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**TEACHING EFL TO TEENS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN CAXIAS DO SUL: USING
TECHNOLOGY TO ACQUIRE LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS**

Caxias do Sul

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado como pré-requisito para a obtenção do título de Licenciada em Letras – Inglês à Universidade de Caxias do Sul.
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To God for blessing me to be alive and kicking.

To my late mother whose dream was to see at least one of her 8 children graduated. “Here I am, mom! I dedicate these six years to you!”

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To all those who, like me, dare living their lives like Bertha Young:

“Although Bertha Young was thirty she still had moments like this when she wanted to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to throw something up in the air and catch it again, or to stand still and laugh at - nothing - at nothing, simply.

What can you do if you are thirty and, turning the corner of your own street, you are overcome, suddenly by a feeling of bliss - absolute bliss! - as though you'd suddenly swallowed a bright piece of that late afternoon sun and it burned in your bosom, sending out a little shower of sparks into every particle, into every finger and toe?

Oh, is there no way you can express it without being "drunk and disorderly" ? How idiotic civilisation is!

Why be given a body if you have to keep it shut up in a case like a rare, rare fiddle? ”

(Excerpt from *Bliss*, by Katherine Mansfield)

To Paulo Freire, who sublimely described what being a teacher is.

“I love being a teacher.

To me, being a teacher does not mean being a missionary, or having received a certain command from heaven. Rather, a teacher is a professional, one who must constantly seek to improve and to develop certain qualities or virtues, which are not received but must be created. The capacity to renew ourselves every day is very important. It prevents us from falling into what I call ‘bureaucratization of mind’.

I am a teacher.”

Paulo Freire, 1985.

ABSTRACT

This article proposes a methodology for teaching EFL in a public school so that students acquire listening and speaking skills, not just reading and writing using a technological tool. When Brown (2007) says that integrating the four skills is important for authenticity and reinforcement, we realize that even if they are produced and ensured in the classroom, while practicing English, listening and speaking to produce dialogue and understand our peers still are the skills that are least practiced in public schools. In her introduction to the components of communicative language ability, Hedge (2000) points out that linguistic competence involves knowledge of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, word formation, grammatical structure, sentence structure and linguistic semantics. The main objective of this paper is to reflect on the use of this technology and review the existing literature on the use of technology for teaching English and on listening and speaking teaching skills. An analysis is provided regarding how English File technology can bring challenges and benefits for teaching listening and speaking in teaching English as a foreign language to adolescents in a public school in Caxias do Sul and reflect on the learning conditions based on the type of technology that schools offer their students and teachers. This paper was conceived in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and, a year later, the world is, unfortunately, still experiencing this unpleasant situation. For that reason, as classes continue online in the public schools, using this model with most students, it was possible to obtain some improvements as well as solutions for the conditions found in a public school in Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil, so that this technology can be inserted in the teaching of English.

KEY WORDS: English; technology; public school; *listening*; *speaking*; abilities.

RESUMO

Este artigo propõe uma metodologia para o ensino de EFL em uma escola pública para que os alunos adquiram habilidades de *listening* e *speaking*, e não apenas *reading* e *writing* usando uma ferramenta tecnológica. Quando Brown (2007) diz que integrar as quatro habilidades é importante para a autenticidade e reforço, percebemos que mesmo que elas sejam produzidas e asseguradas em sala de aula, enquanto se pratica o inglês, ouvir e falar para produzir diálogos e compreender nossos colegas ainda são as habilidades que são menos praticadas em escolas públicas. Analisar à luz de especialistas no assunto, as dificuldades e desafios de se inserir essa tecnologia para ensinar o inglês como língua estrangeira a adolescentes, em uma escola pública, no Brasil. Em sua introdução aos componentes da habilidade comunicativa da linguagem, Hedge (2000) aponta que a competência linguística envolve conhecimentos de ortografia, pronúncia, vocabulário, formação de palavras, estrutura gramatical, estrutura de frase e semântica linguística. O objetivo principal é refletir sobre o uso desta tecnologia e revisar a literatura existente sobre o seu uso para o ensino de inglês e sobre as habilidades de ensino de *listening* e *speaking*. Uma análise de como a tecnologia do English File pode trazer desafios e benefícios para o ensino de *listening* e *speaking* no ensino do inglês como língua estrangeira para adolescentes de uma escola pública de Caxias do Sul e refletir sobre as condições de aprendizagem com base no tipo de tecnologia que as escolas oferecem a seus alunos e professores. Este artigo foi concebido em meio à pandemia COVID-19 e, um ano depois, o mundo, infelizmente, ainda continua experienciando essa terrível situação. Por esse motivo, à medida que as aulas continuam online nas escolas públicas, usando esse modelo com a maioria dos alunos, foi possível obter algumas melhorias e também soluções para as condições encontradas em uma escola pública de Caxias do Sul, RS, Brasil, para que esta tecnologia possa ser inserida no ensino da língua inglesa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: inglês; tecnologia; escola pública; *listening*; *speaking*; habilidades.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This project was conceived during my time working for a public school in Caxias do Sul. As an English teacher for high school students, I introduced English File iTutor in the lessons. It was my experience of working with the iTutor that has driven this research. At least twice a month we were allowed to have the lessons in the IT room, in the school. Students, then, had to move to the IT room in between classes and this was not an easy task considering the large number of students per group and the logistics involved. But most of them enjoyed it and I could really see that they were actually learning something in English. English file iTutor can be used in a notebook connected to a TV screen, the screen is enlarged and everybody could see it. With a balance of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and skills development in every file, teacher and students have access to all those resources in one device - video, audio - getting students talking. It provides and improves students' speaking and listening skills and motivates them to be connected full time during lessons. They also learn grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice in every lesson, having a solid foundation, in a way most of them had never learned before at least in a public school, in Caxias do Sul.

It is in this new scenario that we can think more accurately about inserting new technologies into the English teaching classroom in public schools. Whether it is a lack of interest or a lack of knowledge, it is a pity it has not been provided at public schools in Brazil, since then. It may bring challenges, of course, but the social distancing imposed by the pandemic has given us the certainty that it is possible to do it. And BNCC is opening this door to us, when it contemplates the possibility of focusing in oral communication and not only in reading and writing anymore.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

What challenges and benefits using ENGLISH FILE technology could bring to the teaching of EFL (listening and speaking) for teens in a public school in Caxias do Sul?

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC GOALS

a. Main Objective:

Reflect on the use of technology in a public school for improving listening and speaking skills on EFL teen students.

b. Specific objectives:

- a) Review existing literature on the use of technology for EFL Teaching and on listening and speaking teaching skills.
- b) Analyse how English File technology may bring challenges and benefits for the teaching of EFL listening and speaking for teens in a public school in Caxias do Sul.
- c) Reflect on learning conditions based on the kind of technology schools offer to students and teachers.
- d) Propose possible improvement and solutions for the conditions found in a public school in Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil, so that English File technology may be inserted into EFL teaching.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION

The word *technology* is constantly in our mouths. There is no way out. We cannot think of teaching a foreign language without technology. Fortunately, or unfortunately this paper came in the middle of the corona virus pandemic, in 2020. When the topic and the research problem first came to my mind thinking of my students at a public school in Caxias do Sul, teaching teens, the coronavirus pandemic had not started yet. Even so, it seemed to me that it was of a great importance and urgency that this theme came out.

For decades the use of technology in the classroom has been a reality, but in public schools in Brazil, due to many factors, it has not. For that reason and many others, this paper is going to perpass some issues around the subject.

According to Leffa (1999), in the 19th century, modern languages gained a status similar to the classical languages here in Brazil, in the secondary school curriculum. The methodology to teach the so called alive languages was the same for the dead languages: text translation and grammatical analysis.

As noted by Chagas (apud LEFFA, 1999, p.4), " the primary function of teaching, educating, and training has been removed from school in order to relegate it to the bureaucratic routine of approving and providing diplomas¹⁷". Apparently, since then, teaching English in public schools has maintained the same status instead of prioritizing the language in use as an element of social interaction, because we, teachers, are aware that when speeches are organized in social practices, they become relevant to the actions you want to perform. It is this aspect we want to approach in this paper, which can be of huge relevance to all the teachers that aim to include these social practices into the curriculum and not only continue to teach

structures of grammar and vocabulary.

The paradigm between English having to be curricular and the reality that teaching English should include the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing do not fit into the methods we have been submitted to in a public school. English has to be curricular in a sense that it is inserted into the schools practices to fit into BNCC methodology, seeing the language as a social phenomena, but also to prepare students for life and social interaction.

When we think about that, we have to reflect on the lack of preparation of English teachers as Oliveira (2009, p. 28) states his own views “I consider it safe to say that the vast majority of foreign language teachers in public schools in Brazil speak very little or do not speak the foreign language they teach.”; last but not least, school staff is not aware that the approach and the issues involved in teaching a foreign language are totally distinct from any other discipline. In general, as they don’t understand the way EFL is supposed to be taught and learnt, they treat it like any other subject which is taught in Portuguese, but we know this is not true. Another fact that is intrinsically worrying is that students only have one hour of English per week, in unequal classes. Also, the poor technology we encounter in public schools, with no internet access, or even basic resources like TV sets in the classrooms, nor projectors and the fact that to make these resources available when they exist, we teachers have to struggle to bring them to class on time.

1.4 RELEVANCE

According to Alves (apud Orban and Novelli 2019), one of the greatest challenges we have to face in Brazil is the access to technology. If BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular - The Common National Curricular Base) suggests teachers to use authentic material, it is impossible to think about that when some schools do not have an appropriate internet access. She points out that the English language goes well with audio and video technologies and this is one of the challenges we encounter. The BNCC (p. 214) also testifies that speaking involves language practices with a focus on understanding (or listening) and oral production (or speech) and the understanding that for pedagogical work:

Different verbal-visual media resources e.g. cinema, internet, television, constitute authentic and significant inputs, essential for the establishment of oral use /interaction practices in the classroom and exploration of fields in which such practices can be worked. In these practices, which articulate different aspects of languages for in addition to verbal (such as visual, audible, gestural and tactile), students will have opportunities to experience and reflect on oral /oralized from the English language.

After a while of practise in a public school, it is possible for me to say that this discussion also corroborates that the use of technology when teaching teens, even if restricted can lead us to meet the purpose we have always had in mind when thinking about public schools: to get students really active on the learning of a foreign language, more specifically English, getting them talking, reading, listening and writing at the same time with interactive exercises games and material available all-in-one device.

Investing more in solutions that allow us teachers to better perform in the classroom and let our creativity reach the goals to cover all areas of the curriculum., and as Leffa (1999) says “we teachers are more important than the machine and to use the machine efficiently we have to be what the machines are not: creative and committed to education”. English as a Foreign Language can and must be taught at schools as it is currently been taught in courses and one-to-one classes.

With a good coursebook preferably one that the teacher could choose and following BNCC with access to technology it is completely possible to put into practise what we have been fighting for during a long period up to now. Our students deserve to learn and to understand why English is so important to be a respected discipline.

Every single student deserves to understand that English as a Foreign language can and should be taught at schools as it is in regular courses, why not? We are totally able to break the paradigm and go for it. Technology in EFL speaks for itself when the BNCC is saying that it is necessary to teach English in order to favour learning as a social practise and not only from a list of grammar contents. This can become a major accomplishment with simple actions and good material, to promote the change we have always wanted to accomplish in public schools: make our students succeed and become global citizens.

Using English File iTutor - a CD-Rom containing interactive material and activities with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading and listening - in my classes have been proved effective and allowed me to optimize the poor amount of time I have with the groups of teens in one period.

The iTutor can be assessed with a TV set and a computer and contains lessons and activities which provide all the necessary language, skills practise, motivation and opportunity for students to talk, listen, read and write with confidence and produce more in less time. It keeps them busy all the time and allows the teachers to accomplish all the tasks they are supposed to complete during a one-hour class. Also, students can learn in the classroom or when they are at home with the online extra practises the coursebook provides. Teachers, students and the whole school community has a lot to gain.

According to Warschauer (apud MCDOUGAL, 2005, p. 8), computers have several different kinds of uses to language teaching. We can use it to repeat, drilling activities, use it as a starting point to make students interactive discussions, for writing, researching, all in one device. He continues saying that teachers can access authentic information, which is something we all have been longing for in language lessons for many years. Warschauer (2000) brings two different views about how to integrate technology into the class. First, in the cognitive approach, learners get the opportunity to increase their exposure to language meaningfully and make their own knowledge. Second, in the social approach, learners must be given opportunities for authentic social interactions to practice real life skills. This objective can be obtained through the collaboration of learners in real activities.

As the coronavirus pandemic sweeps from country to country and besides all the terrible things it has brought to the world, we cannot deny the fact that it has enhanced the use of technologies for most of us, even the ones who did not excel at using them.

In the beginning of this paper, prior to the pandemic, I already had this project in mind and having used this device in many of my classes I understand that it is urgent to consider using technologies in public schools when teaching English as a foreign language, even knowing most schools do not give much choice for teachers and the resources are vulnerable - we are in the 21st century, already.

The use of technological devices as proposed in this study has been going on for a long time in many other places and schools and give our students the opportunity to learn English in a more effective way. Also, teachers can take most advantage of it, being trained for this process and engaging all the abilities one should have to learn a foreign language. The scholarcommunity will also benefit because many parents cannot afford to give their kids a proper course or formation in English outside the classroom. It will be a great opportunity to all of us to think out of the box and improve our practice even if sometimes they are painful and not recognized. The learning outcomes will be favourable and they will be sweet and we will certainly be reaping the fruits of all this hard work in a near future.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology based on a review of literature and analysis covered basically by the the conceptual framework proposed by the authors presented on this paper.

According to Gil (2002, p. 44),

The bibliographical research is developed based on material already prepared, consisting mainly of books and scientific articles. Although almost all the studies require some type of work of this nature, there are researches developed exclusively from bibliographical sources. Much of the exploratory studies surveys can be defined as bibliographical researches.

Gil (2002) writes that the books are, par excellence, bibliographical sources and they can be either for reading or for a reference. Many books were used to complete the bibliographical references for this paper as well as online dictionaries, online magazines, periodics and literary masterpieces. The author observes that the main periodical publications are newspapers and magazines. Especially last year and this current year, the Internet has shown its strong contribution to the access of most recent studies and bibliographical material. This kind of research brings information on a variety of aspects. With the online access it was possible to get help on the vast amount of published updated researches of distinguished and technical authors of our times, concerning EFL studies. This paper uses Internet research as a base to promote and to bring these authors' works and investigate their credibility and how to access to their work. For Gil (2002, p. 45) the main advantage of bibliographic research lies in the fact that "it allows the investigator to cover a much broader range of phenomena than he could on a direct research." The literature on TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) has highlighted several perspectives on how the inclusion of listening and speaking abilities to the public school classroom can make it easier to promote English classes in public environments. Some authors presented on this paper highlight the importance of using technology in English classes, but also hold the view of the challenges to the access to technology.

2. THE SCENARIO OF EFL IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN BRAZIL

Teaching English as a foreign language in public schools in Brazil has always been a cause for many interpretations and opinions. As public schools in Brazil have not yet reached the parameters that we, English teachers believe to be the most perfect and necessary to be able to approach the way that English has been taught in private courses, it is natural that we target our efforts at investigating how we could make it happen and effectively make students achieve a degree of proficiency in English. Almeida (2016) calls the “lack-of-it all” scenario of the public school, the poor hours teachers have to try to do a god job while in public schools, classes with more than 40 students who are, in general, not motivated and not separated by proficiency levels, and the complete absence or little technological resources.

A broader perspective has been adopted by Freitas and Sarmiento (2009), who argues that some situations occur when specially in public schools many students often feel marginalized because they have to work to help their families, some of the young women got pregnant or because many of them were not able to reach the minimum knowledge required by the schools, repeating the same year many times and sometimes give up studying, we have students with multiple disabilities and we have to understand how to deal with them and how to include them in our classroom and in the listening and speaking activities. These students have to be considered and when it comes to learn a foreign language, some of those aspects have a huge influence. As teachers we must recognize those situations and value their previous knowledge helping them develop critical thinking and understand that they have been agents for constant social change. It is part of our role as English teachers to optimise the image of this language to our students and to promote critical discussion within the lessons so that could open new ways of showing them in which ways the English language could help them in their lives, in their social environment.

2.1 PEDAGOGY AND THE CRITICAL APPROACHES TO TEACH ENGLISH

In 1999, Pennycook published an article in which he pointed to many aspects involving pedagogy and the critical approaches to teaching English as a foreign language and he claims that “unfortunately the requirements for inclusion inevitably tilt things away from accounts of what ordinary teachers are doing in ordinary classrooms around the world.” As English in schools according to BNCC has to be a premise for students to understand, recognize and respect different cultures, we cannot set this issue apart when we analyze our teaching here in

Brazil. Still according to Pennycook (1999), one the first prominent element of critical work in TESOL to be taken into consideration is to try to locate aspects of teaching English as a foreign or second language within a critical view of social and political relations. As students start to learn a foreign language and get in touch with other cultures, they start to realize about their own condition and start thinking critically. Perhaps in no discipline it is as easy to exclude the student as in the case of a foreign language. There are several different mechanisms to do this, from ideological hints, lack of patriotism, self-exclusion, instilled in the student's mind by the society. The way to overcome it is for the teachers to be aware of the mechanisms that society creates for exclusion and they, together with the students, to strengthen this desire for inclusion and work for that desire.

This view is supported by Prescher et. al (2019) who writes

The teaching of a foreign language assumes a social role when it favors inclusion of the individual - with his knowledge and world view - in the society; in the social group with which he communicates, while they dialogue. The instrument that provides this insertion is language, through the construction of meanings and identities, transmission of values, beliefs and culture.

2.2 CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Much of the current literature on inclusion and critical thinking pays particular attention to Freire (1998), which is the founder of Critical Pedagogy, who insists that issues of social justice and democracy are not distinct from acts of teaching and learning. Warschauer (2002) postulates that the progress of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is not a new idea, in a sense that Freire and Macedo (1987) had already expressed the same perspective, observing that literacy is not only about "reading the word," but also about "reading the world" - and not only about reading the world, but also writing it and rewriting it. But today, new forms of information and communication technologies provide a powerful new means of achieving them.

2.3 EMANCIPATORY PEDAGOGY

An emancipatory pedagogy, on the other hand, understands that the school must produce its own curriculum in a way that organizes knowledge and learning considering the social environment. The arguments in favor of BNCC outline the idea that a standard curriculum could solve equity problems. Absolutely pertinent when we consider that social inequalities are associated with school inequalities. Thus, people from less favored classes have poor school

performance. A national curriculum structured around universal themes will ensure that students learn the same content, that is, that they would be guaranteed the same rights to learning. With a common base, future teachers could be better prepared for teaching practice and for school content that would be previously defined. In the same line, there are, of course, some points of view contrary to the BNCC as referred by Ribas (2018), which point out to the lack of respect for diversity and local knowledge of learners, and also to the end of teaching autonomy. The standardization of content to be worked on by teachers could end up indicating to students that there are correct and legitimate ways of thinking and expressing themselves and these ways lead to an elitist culture, and it would cause an effect leading to more exclusion and marginalization. According to her, “the existing differences in the country would then be reinforced”(RIBAS, 2018, p. 3).

Nevertheless, it is important that we try to find a favourable environment in public schools to reach up to all those obstacles and difficulties that may arise. Brown (2007) says that even with many distractions teenagers are going through at this age, the attention can be shortened. Similarly, Puchta (2013) asserts that when a topic is interesting to students, they memorize it in a better way. They are involved by the topic and their motivation goes higher. As a result, the language presented will stick to their memory more easily. It is urged that we adapt the public schools’ reality to those in papers like BNCC and others, in order to get them work together to obtain a more efficient way to understand and adapt these theories to the public school reality specially concerning TEFL.

3 A VIEW FROM THE PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVE

The world has been going through difficult times this year, we cannot deny, but in times of crisis, we can see the worst but also the best in some opportunities that arouse from the pandemic. One big positive of this global village we live in is that for the educational area we encounter a scenario of breaking paradigms. It is relevant and pertinent to think that maybe, for the classroom space in public schools, the scenario of chaos has opened many doors, because the resources before it started were not enough or probably not recognized by many in the school community. Technology is gaining space in the classroom, even for those who never believed or accepted that. Platforms like Google Classroom are here to stay and are now part of the students' and teachers' lives not only in private schools, but also in public schools and the expertise that our teenagers have to quickly adapt to such platforms, the way they dominate them with mastery as they do with their mobiles and notebooks is remarkable.

3.1 SOCIAL DISTANCING AND THE ASPECTS OF USING TECHNOLOGY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

With the social distancing we have discovered other important aspects of the use of the technology with teenagers. There is no logistics to be considered, they can study from wherever they are. It can be at home, on the move or elsewhere. Also, with the pandemic and social distancing, as schools have been closed and many students do not have access to wi-fi or notebooks and mobiles, the government is managing to provide wi-fi for teachers and students and also chrome books and mobiles – of course we know that this could take time, but at least they are rethinking the former scenario. This is a real new insight over the technology that before the coronavirus pandemic was not considered. For those schools and government policies that ignored this kind of technology and looked at it as a burden or impossible, it is now the time to adapt to it and engage to find alternatives and solutions. Inevitably, we cannot avoid observing from up close the great importance that the role of the technological expansion has in the evolution of our society.

3.2 THE BENEFITS OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL EXPANSION AND THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

According to Gáspari and Schwarts (2002, p. 261): “Among some benefits resulting from technological expansion and automation, are the dissolution of borders, the shortening of

distances, the approximation between peoples and cultures and the increasing of time in the excess time granted to men”. From this perspective, we can observe a wide range of existing devices such as the tablets, cellphones and state-of-the-art computers.

Everything is possible when it comes to communication. Barriers no longer exist in this context. Our feelings and emotions may be registered, shared and seen by millions. It is possible that we develop our intellect in an unusual way and that occurs because of the various stimulus students receive everyday through messages, feelings, coming from so many different places.

Gardner (apud GÁSPARI and SCHWARTS, 2002, p. 264), testifies: “the multi human faculties are independent in significant degrees [...]”. And he continues: “[...] the individuals can differ on the private profile of the intelligence which they are born, and certainly they differ on the profile which they end up developing”.

From the studies of LeDoux (apud GOLEMAN, 1995, p.29-30), however, we find a new model that invite us to reconcile the rational mind with the emotional. Such reconciliation depends on our awareness of the rational use of our emotions. Setting out the great importance the emotional has in our learning and the students’ ability to use technologies and trying to keep the balance between both may be the secret for a better quality of life and more important, to enhance our capacity to learn a foreign language. The research about the developed studies on emotional intelligence reveals surprising facts about our *emotion* and the domain that it has in our brain and in our life.

Puchta (2005) points out that understanding how the brain works when our students are learning (or forgetting) is crucial to our success as teachers. Some of the recent findings from neurobiology can lead us to fascinating insights and more efficient teaching. And teaching with the brain in mind can help develop students’ cognitive skills at the same time.

3.2.1 THE ROLE OF THE EMPATHY TO ENHANCE LEARNING

Goleman (1995) outlined the preliminary evidence suggesting that Emotional Intelligence was the active ingredient in programs that enhance learning while preventing problems such as violence. Now the case can be made scientifically: helping students improve their self-awareness and confidence, manage their disturbing emotions and impulses, and increase their *empathy* pays off not just in improved behavior but in measurable academic achievement. He also testifies some actions schools and faculties have been experiencing when using the emotional intelligence based on *empathy*, for example, learning standards in Emotional Intelligence abilities have been established for every grade from kindergarten

through the last year of high school.

Another example of a remarkably detailed and comprehensive curriculum, in the early elementary years students should learn to recognize and accurately label their emotions and how they lead them to act. By the late elementary years lessons in *empathy* should make children able to identify the nonverbal clues to how someone else feels; in junior high they should be able to analyze what creates stress for them or what motivates their best performance. And in high school the SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) skills include listening and talking in ways that resolve conflicts instead of escalating them and negotiating for win-win solutions.

The benefits are countless in terms of academic accomplishment, such as: achievement test results and grade-point averages; a great percentage of students showed improved achievement scores and up to 38 percent improved their grade-point averages; schools were found safer: incidents of misbehavior dropped by an average of 28 percent; suspensions by 44 percent; and other disciplinary actions by 27 percent. At the same time, attendance rates rose, while 63 percent of students demonstrated significantly more positive behavior. In the world of social science research, these remarkable results for any program promoting behavioral change, SEL had delivered on its promise.

3.2.1.1 USING *EMPATHY* TO PROMOTE SPEAKING IN THE CLASSROOM

When we think about teaching and learning a foreign language we cannot forget the oral communication. It is part of the interaction and this is what we really want our students to master. Andreia Alves, a teacher and consultant at MEC (Ministry of Education), in a study called *Public Policies for Teaching English (2019)*, highlights that we all want a foreign language to interact with other people and that the language is human, so “when we include speaking when teaching English in public schools, you connect the language to its use”. Although speaking is one of the least improved abilities in a public school, students deserve to access it from its usage, to learn how to communicate in English as they do in their mother tongue. It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is the English teacher’s profile and Schmitz (2009) holds the view that the teacher should use English to introduce the language little by little in the classroom giving the students a chance to experiment and develop their hearing and speaking comprehension. He understands that the four abilities should not come isolated, but altogether. Teachers can make use of the English they have to get students tuned and used to hear the language and to produce it, as well. Here, once more, we can see the use of *empathy* working side by side with the learning of a language. If we use *empathy* and think: *What would*

I want my English teacher to do in class?, of course, one of the first things that come to our mind is that he/she uses English to communicate. The author continues arguing that this is what distinguishes an English teacher from teachers of other disciplines: our condition to be bilingual, so that we can easily travel between the two cultures, our mother tongue and the foreign language. It is extremely important for an English teacher to recognize the importance of using this ability to recognize the potentials we teachers and our students have regarding the language we are teaching and all the possibilities it implies. Empathy is one of the abilities that propagates in in our self- emotional conscience and it is our indispensable “personal aptitude”. It produces selflessness, love of neighbor. The ones who use this ability are in tune with what the other wants and needs. In the fields of assistance, teaching, sales, those who make use of it, stand out. In this century one of the abilities that is less noticed in humans is this: the ability to put oneself into others shoes, to notice their needs, their desires, to be able to understand their reactions and to be able to respect them. While humans have been leading a more and more chaotic life style, the power that the emotion has to transform this sad reality is essential. We understand that there is an urgency in reverting this scenario of emotionally unprepared people in the school and academic fields. It is possible to change it by expanding the conscientiousness of the influence our emotions can have on the learning process.

4 USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM TO TEACH ENGLISH

Harmer (1998) claims that one of our duties as teachers is to incite student's willingness to learn even when they are not into what is being taught. For that reason, we might think that using some technological device which is new for students in a public school will initially instigate them to get to know this new technology and become interested in using it. Another great achievement of using it - of course, again, we have to consider that in most public schools would be the amount of time we save due to the short time we have for each lesson with each group.

Harmer (1998, p. 8) argues that "teachers are not, however, ultimately responsible for their students' motivation. They can only encourage by word and deed. Real motivation comes from within each individual." Having his words in mind, we are aware that some students will succeed while others will not. But even with the ones that do not reach the parameters that we find correct to achieve a great deal of knowledge in English, with this innovative way of teaching English they will probably get the most out of it, better than just copying sentences from the board and responding random grammar exercises.

4.1 DIGITAL NATIVE YOUNGSTERS AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

Pescador (2010), in her study about learning actions employed by digital native youngsters on their interaction with hypermediatic environments, which have English as the language used for communication amongst all users, invites us to reflect on the importance of going deeper on those studies - of how teenagers learn and how they use the technologies when they are not at school so that we could bring them to our classrooms to enhance the learning process. It is in this aspect that we have to focus when we look at teens learning a foreign language. All their actions and moves into the technology they use are linked to the learning process. Those aspects lead us to believe that inserting a bit of technology into our classrooms in a public school when teaching teens a foreign language is the best way to provide a communicative and efficient alternative to put down quotes like "English at school sucks." or even "English at school is only the verb to be." or even "Students don't learn English in schools". And more than this: to finally "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar". It is time for a change and this change urges to be now. This technology is smart and it speaks for itself: linking the four abilities in a motivational and quick way.

We have a long way to go, but this is just a taste of the beginning of a new journey in English education in public schools. "As in 2020 TEFL is mandatory in basic education in

Brazil, it leads the country to recognize that if we want to reach a worldwide economic status being able to negotiate in English, having more and more people capable to to perform actions through the English language is essential and not only a luxury” (DOWLE, 2019, p. 7).

5 THE LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS INTEGRATED IN THE CLASSROOM

There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of integrating listening and speaking skills when teaching English and Brown (2007) reminds us that when we look from the perspective of the language classroom, these skills are closely connected to each other and the interaction between them applies especially to conversation. For him, the integration of the four skills is of great importance, though. This is what we aim when we teach EFL, and it is important to point out that even when we do not actually “teach” listening or speaking, students are listening and speaking from us, teachers and from the audios they are exposed to during the lessons, as well as in all the internet sources they are daily dealing with, as podcasts, blogs, music, videos and much more. And they are also listening something from their colleagues, even if sometimes not correctly but many students know the language and verbalize it while learning English in class. So when Brown (2007) says that integrating skills are important to authenticity and reinforcement we realize that even if the four abilities are produced and sustained in the classroom, while practising English, listening and speaking to produce dialogues and understand our peers are still the less practised in public schools. That is the goal to be reached: approximate English learned at public school to that learned at private courses, with a new methodology, using technology and managing the time, because time is what we do not have during a one hour class.

The importance of listening in language learning cannot be underestimated, according to Brown (2007). He reinforces that students in the classroom practise more listening activities, than speaking. “Listening comprehension has not always drawn the attention of educators to the extent that it now has.” (BROWN, 2007, p. 299). In the same line, according to Harmer (1998, p. 97), “One of the main reasons to getting students to listen to spoken English is to let them hear different varieties and accents, rather than the voice of their teacher with its own idiosyncrasies”. Also, Richards (2008), highlights the important place listening and speaking skills have in language programs and observes that because of the role of English as an international language, these skills have gained visibility and according to him, it is time to review the practices regarding these so important skills. In the same line, Cook (2003) observes that English is a lingua franca as it is taught as the main foreign language in nearly every country and also it is the dominant language on the internet. A broader perspective by Richards (2008, p. 1) argues that “In recent years, listening has also been examined in relation not only to comprehension but also to language learning. Since listening can provide much of the input and data that learners receive in language learning, an important question is: How

can attention to the language the listener hears facilitate second language learning? This raises the issue of the role “noticing” and conscious awareness of language form play, and how “noticing” can be part of the process by which learners can incorporate new word forms and structures into their developing communicative competence.”

6. iTutor ANALYSIS:

By using English File iTutor in class, with just a TV set and a notebook, we can turn grammar lessons into lively and enjoyable lessons for getting students talking. The lessons in the iTutor provide all the necessary language students need to talk with confidence. With this easy-to-manage device, teachers and the students can access all those resources in one. They listen, repeat, and interact with exercises the iTutor provides. The videos offer students the opportunity to watch and listen to a clear model of the English sounds in a way they play with the sounds and pictures of a word that contains each sound. They have access to many different accents of English and more importantly, they hear people from all over the world to whom they can identify with their needs and frustrations of maybe not corresponding to the perfect pronunciation they think would be “appropriate” and also when students feel frustrated for not participating in English speaking activities in public schools classrooms (PAIVA, 2007).

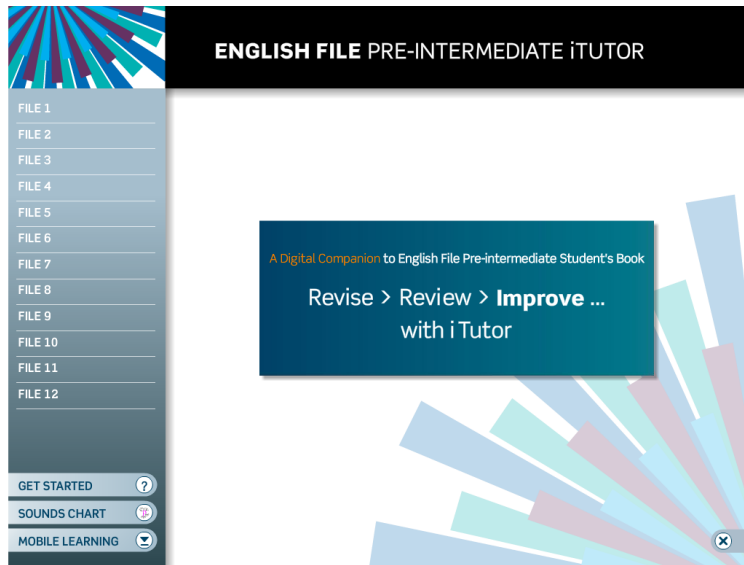
It is worth to mention that the iTutor works as a digital companion to the student’s book and all the other resources the entire syllabus offers, with a variety of material online, as well. Students, of course, have to register written activities in their notebooks in order to prove to parents and also to the maintenance boards that they are really learning something other than just having listening and speaking practises, as a mandatory practise in public schools. As we have previously mentioned, English as a Foreign language has not been recognized yet as having a different approach from any other subject which is taught in schools so that it is necessary to sustain the current practises in public schools to cover all areas of the curriculum.

The engaging videos contained in the iTutor develop communication skills through real-life examples and scenarios, the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation practise in each lesson provide interactive participation of the students and also for pronunciation it brings the sounds of English with the sounds chart and pronunciation games.

To better understand the mechanisms of the iTutor in the classroom and its effects on the learning process, let us analyze this tool inside. What comes next is a demonstration of how this tool is presented, its contents and how we can work with it in our classes. The tool demonstrated in this study is the iTutor of English File Pre-Intermediate.

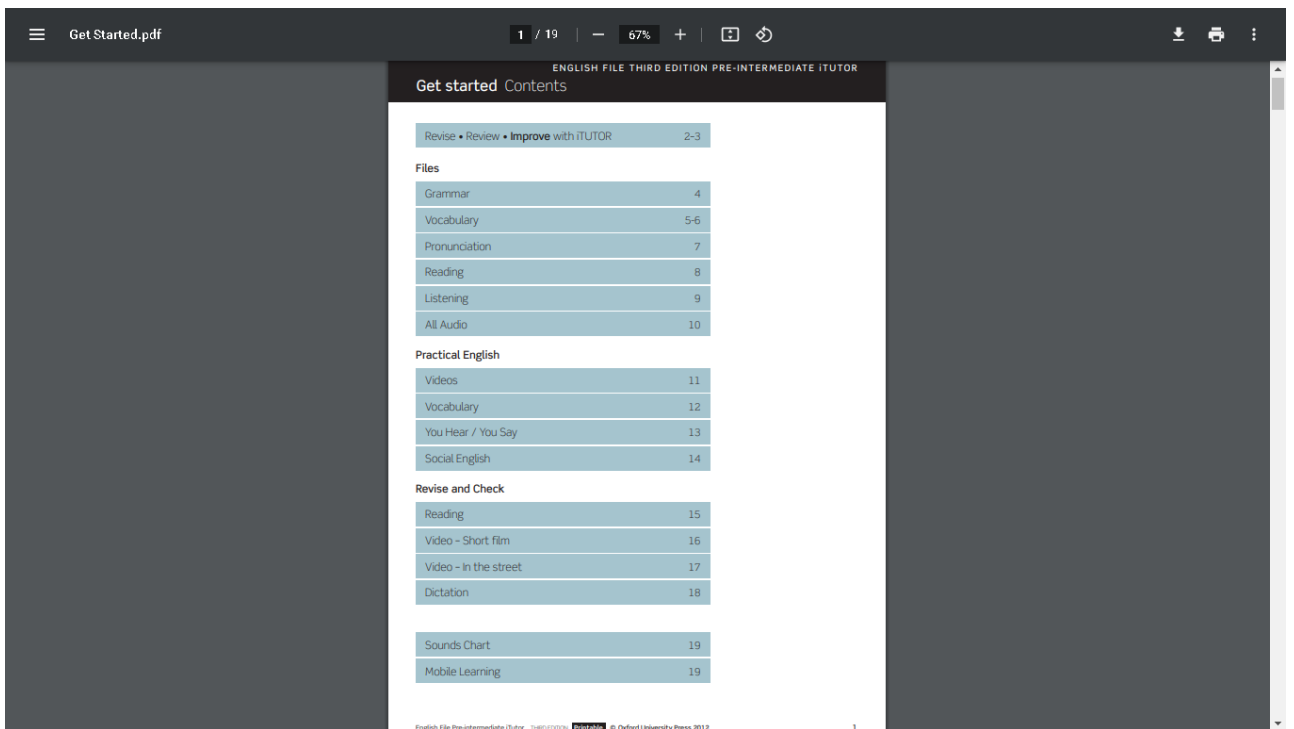
This is the first page of the iTutor when we open it:

Picture 1 - English File Pre-Intermediate iTUTOR.



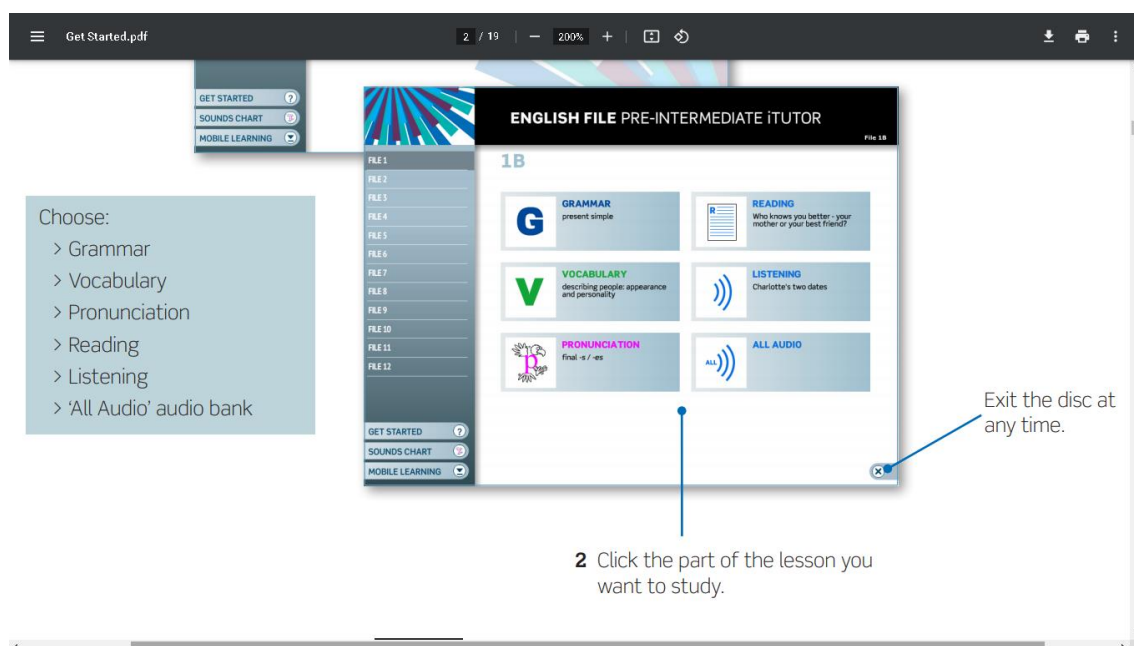
English File Pre-intermediate iTutor THIRD EDITION Printable © Oxford University Press 2012

Picture 2 - Contents.



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Picture 3 - Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Reading, Listening, All Audio Bank.



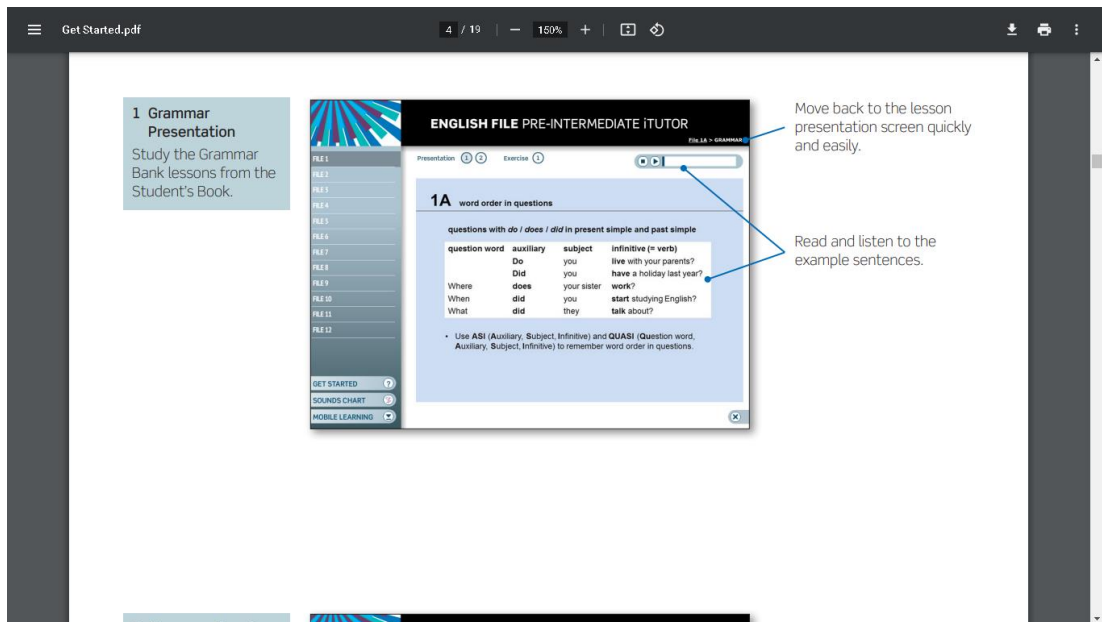
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As described on picture 3, we can choose from Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Reading, Listening and the Speaking part comes naturally and it is the ultimate aim of most students – to be able to communicate in English. All the previous resources emerge into communication. Every exercise is designed to culminate in speaking activities among groups of students inside the classroom and it is the role of the teacher to make it happen efficiently. In every file, students have countless opportunities and reasons to interact with their peers.

Grammar, vocabulary, and Pronunciation

Even if this paper intends to place its focus more on the skills of listening and speaking in a public school classroom when teaching teens, we have to understand that the four abilities must work together. If we want students to speak English with confidence, we need to give them the tools they need. with grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation to get confident speaking, and these three elements, in English File iTutor are given equal importance. In her introduction to the components of communicative language ability, Hedge (2000) points out that linguistic competence involves a knowledge of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, word formation, grammatical structure, sentence structure, and linguistic semantics. This is what the iTutor brings to the classroom.

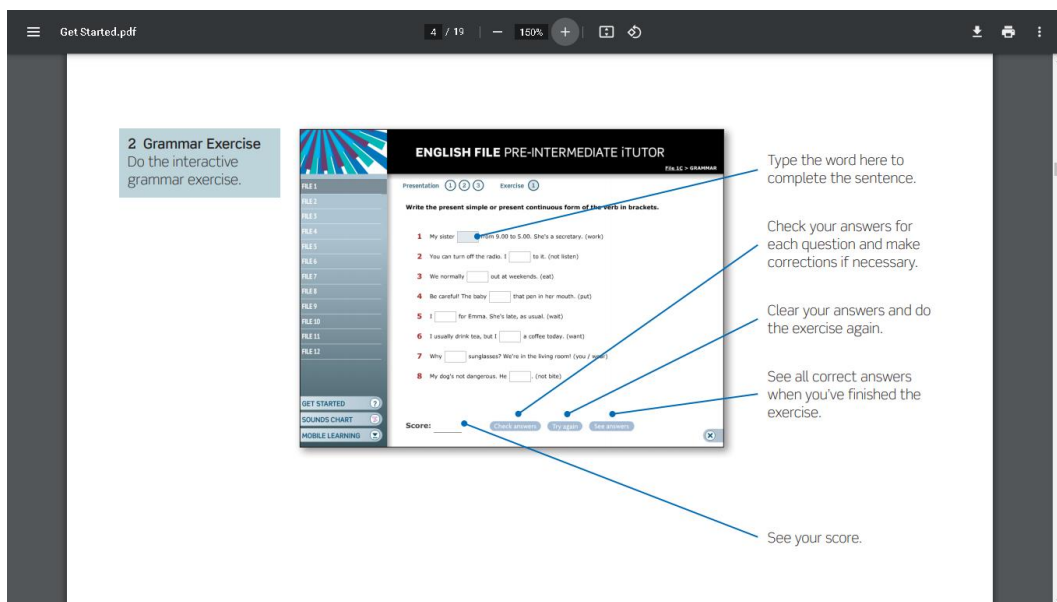
Picture 4 - Grammar Presentation.



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This tool interacts in contexts in which the **grammar** is to engage students using real-life stories and situations, humour, suspense, all integrating within the same context in each file. The **Grammar Banks** give students a single, easy-to-access grammar reference section with clear rules, example sentences and common errors.

Picture 5 - Grammar Exercise.



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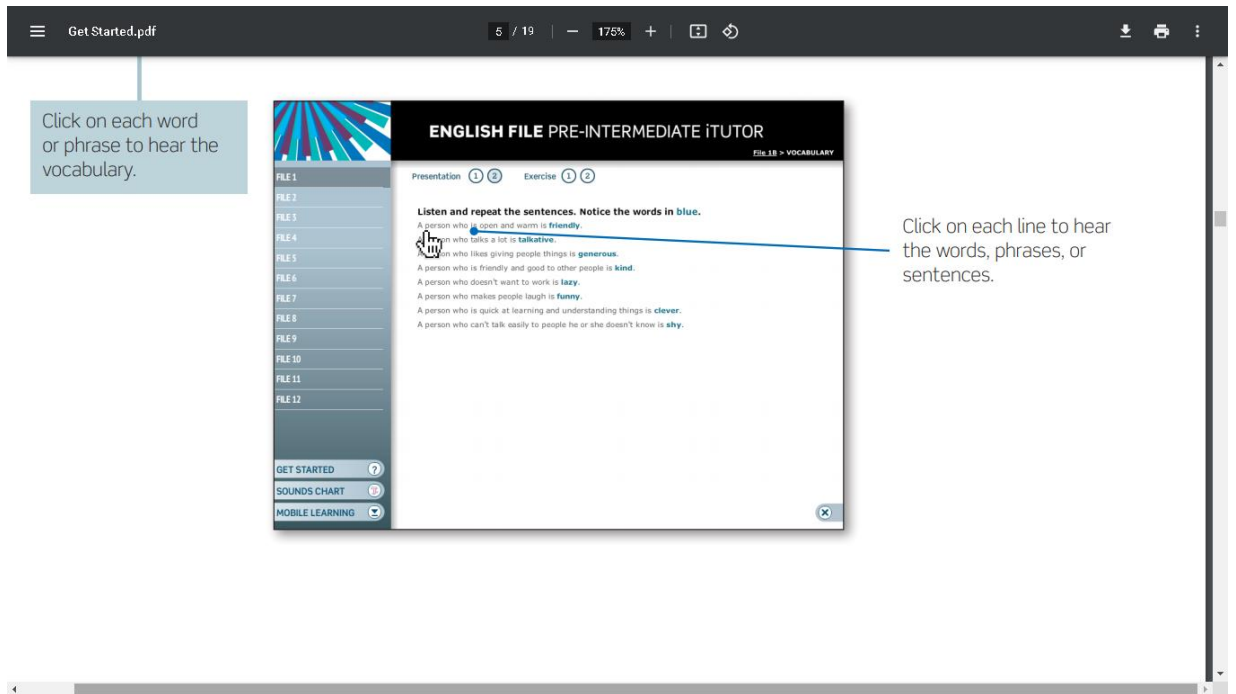
Picture 6 - Vocabulary Presentation.

The screenshot shows a digital interface for 'English File Pre-Intermediate iTutor'. At the top, a dark header contains the text 'Revise • Review • Improve VOCABULARY, Files 1-12'. Below this, a central window displays the 'ENGLISH FILE PRE-INTERMEDIATE iTUTOR' interface. On the left of this window is a vertical menu with items 'RE.1' through 'RE.12', 'GET STARTED', 'SOUNDS CHART', and 'MOBILE LEARNING'. The main area of the window is titled 'Presentation' and 'Exercise' and contains a grid of 12 small illustrations, each with a corresponding phrase: 'get divorced', 'get angry', 'get nervous', 'get fit', 'get married', 'get sick', 'get colder', 'get worse', 'get better', 'get a job', 'get a ticket', 'get a newspaper', 'get on (with) with', 'get on / off a bus', and 'get up'. To the left of the main window, a light blue box titled '1 Vocabulary Presentation' contains the text: 'Look at the pictures, and click to hear the Vocabulary Bank words and phrases.' Two blue arrows point from this box to the 'Presentation' and 'Exercise' tabs in the iTutor interface. Another blue arrow points from the text 'Click on a picture and listen to the word.' to one of the illustrations in the grid. A final blue arrow points from the text 'Go to the next screen of images, or go back to the previous screen.' to the 'Next' and 'Previous' buttons at the bottom of the iTutor window.

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The **vocabulary** section contains high frequency vocabulary and common lexical areas, keeping it realistic. With the Vocabulary Banks students can practice vocabulary and have a clear reference. They can revise and test themselves with the extra exercises they also have in their notebooks and books.

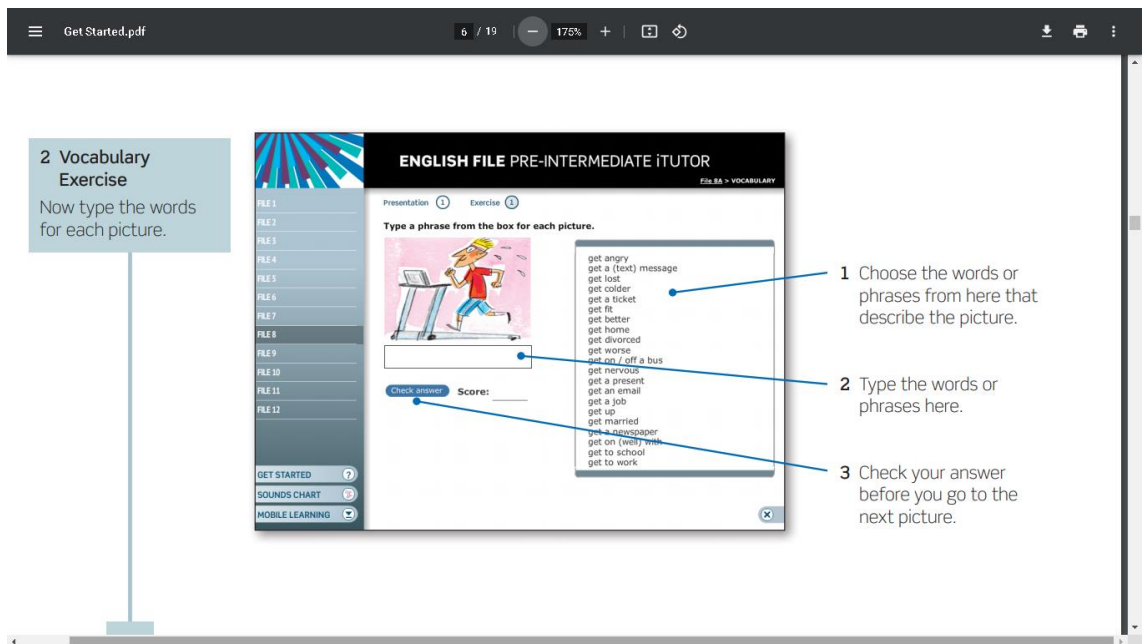
Picture 7 - Vocabulary/phrases Listening and Repeat.



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On the section above, with just a click on each word or phrase, students can listen to the vocabulary/phrases they are learning in each file (unit). They listen to the words or phrases and repeat them.

Picture 8 - Vocabulary Exercise.

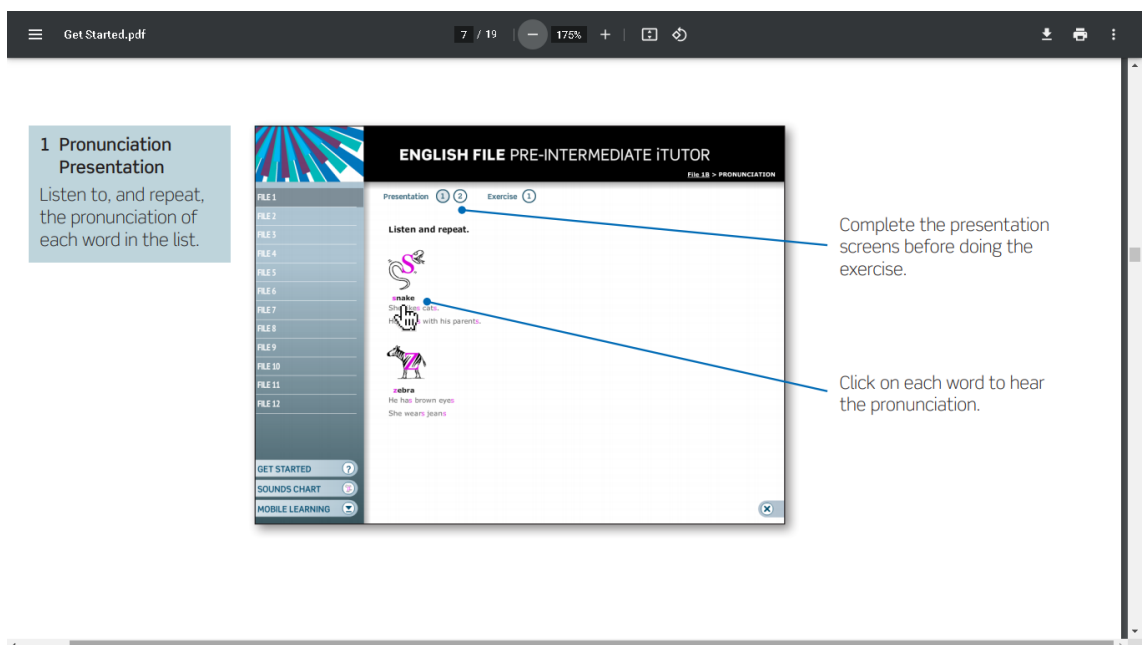


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On picture 7 students can revise the vocabulary pictures they learned and choose the

words or phrases that describe each picture. This exercise can be performed in many different ways considering which learning model is being used at the moment. If the classes are remote, the teacher can give the remote control to each student; if the class is being performed presential, one student call the name and the teacher can type it and check, or one by one, students go to the laptop and type it. There are many different ways of doing those exercises, and considering that students should register the contents on their notebooks, the teacher chooses some exercises she finds priority and make sure all of them will register them on time before each class is over.

Picture 9 - Pronunciation Presentation.



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In the **Pronunciation Presentation, picture 9**, students are introduced to the sounds of English, the phonemic script and practice the pronunciation of all the words from the **Vocabulary Banks**. Learners are often frustrated by English pronunciation, although they want to speak clearly. The sound-spelling relationships are the most feared ones by students who learn English as a foreign language. Also, the silent letters are confusing and the weak forms, as well. In the first two files, the iTutor introduces the 44 vowel and consonant sounds of English through a unique system of sound pictures, which give clear examples words to help students to identify and produce the sounds.

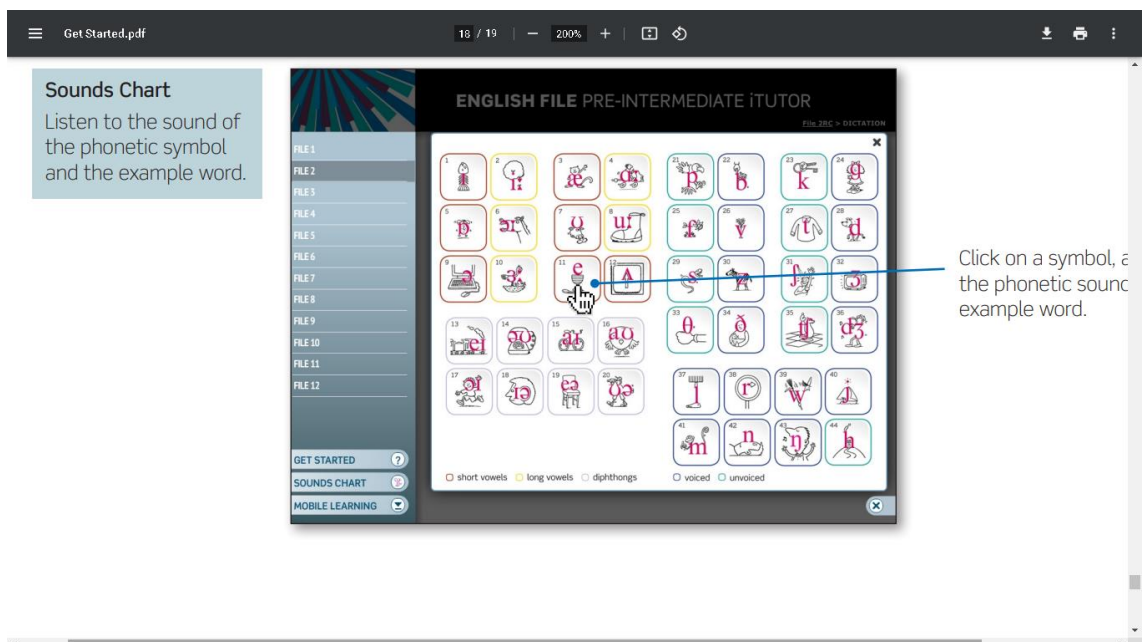
Picture 10 - Listen and Repeat the sounds and the words.



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As we can see on picture 10, students can listen and repeat the sound and the words which contain each sound. The teacher clicks on the picture of the sound and students can repeat them as many times as necessary, considering there are many students and each one of them have their own timing to learn.

Picture 11 - Sounds Chart.

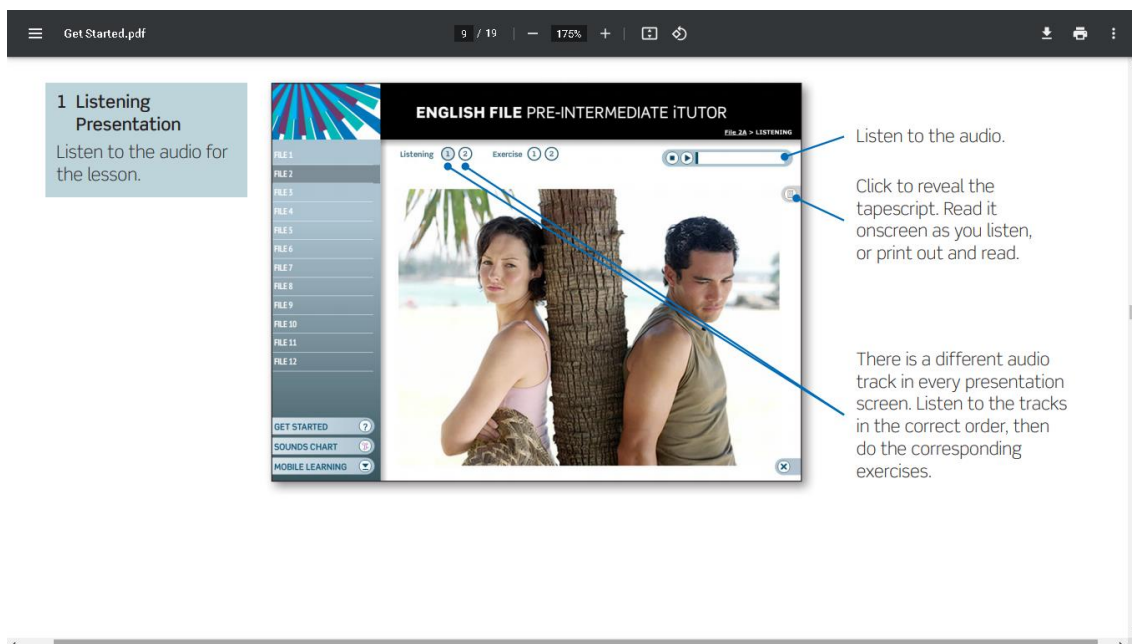


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The Sounds Chart (picture 11) where students can see all the English sounds and practise all the vowel and consonant sounds. You click on any symbol and and hear the

phonetic sound and the example word. Throughout the tool there is also a regular focus on word and sentence stress where students are encouraged to copy the rhythm of English. This will help students to pronounce new language with greater confidence.

Picture 12 - Listening Presentation.



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Students need confidence to understand the gist of what is being said and to make sense of connected speech. One of the hardest skills to master is probably understanding spoken English. At lower levels, for example, this can be demotivating, because students find the speed of the listening material fast and the tasks much difficult. Students need a reason to listen. With the iTutor, students read the texts and listen to them to understand the gist even if they will not understand every word, which is something we do not achieve in our own language at all. According to Vandergrift (2004), and the cognitive processes in listening comprehension, *listening* is probably the least explicit of the four language skills, and that's because it is considered the most difficult skill to learn. Physiological and cognitive processes are involved and at different levels, attention to contextual and “socially coded acoustic clues”. Still according to his studies, the instructions in L2 listening must take into account the complex cognitive processes that underlie the listening construct. The author also calls our attention to the the critical role of both bottom-up and top-down processes in comprehension. Hedge (2008) defines “*Bottom-up processing* consists in using our linguistic knowledge and ability to process acoustic signals, which we first decode into phonemes, then words, phrases, and finally sentences. *Top-down processing* is when the speaker’s meaning is interpreted from expectations based on the context, world knowledge

(topic, genre, culture, and other schema knowledge in long-term memory) to build a conceptual framework for comprehension”. While these processes interact in some form of parallel distributed processing, the degree to which listeners may use one process more than another will depend on the purpose for listening. Vandergrift (2004) highlights that in real-life listening we listen in different ways, and it depends on our purpose for listening. Following this line of thought, the teacher should bear in mind that for every group of students and depending on their progress, each activity should be carefully designed for each lesson.

Picture 13 - Listening Exercise.

The screenshot displays the 'English File Pre-Intermediate iTutor' interface. On the left, a sidebar lists 'FILE 1' through 'FILE 12', with 'FILE 2' selected. Below the sidebar are buttons for 'GET STARTED', 'SOUNDS CHART', and 'MOBILE LEARNING'. The main content area is titled 'ENGLISH FILE PRE-INTERMEDIATE iTUTOR' and 'FILE 2A > LISTENING'. It shows a listening exercise with a play button and a progress bar. Below the audio player, the instruction reads 'Listen to Mia again and choose True or False.' followed by six numbered questions, each with 'True' and 'False' radio button options. At the bottom, there is a 'Score: _____' field and three buttons: 'Check answers', 'Try again', and 'See answers'. Annotations with blue arrows point to various elements: 'Listen to the audio again and answer the questions.' points to the play button; 'Each presentation screen has a corresponding exercise screen.' points to the sidebar; 'Check your answers for each question and make corrections if necessary.' points to the 'Check answers' button; 'Clear your answers and do the exercise again.' points to the 'Try again' button; 'See all correct answers when you've finished the exercise.' points to the 'See answers' button; and 'See your score.' points to the 'Score' field.

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After the listening of the text, interactive exercises are provided (picture 13) and the teacher can choose/call some groups of students to go to the front and click on the correct answer or even ask for volunteers. Students gather in groups, analyse the text they have just read and heard and read the exercises together. The teacher allows some minutes to their organization and then one by one they go to the laptop at the front and choose the response they find more appropriate. Students love to participate and when they do they become more attentive, less disruptive and more engaged. Then one student can go and click on SEE ANSWERS and check if they did a good job. There are many possibilities to work with all the facilities this tool brings to the classroom. It is up to the teacher to find the best way to perform them and to organize each group of students.

Picture 14 - Practical English Video.

The screenshot shows a digital learning interface. On the left, a sidebar lists 'FILE 1' through 'FILE 12'. The main area is titled 'ENGLISH FILE PRE-INTERMEDIATE iTUTOR' and features a video player. The video shows a street sign for 'W 36 ST' and '5 AV'. Below the video are playback controls including a play/pause button, a progress bar, and a 'SHOW SUBTITLES' button. A text box on the left of the video player contains the text: '1 Practical English Video. Follow the story of Jenny and Rob. Three videos in every Practical English section.' Two blue arrows point from text on the right to the video player: one points to the video frame with the text 'Watch the video with, or without, subtitles.', and the other points to the playback controls with the text 'Use the controls to play, pause, or stop the video.'

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This section called **Practical English** (picture 14) - video lessons of English ‘to survive’ – give students practice in key language for situations such as checking into a hotel, ordering a meal in a restaurant or in a Café, make a reservation and every situation concerned to travelling. These situations come alive in stories lines involving two main characters that students will get to know through the lessons.

Picture 15 - Practical English – *You Hear*.

The screenshot shows the 'English File Pre-Intermediate iTutor' interface. On the left is a sidebar with a file list from FILE 1 to FILE 12, and buttons for 'GET STARTED', 'SOUNDS CHART', and 'MOBILE LEARNING'. The main content area is titled 'ENGLISH FILE PRE-INTERMEDIATE iTUTOR' and 'FILE 13E > YOU HEAR YOU SAY'. It features a 'Watch and complete the 'You Hear' phrases.' section with seven numbered tasks. A video player is embedded in the center, showing a man on a phone. Below the video are playback controls. At the bottom, there is a 'Score:' field and buttons for 'Check answers', 'Try again', and 'See answers'.

1 Practical English
You Hear
Watch and complete
the lines of dialogue.

Watch the video and
complete the 'You Hear'
part of the dialogue.

Use the controls to play,
pause, or stop the video.

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Picture 16 - Practical English – *You Say*.

The screenshot shows the 'English File Pre-Intermediate iTutor' interface for the 'You Say' exercise. The sidebar is the same as in Picture 15. The main content area is titled 'ENGLISH FILE PRE-INTERMEDIATE iTUTOR' and 'FILE 13E > YOU HEAR YOU SAY'. It features a video player showing a man on a phone with the subtitle 'Hello. This is room 313.' below him. Below the video are playback controls and a 'SHOW SUBTITLES' button.

2 Practical English
You Say
Watch and repeat.

Watch the video again,
and repeat the 'You Say'
phrases when you see
them.

Use the controls to play,
pause, or stop the video.

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The *You hear* (picture 15), *You say* (picture 16) features make clear distinction between what students will hear and what they need to understand in each situation they are learning,

e.g., *Are you ready to order?*, and what they need to say, e.g. *I'd like the pasta, please*. The video brings pauses after each phrase for the students to listen and repeat them.

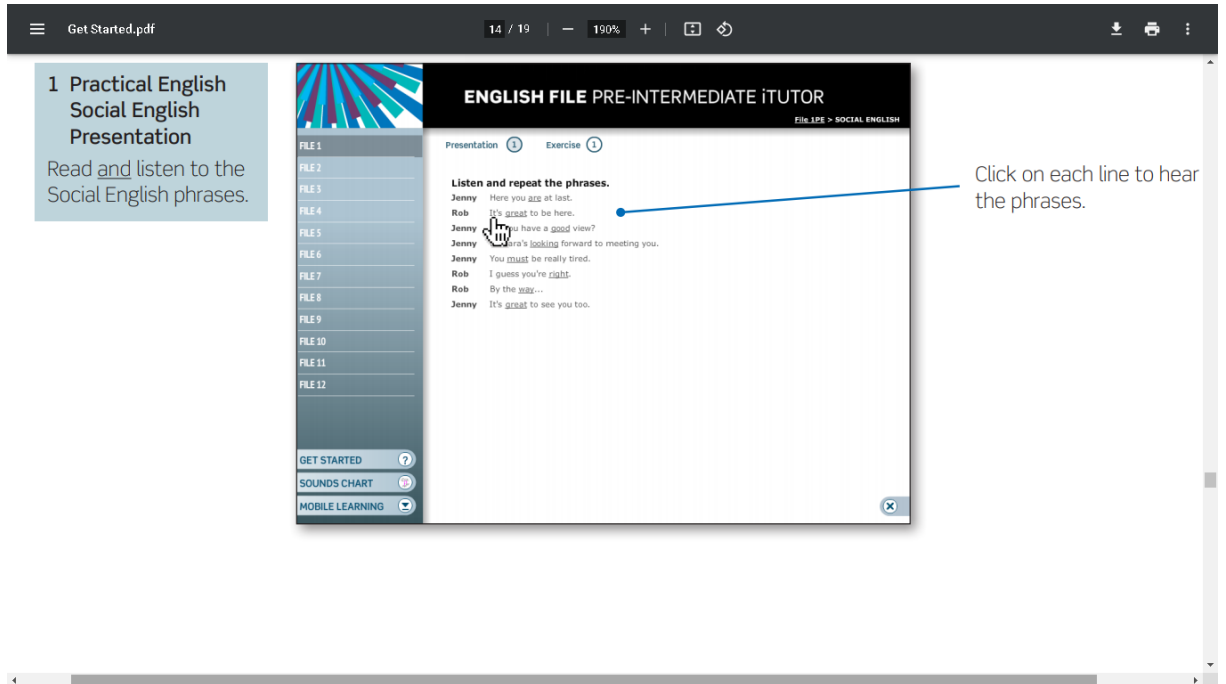
The lessons also highlight other key ‘Social English’ phrases such as *Let’s go*, *OK*, *It doesn’t matter* and many others contained in each dialogue in each of the files of Practical English section. Using the videos with the students will provide a change of focus and give lessons a clear visual context, making the lessons more enjoyable and again, capturing students’ attention to later roleplay the situations. It is fun and it causes movement in the classroom, students love it.

Picture 17 - Practical English Video Exercise.

The screenshot displays the 'English File Pre-Intermediate iTutor' interface. On the left, a sidebar lists 'Practical English Video Exercise' with instructions to 'Do the interactive exercise on each video.' The main content area features a video player and a list of seven multiple-choice questions. Below the questions are three buttons: 'Check answers', 'Clear', and 'Get answers'. On the right side of the interface, there are five blue callout lines with text boxes providing instructions: 'Watch the video again.', 'Click on the correct answer.', 'See all correct answers when you've finished the exercise.', 'Clear your answers and do the exercise again.', and 'Check your answers for each question and make corrections if necessary.' At the bottom of the page, the footer reads 'English File Pre-intermediate iTutor THIRD EDITION Printable © Oxford University Press 2012' and the page number '11'.

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Picture 18 - Practical English – Social English Presentation.



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After watching the videos, students have exercises (picture 17) to a better comprehension of the entire context and they copy them on their notebooks and do them and later they organize in groups and according to the time left of every lesson, they can, again, go to the front and answer the exercises on the teacher's laptop and click on CHECK ANSWERS and check with their peers and on their notebooks.

In the Social English Presentation (picture 18), students are provided with the social English phrases used in the video and they listen to each line of the dialogs and repeat them.

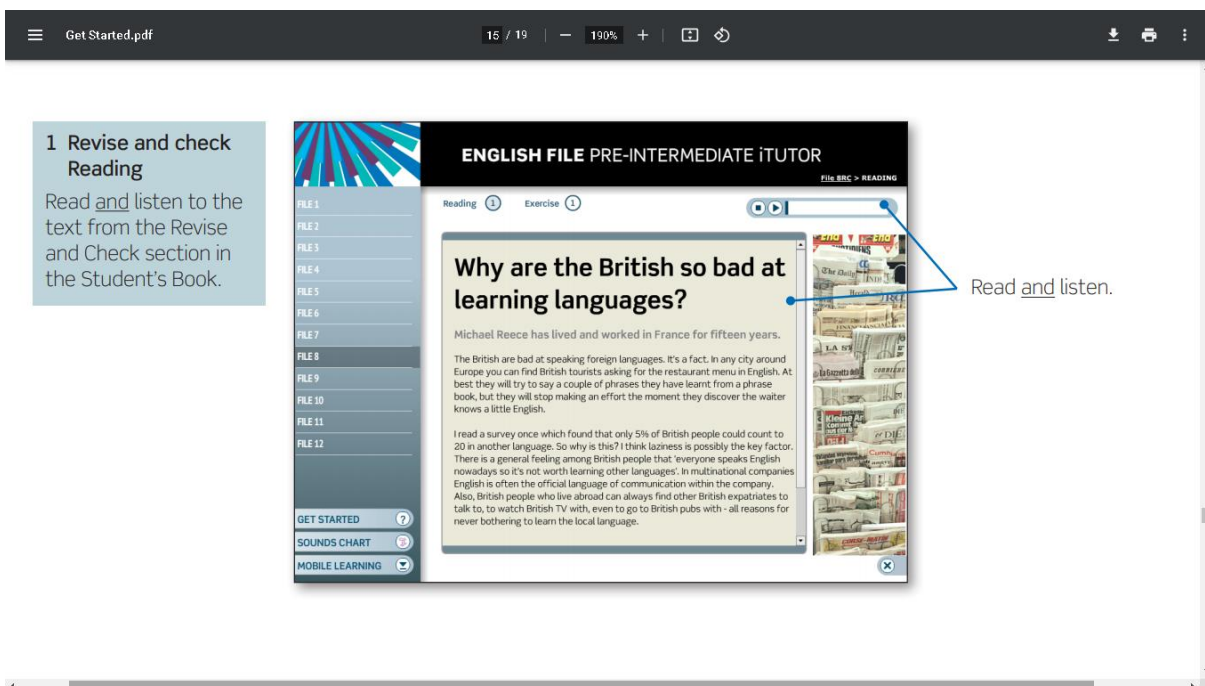
Picture 19 - Revise and Check – Short Film.

The screenshot displays the 'English File Pre-Intermediate iTutor' interface. On the left, a sidebar menu lists 'FILE 1' through 'FILE 12', with 'FILE 12' selected. Below the menu are buttons for 'GET STARTED', 'SOUNDS CHART', and 'MOBILE LEARNING'. The main content area features a video player titled 'ENGLISH FILE PRE-INTERMEDIATE iTUTOR' with a 'File 12RC - VIDEO' label. The video shows two skydivers against a blue sky with clouds. Subtitles at the bottom of the video frame read: 'Today, visitors to Queenstown can do all kinds of adventure sports. As well as jet boating and bungee jumping they can go sky diving or even parasailing.' The video player includes a play button, a progress bar showing '2:12/4:13', and a 'HIDE SUBTITLES' button. Two blue arrows point from text annotations to the video player: one points to the video frame with the text 'Watch the video with, or without, subtitles.', and the other points to the play button with the text 'Use the controls to play, pause, or stop the video.'

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There is a section called *Revise and Check* every other file. Students need regular review, motivating reference and practice material to have a sense of progress. Although clearly structures or vocabulary are presented, students will usually only assimilate and remember new language if they have the chance to see it and use it several times. Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation are recycled throughout the iTutor. The Short Films on each Revise and Check Section (picture 19) give students the opportunity to watch special short films with or without subtitles, and teachers can pause or stop the videos whenever they find it necessary. First students can watch the whole video, then they listen and watch it again with the subtitles and do the exercises. Every section contains the material presented (videos and reading) and the exercises to check students' understanding.

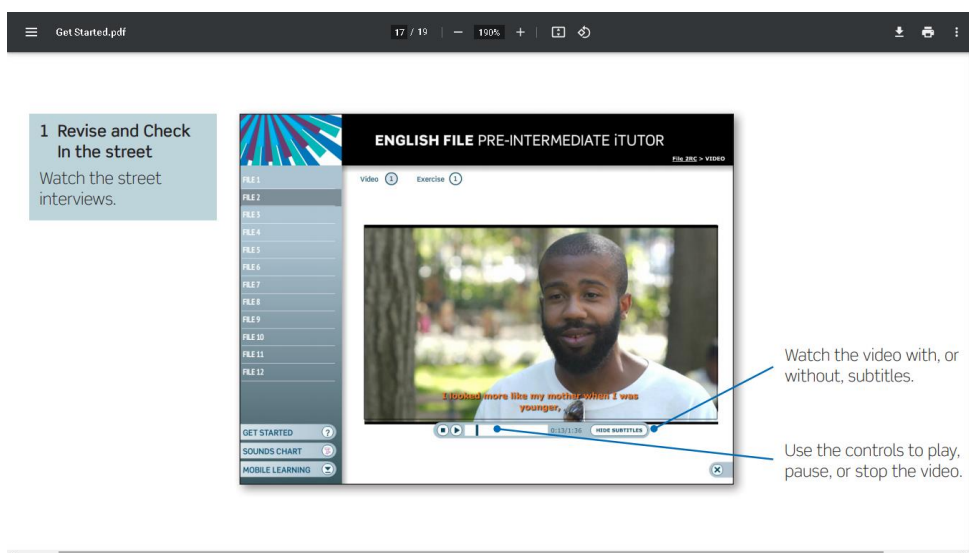
Picture 20 - Revise and Check – Reading.



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In the section *Revise and Check - Reading* (picture 20), students can read and listen to the text at the same time. After they read and listen, they can do the exercises of listening and reading comprehension.

Picture 21 - Revise and Check, In the Street.



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The Revise and Check section also contains a sub-section called *In the Street* (picture 21), which interviews people from different nationalities about the topics students previously learned. Here students can listen to people from other countries with different accents who

speak English as a foreign or second language as they do. Students can identify themselves in the videos and notice that it is possible to speak English keeping our native accent.

Picture 22 - Revise and Check, Dictation.

The screenshot shows the 'English File Pre-Intermediate iTutor' interface. On the left, a sidebar lists 'FILE 1' through 'FILE 12' and buttons for 'GET STARTED', 'SOUNDS CHART', and 'MOBILE LEARNING'. The main area is titled 'ENGLISH FILE PRE-INTERMEDIATE iTUTOR' and 'FILE 28C > DICTATION'. It features an 'Exercise 1' section with the instruction 'Listen and type the sentences.' Below this is an audio player with a play button and a progress bar. The text 'Dear Mum, We're having a great time here in' is displayed in green. Below the text are several lines of dashed lines for typing. At the bottom, there is a 'Give me the word' button and a 'Score: 9/69' display. Annotations with blue arrows point to the audio player, the green text, and the 'Give me the word' button.

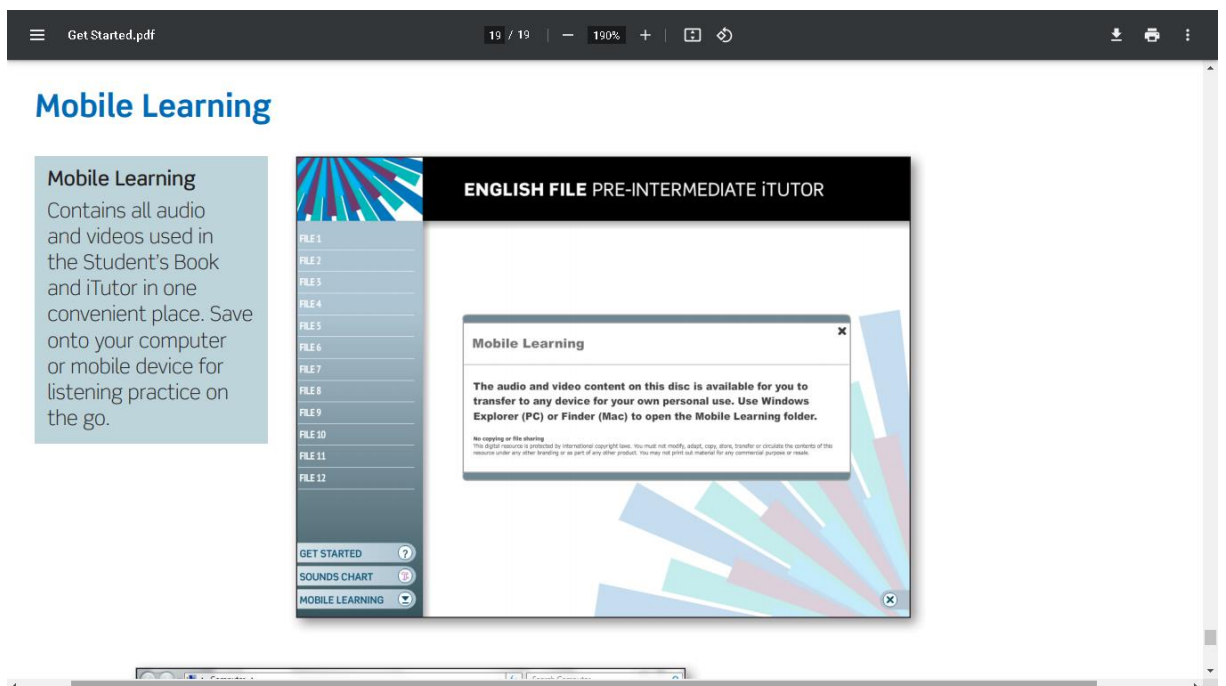
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On Revise and Check – Dictation (picture 22), students listen to a text linked to the aspects they have studied. Actually, it is a dictation of a text so there are pauses after each chunk and students can write it on their notebooks. The teacher can repeat as many times as it is necessary for the students to write the text and then check. There is a possibility to write the text on the computer, one of the students could be a volunteer and if the text he/she types is green, it's correct, if it's red, then they have to try again. This is one of the possibilities the teacher might use, depending on the number of students in each class, she calls a volunteer and the student tries to type, and if he/she gets it wrong, the others could help, or divide the class in two large groups and whenever one volunteer of one group gets it wrong, the other group sends a volunteer who knows the answer. It is a fun activity and later students can sit on their benches and do the exercises all by themselves on their notebooks.

The **writing** ability is a constant in every section mentioned above, because students should register on their notebooks what they did in every English lesson. We shall recall that the environment is a public school where teens are being evaluated for their writing productions, as well. Students need clear models, the 'nuts and bolts' of writing on a word-

and-sentence level. It is clear that with the growth of the Internet and mobile devices more modern each day people worldwide are writing in English more than ever before, for business and personal communication. The amount of instant messages sent every day in the social media is astounding. But we also know that students need a model before doing a guided writing task themselves, because instant messages are not well elaborated and not properly written, especially in a foreign language. The writing tasks provided in the iTutor and the exercises students need to copy and answer focus on a specific text type and provide consolidation of grammar and lexis taught in each File.

Picture 23 - Mobile Learning.



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Luckily, the section Mobile Learning (picture 23) contains all audio and videos used in the iTutor in one place. Students can save it onto their computers as well as the teachers or mobile device for listening practise wherever they want or need.

7. LEARNING CONDITIONS BASED ON THE KIND OF TECHNOLOGY SCHOOLS OFFER TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

As mentioned in the relevance part, we can analyze the learning conditions based on the kind of technology schools offer to students and teachers before the pandemic and during the pandemic, considering that it is not yet over. These are exceptional times that have required all of us to take swift action and make drastic changes to our professional and personal lives to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. We had to adapt to a difficult transition to a remote learning mode from last year through at least the end of this year. As most of the institutions make this shift, and are working to ensure that students are receiving the same high-quality instruction they would have under normal circumstances, in the public schools we are perhaps celebrating a new chapter of this novel. The pandemic has opened a door that we, educators, did not expect: that the non-existing technology in public schools could be provided and within time we could rip excellent fruits out of this terrible chapter of our lives.

Before the pandemic at this specific public school in Brazil, the kind of technology offered to students and teachers was null or void. As pointed out in the justification to this paper, when Alves (apud Orban and Novelli, 2019) observes that we have to struggle with many issues in public schools and one of them is the poor technology encountered in such schools. The projectors, CD-players, TV sets, or computers were almost impossible to be available or when they were, the conditions found to use them were always with struggle. We had to schedule their use with one week in advance, they were never there to be used at any time we wanted. Those devices in general were broken, damaged or not available to use. The result was a disrupted class; we had to arrive at school very early in the morning to separate them and get them ready to use; sometimes we could not fix them on time and all the material and plan we had previously made were discarded and we had to start from zero.

During the pandemic or we could say because of the pandemic, we had some surprising changes regarding technology in public schools in Brazil. As previously mentioned, one of them is the *Classroom* (Google Classroom), a free and easy tool helping educators to efficiently manage and assess progress, while enhancing connections with learners from school, from home or on the go. It is an online learning platform which connects us teachers with our students from anywhere with a hybrid approach for in-class and virtual classes. With this tool we have the opportunity to send links with videos, reliable sites which teach EFL and where students have the opportunity to listen and watch people from all over the world speaking English as a foreign language as they do. As perfectly observed by Warschauer (apud MCDUGAL, 2005, p. 8), in the relevance part, we can use computers to such different things

making use of it to access authentic information gathering the abilities and making students aware of all the possibilities. This has been a wonderful and transforming way for us teachers and for the students to realize they can really speak English and that even people from other countries speak English with an accent and here we can briefly cite Richards (2008) in his argument that the listening has been examined in relation to language learning and that the “noticing” and conscious awareness play an important role and they can be part of the process of learning so that learners can gather new word forms and new structures.

Another good change we had is that we can use the Classroom to ask students to record videos speaking English and explaining what they have learned within the trimester. It is simple, but an engaging and innovative way to get to know and watch our new students every new trimester, considering that the pandemic is not over yet, by the time I am writing this paper.

A third change that came in the middle of the pandemic is that students are using more devices to learn English than they’ve ever used before. One example is the online dictionary which provides students with both American English Pronunciation and British English Pronunciation. Besides, it is a free and online English dictionary where students learn the definitions in English. It also brings the word origin, idioms and collocations linked to every word we search on it. It’s not that they could not have used these platforms before, but now with the restrictions to teach face-to-face we could say that a Blended Learning approach also called Hybrid Learning, would be necessary and strategic for the situation we are currently facing. According to Whittaker (2013, p. 11) her perception is that blended learning could be defined nowadays as “the inclusion of computer technology providing online or offline activities and materials in the mix, rather than implying this is a wholly new approach to teaching and learning”. It is the adoption of technology in the classroom or even a model where some students attend class in-person, while others join the lesson virtually from home.

The benefits of a hybrid learning are innumerable but we could say that the most important is probably the independence in learning and flexible study access that our students are currently experiencing. Our role as teachers is therefore that of facilitator. The new tools students are been exposed to, encourage them to work with autonomy, as they can adopt the learning strategies that fit into what they understand promoting collaborative discussions with both the teacher and their classmates. The online work consists on the teacher posting learning material, questions and this can encourage students to take charge of their own learning.

With the Classroom tool we can also have online meetings with the students via Meet and when I have the opportunity to have those classes, I take advantage of using iTutor with

them, sharing the screen and we can revise all the language we previously studied in the activities. To make it clearer: in the public school where I work, in the beginning of the term, we could only send activities via Classroom. Students return the activities and we correct them and grade them. Within two months after the beginning of the term we are asked to work with them every fifteen days in the Classroom, online classes. And now we are working on the Hybrid model.

In contrast to the period before the pandemic many improvements were made to enhance learning and to promote engagement and inserting new technologies into the English classroom in public schools in Brazil. We understand that these tools and technologies in the school environment reinforce the many voices here in this paper as (Freire, 1998; Ribas, 2018; Prescher et. al, 2019) who are in favour of the teaching of a foreign language as a social role, inclusion, promotes social justice, develops the empathy and ensures the same rights to every individual.

8. IMPROVEMENTS AND SOLUTIONS FOR THIS TECHNOLOGY TO BE INSERTED INTO EFL TEACHING

There are some aspects we have to observe when we want to improve listening and speaking skills by inserting a new technology when teaching EFL to teens in a public school in Brazil. The first thing we should urgently reach in public schools is to make it clear both to directive staffs and to all the English teachers that the use of technology to teach a foreign language leads students to independence. Secondly that using some kind of technology can contribute to differentiate the needs of students and most of all to identify them. Also, that technology could accelerate learning by using resources that students are interested in. Students clearly want and like to use technological resources. And finally, technology can give students an equal voice. It enables each one of them to absorb the contents wherever they are, whenever they can.

In my school teachers of different disciplines and areas have proposed during meetings that all the students could have access to the internet at school and not only teachers and that all the rooms should have high-speed internet connection so that the use of technology could be improved and we really achieve our goals with teenagers while studying English and other disciplines.

The challenges of providing internet connectivity to the public schools is clearly not one of the main goals of the government or directive staff. It is our responsibility to make it clear to them why and how do we need this to happen.

Here are some suggestions of improvement in order to reach those goals:

- 1) Provide appropriate training for all teachers to use modern technology in English language teaching.
- 3) Adopt an electronic curriculum project in line with modern requirements.
- 4) English teachers encourage students to use modern technology as a means to develop their language skills and teach them properly how to do that.
- 5) Establish Internet networks within educational institutions to equip teachers to properly avail of modern technology.
- 6) Provide appropriate student training in all forms of available technology so that they can keep pace with the requirements of the electronic curriculum.
- 7) Establish an English language teaching portal school-home connection to enable students to learn in their free time.
- 8) English teachers' development programmes which use modern technical means such as screens, projectors, and smart panels in order to promote students and teachers

mastery of the English language.

9) Implement user-friendly English content, which reflects real-life situations as opposed to the traditional means that students find contrived and boring.

10) Analyse “how we can redesign this learning experience to take advantage of a whole wealth of technology that can deliver a full learning experience - not just the delivery of information?” (Kathryn Skelton, chief transformation officer at FutureLearn, an online learning platform owned by the Open University).

11) The material we receive at public schools are designed by teachers from our country. We could talk to the directive staff and suggest that we could contact representatives of foreign publishers to obtain authentic material properly designed to speakers of other languages, as pointed out in the introduction to this paper that BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular - The Common National Curricular Base) suggests teachers to use authentic material.

12) We can approximate the contents of a coursebook disconnected to the technology we are proposing on this paper, and integrate BNCC and sustain the listening and speaking activities using the software if we are willing to implement it at a public school. Challenges exist to optimize the platforms in a way that they fit into the premisses we want to achieve.

9. CONCLUSION

The main goal of the current paper was to reflect on the use of technology in a public school for improving listening and speaking skills on EFL teen students. One of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that technology plays an important role in the process of teaching English, and it also enables students to learn more efficiently. Teachers perform more effectively when using modern technology since they can communicate with the students through a variety of ways. The fact that institutions have shifted to a digital model in a matter of weeks when the coronavirus pandemic started is impressive and of course it has brought many challenges but it has in many ways contributed for the understanding that technology is here to stay. The online learning platforms have been used and mastered by every educator, who had to quickly adapt in delivering lectures via *Meet* and other platforms. It is also clear that we have to consider that the environment of English as a foreign language to many students is completely new and unknown and that the aspects of acquisition and learning are distinct from any other discipline that is taught in the mother tongue; also, that students come from a generation where the smart phones have already become an irreplaceable tool in their school and daily lives. This new understanding should help to make predictions of the impact using modern technology in public schools to teach EFL has and that it brings significant advances in contemporary English language teaching methods for inclusion of listening and speaking skills.

The research has also shown that with the pandemic the technological advance public schools had to adapt to came in the right time to open a path between the poor technology we encountered before and the resources we have been exposed to since then. The challenges, as previously observed are, of course, considerable, but the willing to go forward and to succeed are greater.

In the public school where I work with teenagers, the use of technological devices in the classroom while teaching English before the pandemic started was proved efficient and innovative for them. Using a method which allowed me to teach the four abilities using only a TV set and a notebook, brought great achievements, catching their attention and making the lessons more active and interesting. It is also crucial to point out that with this simple and cheap action we can engage our students in an environment where they can experience learning a foreign language in a way they have never experienced before, at least in a public school. As Brown (2007, p. 106) explains, “[...] teenagers are at an age of transition, confusion, self-consciousness, growth and changing bodies. They are a huge challenge for the teacher”. Having his words in mind, and also knowing that teens tend to be distracted, learning a foreign language

with the use of some sort of technology with a focus on listening and speaking can be fun and at the same time engaging and extremely efficient. Every single effort to integrate the four abilities by using a technological device will probably be very well received by the whole academic community, students and scholar community as a new stage in EFL teaching and learning.

Taken together, these studies support the notion that it is possible to use a technological tool that could further increase the learning of a foreign language in public schools, and more specifically, *listening* and *speaking*. It is, indeed, one important step to start changing our way to teach English in such environments. This study has also raised important questions about the significant improvements over last year and the need that these achievements are continuously observed and periodically supervised because if the suggested improvements are not carried out, and the ones that are already been put into practice are not sustained it will be a great loss for all the educators in this area. Further work is needed to fully understand the implications of changing the way English is taught at public schools in Brazil and the engagements of every member of the school staff to understand that technology is mandatory in the 21st century and that there is no way out therefore we must move effortlessly from this point to the next.

Warschauer (2000, p. 44) indicates a way when he states “Let us view neither the computer nor English as ends in themselves, but rather as complementary tools that our students can use to read the world, to write it, and to rewrite it.” We deserve more than we have had so far. Our students already know how to make this transition. They are connected to the laptops and mobile devices as they are to their mother tongue. By adopting technology as a support to the teaching of EFL to promote listening and speaking skills we are not just recognizing our students’ capability to deal with it but leading them to use the latest technologies to create their virtual world in English and to communicate their world, to understand the real impact it has on our lives. It is a small move with pieces we already know and have, but a huge step to the public schools.

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