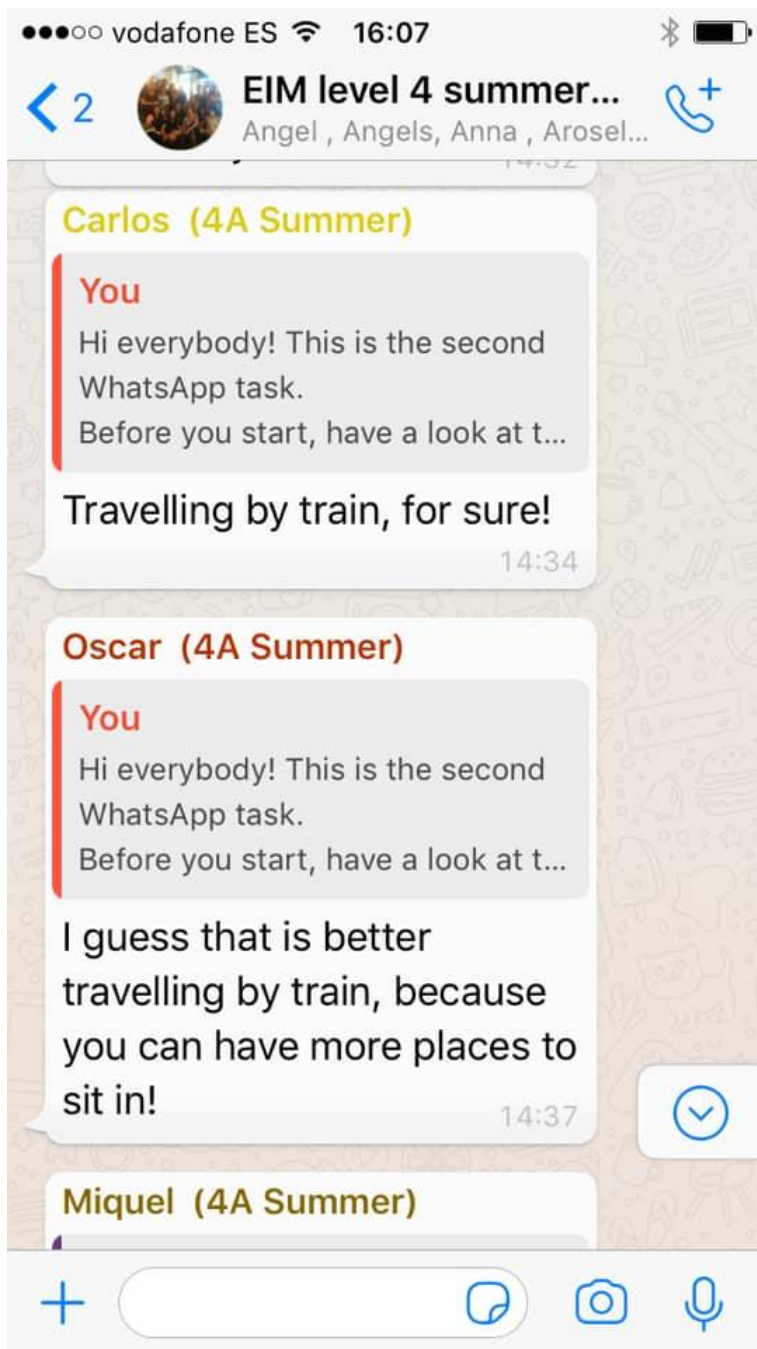
14:2



Anna (4A Summer)

If I have to choose between







# The WhatsApp programme

## *This or That*

- bottles or cans?
- summer or winter?
- Harry Potter or Game of Thrones?
- Apple or Android?



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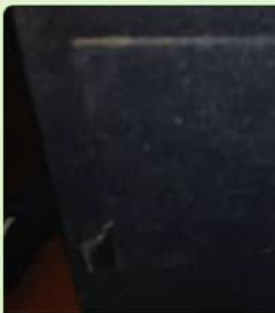
The WhatsApp programme

Confetti

# THE GUESSING GAME



My angle on....  
Choose an object  
own that has a  
meaning for you  
picture of a pair  
object from an  
angle. Try to make  
picture so that  
to see (but not  
You'll see my picture  
Please post your  
tomorrow, then  
the next part of



Part 2:  
Look at your classroom  
pictures. Choose the  
ask questions to try  
out what the object  
owner can only answer  
or 'no' e.g.:  
Is it made of metal?  
Yes, it is.  
Do you use it in the  
No, you don't.

If three people have  
asked questions about  
object you chose, choose  
another picture. Post  
questions by tomorrow  
(Thursday). If no one  
found the answer by  
the owner should tell

**José Luis (4A Summer)**

**You**

OK - 10 points?

Ohh!! -10 points!! Jessica is  
from Scotland and you are a  
weepy (llorón) man.

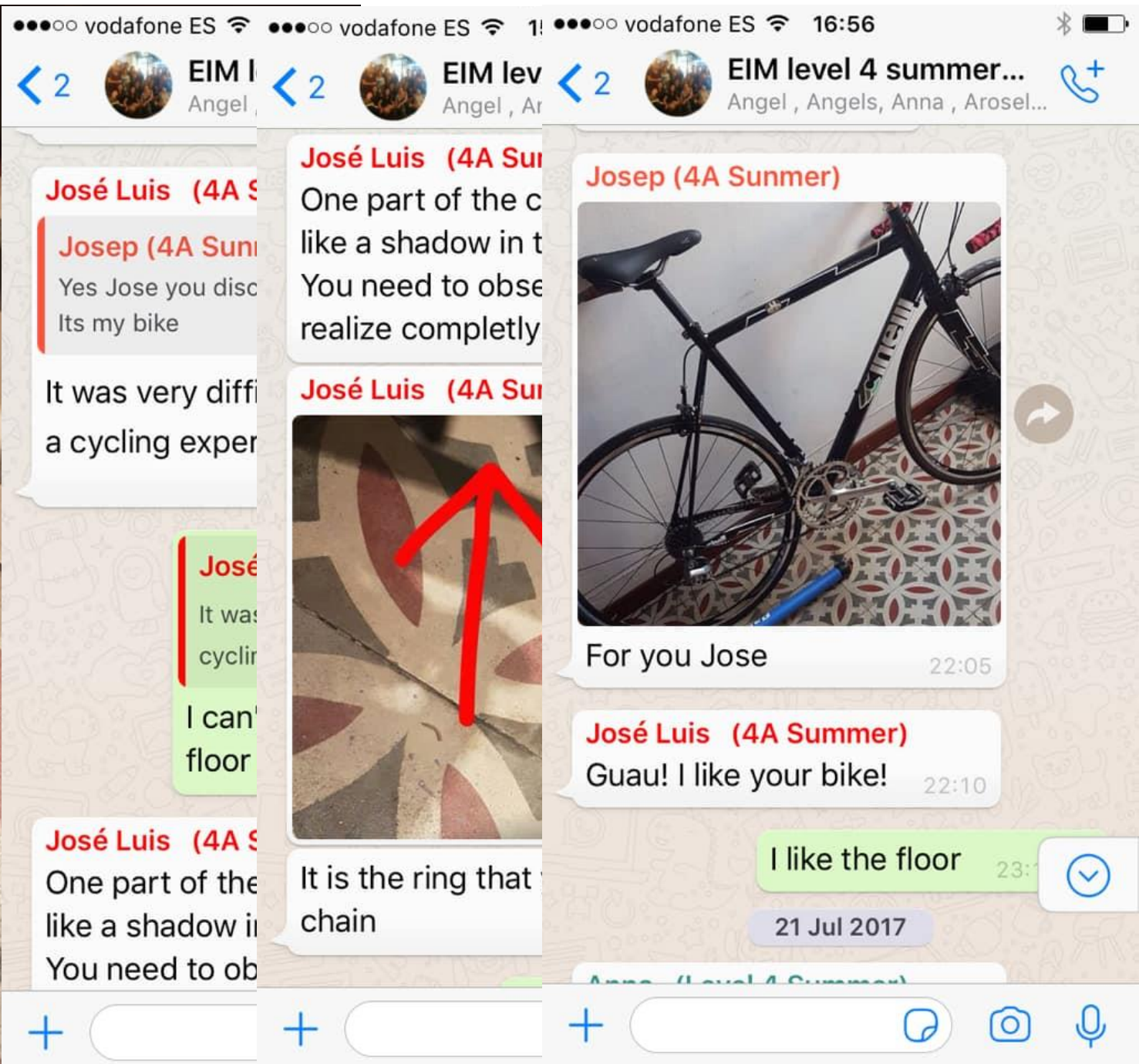
🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬 (Extra points to  
Marie Curie!)

15:50

20 Jul 2017

If you haven't already  
guessed the mystery  
objects, the owners should  
now reveal what they were.  
Mine was (the back of) a  
photo frame with a picture  
of my dad. What about you?

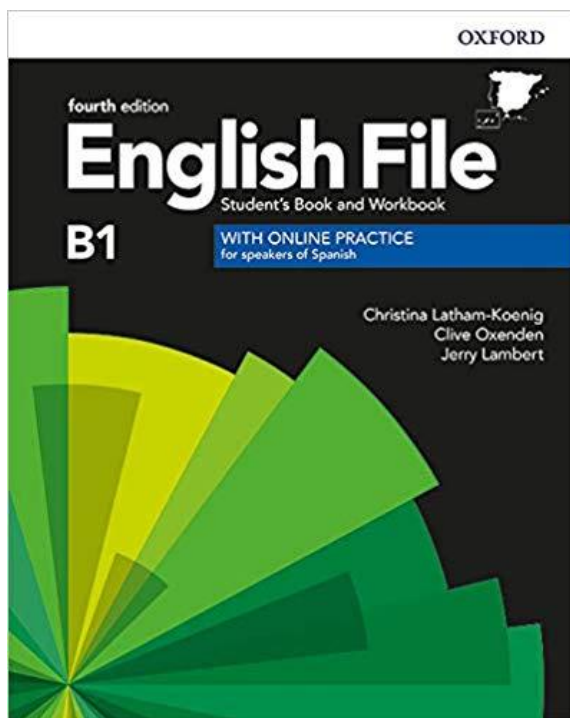
09:51 ✓







# 'Integrated' Tasks



*English File B1, 4th edition*

Latham Koenig, C.,  
Oxenden, C. & Lambert, J.  
(2019) OUP

**Unit 9: Quantifiers**



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8/5/2019

Hello Superstars! This week's task helps us to practise **quantifiers**. Take a photo of what's in your fridge. Other people will make some suggestions about what you could make for dinner.

12:18 ✓✓

Example:

12:18 ✓✓

Jasmin UB



12:20

Wow, Jasmin! You don't have **enough** food for a big meal. But you've got **a few** eggs and **lots of** vegetables, so you can make an omelette.

12:21 ✓✓



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Teacher

Wow, Jasmini! You don't have **enough** food for a big meal. But you've got **a few** eggs and **lots of** vegetables, so you can make an omelette.

12

Teacher



Guys, someone help me! What can I have for dinner tonight?

12:22

Student 12

Well, Mathew! You have a lot of meat. Maybe you can do a bbq and invited all us to lunch. Then we can do some shots of tequila.

13:46

Student 6

Hajajajajaja

13:56

Student 7

I think that Matthews has too much meat for a class of 20 people. Maybe, it's enough for 30, but not for 20.

16:25

And, obviously, there isn't enough "Jose Cuervo" for everybody

16:26

Student 3

Why do you have lots of meat and a few fish? I suggest you to change your diet. Eat less meat and add more vegetables.

16:29

Student 3

Student 7

And, obviously, there isn't enough "Jose Cuervo" for everybody

Hahaha

16:35

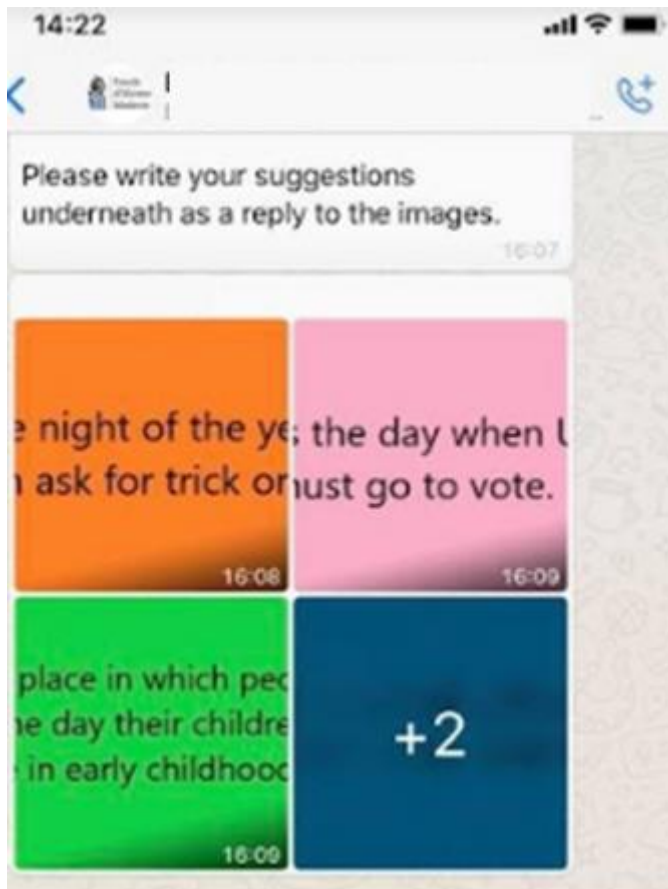
9.5.2019

Student 15

I think that Matthew doesn't have enough meat for one dinner. You don't have to switch off the fridge, because you will haven't any edible food!



# 'Integrated' Tasks: Feedback





# Spontaneous interaction



‘Learner-generated’  
Teacher models a  
prompt  
Learners respond





Image tweeted by @kaarendu



Teacher sets calendar  
suggests ideas:

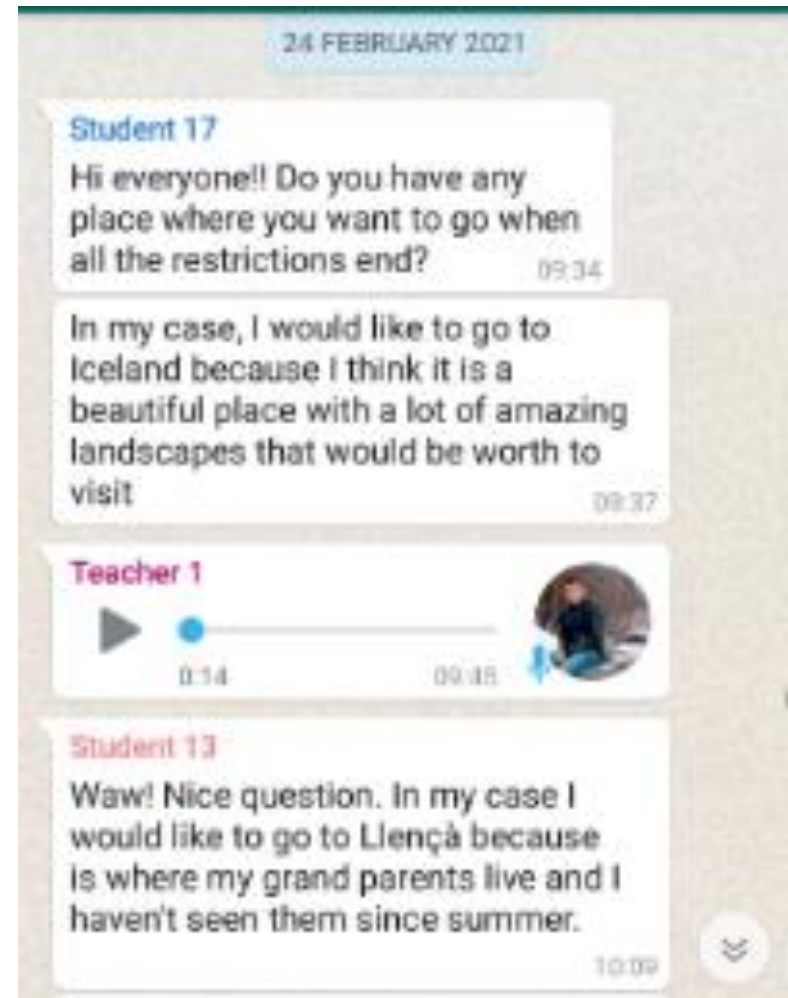
- *viral videos, memes*
- *current events*
- *students' lives*

provides frames:

- *What's your favourite .....? Why?*
- *Have you seen .....? What did you think?*
- *What do you know about .....?*



Learners provide  
prompts  
Others respond



# Results

Group	A (2017)	B (2019)	C (2020)	D (2021)
Total messages	764	158	623	626
Teacher / Researcher	105 (14%)	47 (30%)	259 (42%)	291 (46%)
Students	659 (86%)	111 (70%)	364 (58%)	335 (54%)
Average per day	22	6	21	13
Average per student	28	9	36	20



# Results - participation

## Successful tasks

- Drills
  - 'safe' parameters, but ss often want to go beyond the demands of the task
- Exchange of personal information
- Involve images
- Learner-generated
- \*Reluctance with speaking tasks



# Results - participation

- Group Dynamics
  - Students who joined group late tended not to participate
- Attrition effect
  - Participation drops with each stage of a task

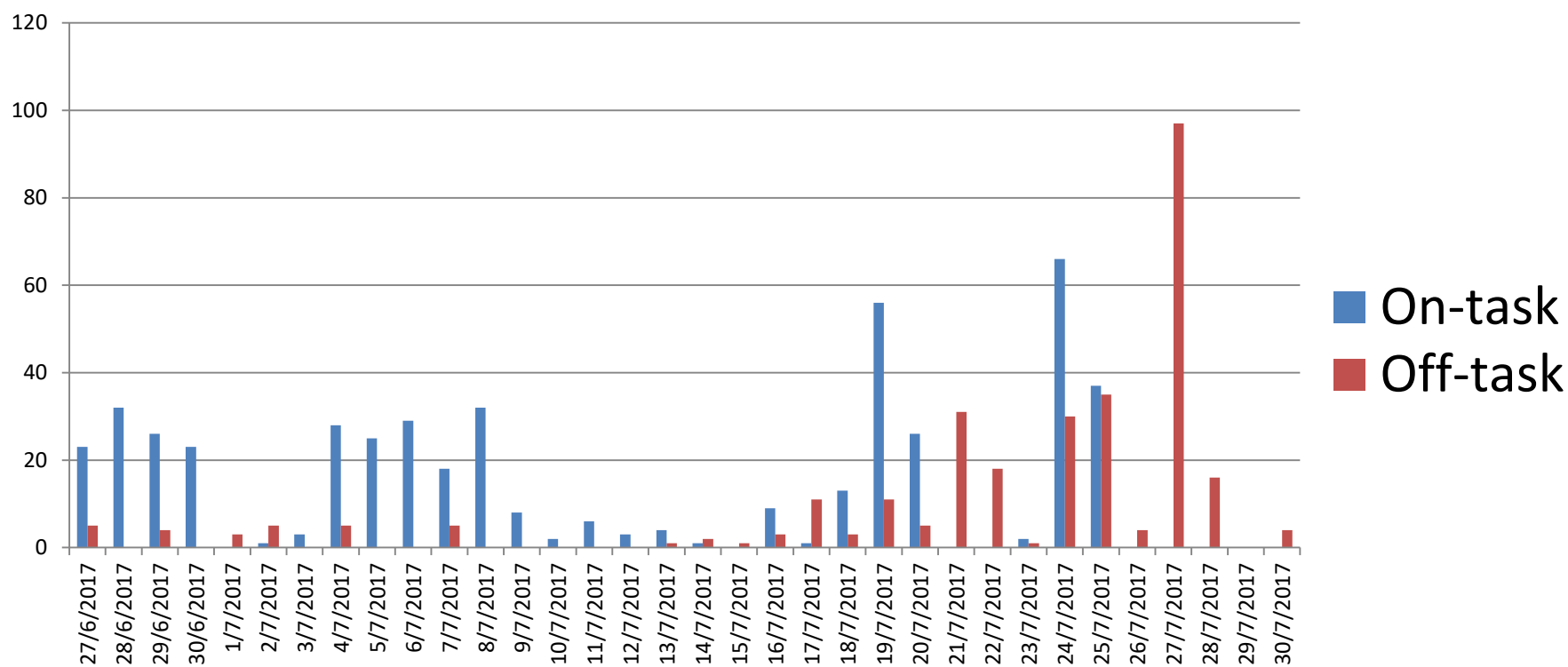


# Results – type of contribution

- Increases out-of-class TL use
  - Minimal contributions in L1
- Agency and Autonomy
  - Students took over the group



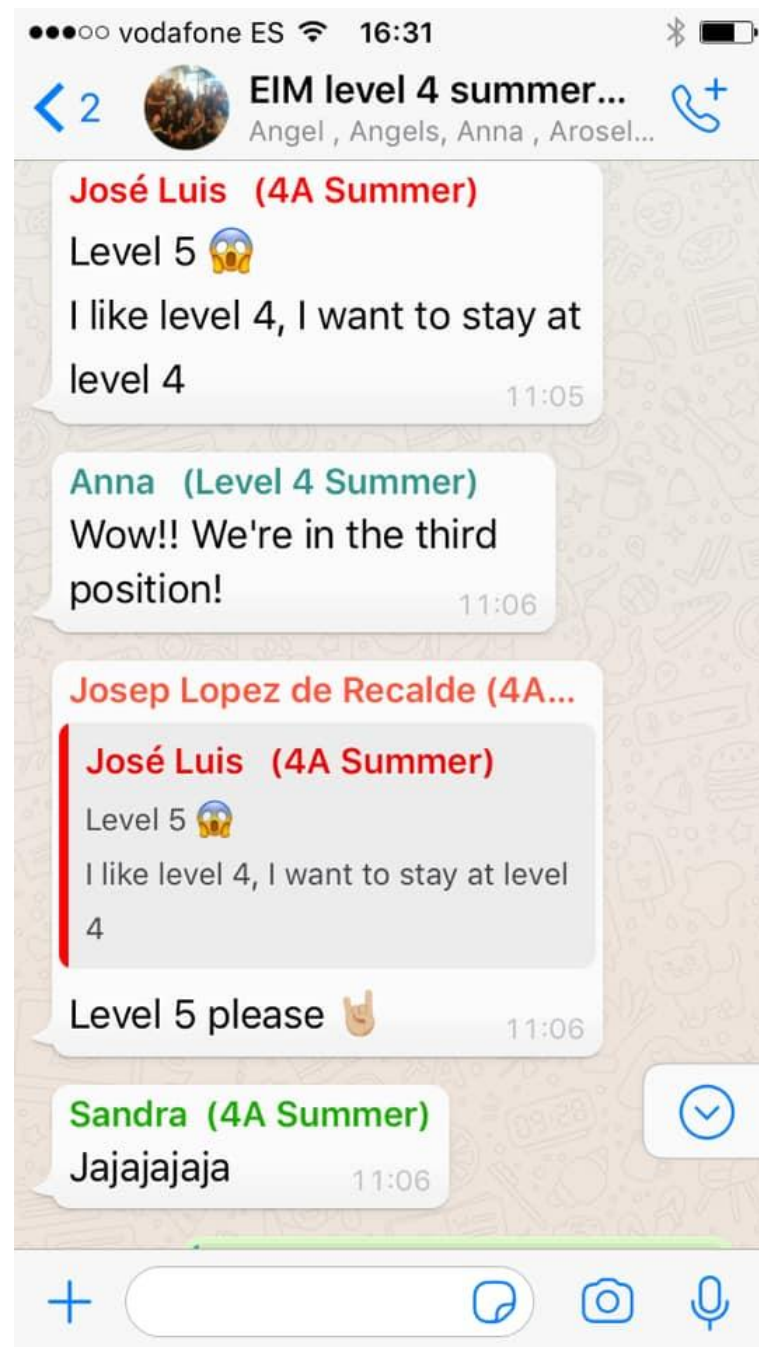
# Results: type of contribution (group A)



# Results – type of contribution

Off-task contributions:

1. Admin.
2. Social



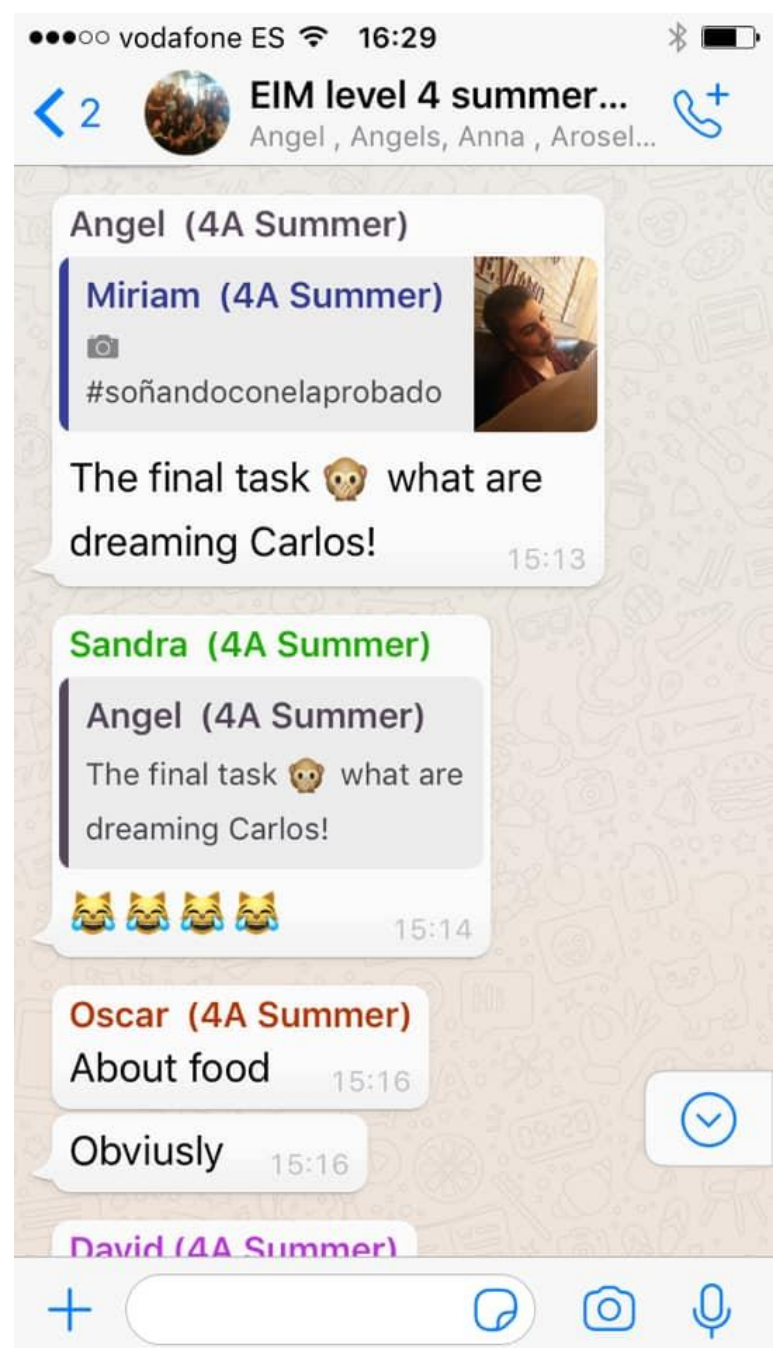


# Results – identity

They became themselves in the group:

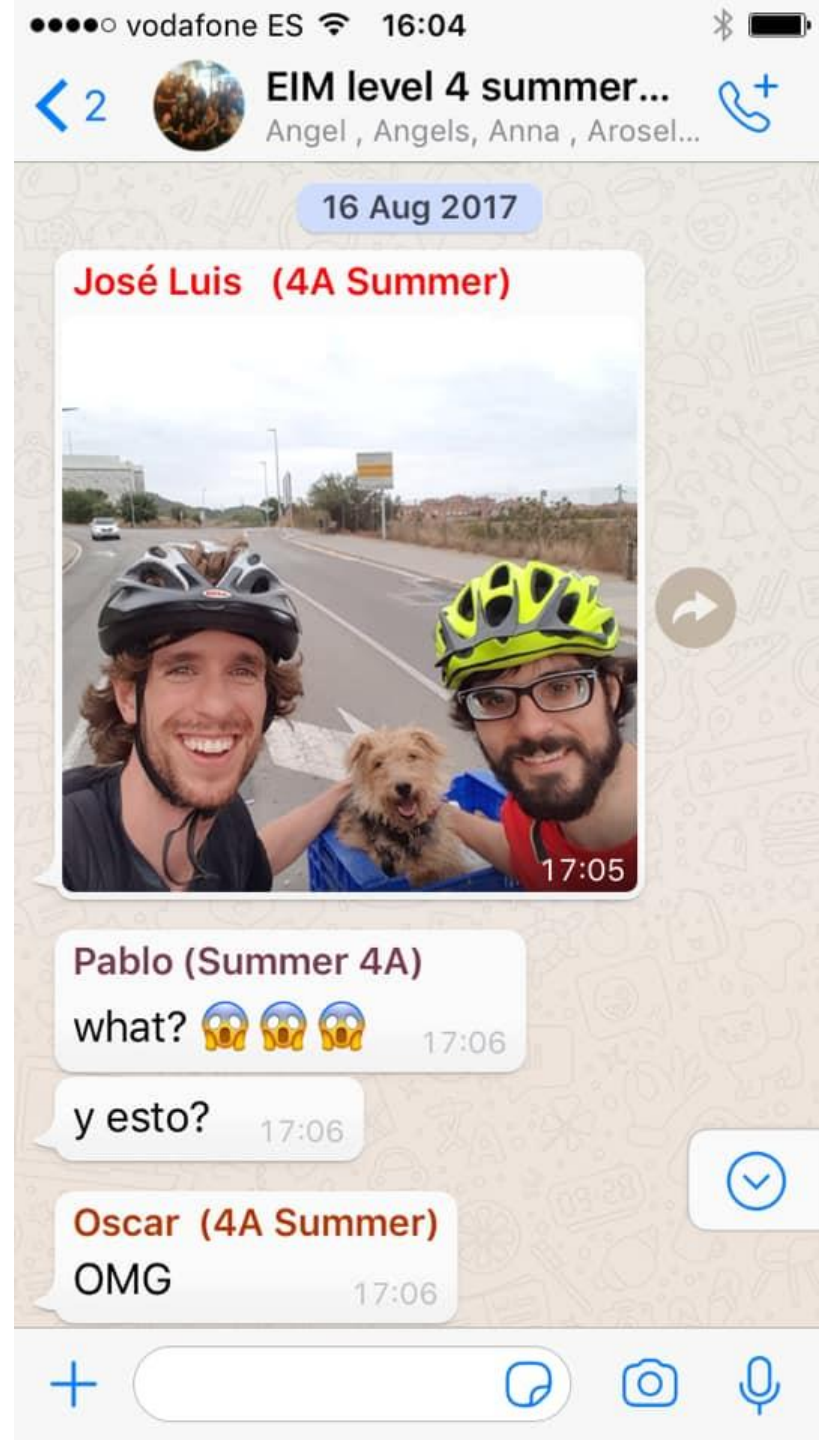
- Real-life behaviour
- Personalities
- Teasing / joking





# Results – feedback

- Positive response
- Prefer immediate feedback
- Some age differences
- Interaction continued (in English) after the course had finished.





# Practical tips

## *Tip 1*

Start the WhatsApp group as soon as possible.

## *Tip 2*

First few days: tell ss who to ask, establish calendar for prompts.



# Practical tips

## *Tip 3*

Images encourage interaction.

## *Tip 4*

Be involved as a participant.





# Practical tips

## *Tip 5*

Alternate drills for accuracy and open activities for fluency.

## *Tip 6*

Pre-teach common expressions, e.g. Hahaha, Wow! etc.



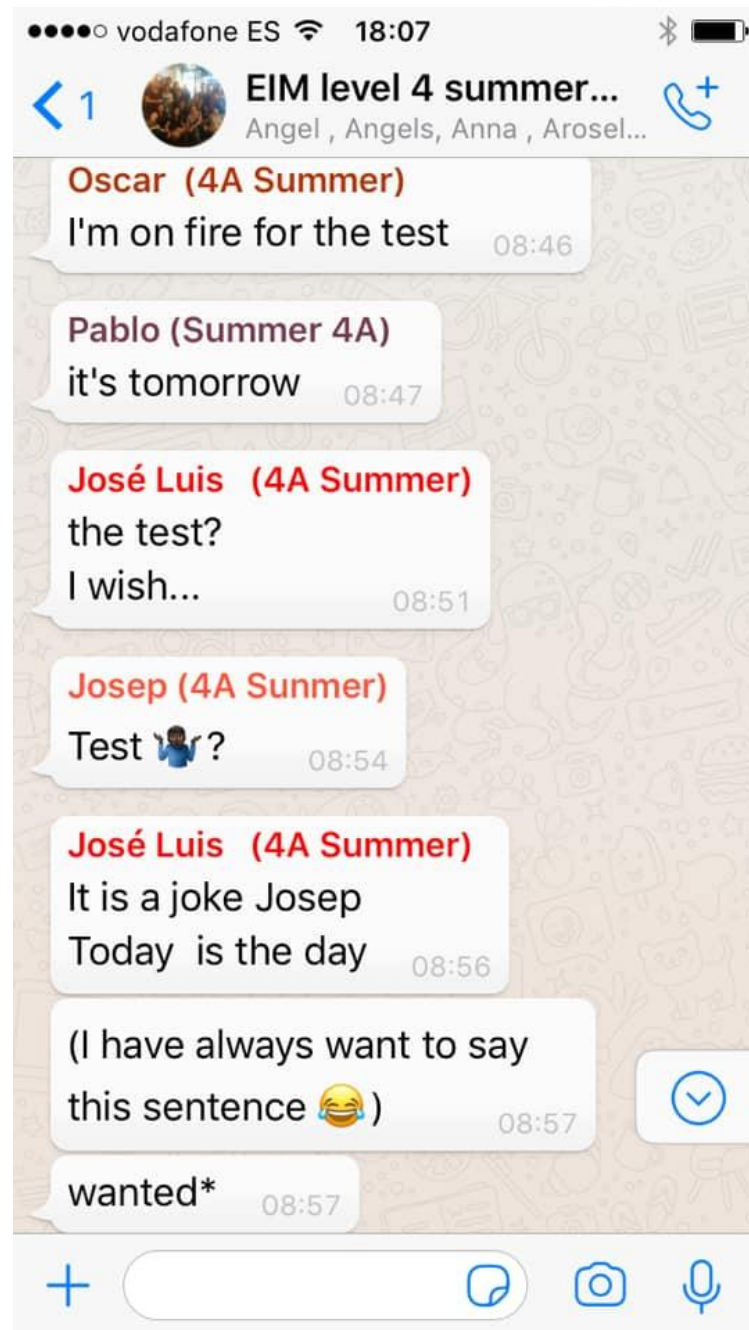


# Practical tips

## *Tip 7*

### Vary correction!

- upon request?
- recurrent errors
- in the chat
- in class







# Practical tips

## *Tip 8*

Use emoticons  
for feedback







# Publications

**Mackay, J., Andria, M., Tragant, E. & Pinyana, A.**  
(2021) WhatsApp as part of an EFL programme:  
participation and interaction. *ELT Journal*

**Tragant, E., Pinyana, A. Mackay, J. & Andria, M.**  
(2021): Extending language learning beyond the EFL  
classroom through WhatsApp. *Computer Assisted  
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**Mackay, J.** (2015). Applications and implications of the L2 Motivational Self System in a Catalan EFL context. In K. Csizér & M. Magid (Eds.), *The Impact of Self-Concept on Language Learning*. Multilingual Matters.

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# THANK YOU!

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<https://www.eim.ub.edu/en/teacher-development/>



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