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Maestría en Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada

“The Effect of Moodle in the Learning Process of Business English at an Intermediate Level at Universidad del Pacífico.”

**Tesis previa a la obtención del Grado de  
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## Resumen

La Universidad del Pacífico (sucursal Cuenca) fue creado en 1998 con el objetivo de brindar una alternativa educativa en el área de negocios. Esta investigación se ha realizado con un enfoque analítico y crítico con el fin de observar el efecto de una plataforma virtual en una clase de negocios a nivel intermedio en la Universidad del Pacífico la cual se centra en las habilidades de lectura y comunicación verbal. Al crear las actividades y tareas de la plataforma virtual se tuvo en consideración la teoría del constructivismo debido a que ésta alienta a los estudiantes a aprender y a estar en medio del proceso de aprendizaje. Los resultados de los datos que se recopilaron a lo largo de esta investigación fueron convertidos a gráficos y tablas. Una vez que esto se haya efectuado el resultado ofrece una alternativa diferente y actualizada para que los profesores puedan emplear con sus alumnos generando a su vez un mayor compromiso de las personas involucradas en esta investigación así como de las autoridades de la Universidad.

Palabras claves: Lectura y Comunicación Verbal, Plataforma Virtual, Constructivismo



## **Abstract**

The Universidad del Pacífico (Cuenca branch) was created in 1998, with the goal of providing an educational alternative in the business area. This investigation has been done with an analytical and critical focus in order to observe the effect of a virtual platform in an intermediate business class at the Universidad del Pacífico. It centers on the skills of reading and oral communication (speaking). When creating the activities and assignments for the virtual platform the Constructivism theory was taken into consideration because it encourages students to learn and be at the center of the learning process. The results from the data that was collected along this investigation were put into graphs and tables. Once this was done, the outcome provides a different and up to date strategy for the teachers to use with their students, in turn generating greater commitment from the people involved in this investigation as well as from the authorities at the university.

**Keywords:** Reading and Oral Communication, Virtual Platform, Constructivism



## **Dedication**

I would first like to thank God for blessing me and my family. Then I would like to dedicate this to the most important people in my life who are my parents Jorge and Carmen along with my sisters Michelle and Nicole. You have been my biggest inspiration to persevere during this time, thank you for all your encouragement and words cannot express the love I have for the four of you.



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## Introduction

Language is a method of communication that is common to all humans and even to other species but the biggest difference is that human language is a symbolic communication that we learn instead of something that we biologically inherit from our predecessors. There are many forms of language that we as humans use: body language, communicative, gestures, eye contact, and posture. There are also different aspects to be considered when it refers to verbal and written language because it has many peculiar features to it.

When teaching a second language there are two important aspects to take into account to know how to teach it and the type of activities to be used so that students will accomplish their language-learning goals. First, there have been many language methods and approaches over the years that have been developed to learn a language. Second, when planning out a class it is important to include interactive and practical activities which will generate an approach to learning the language. This also is beneficial because most students become very motivated with these activities.

The Information and Communication Technologies method (ICT) is relatively new to teaching. In the past most of the classes were teacher and board oriented, then “film strips, audio, and video recording and playback were additions to technological tools available to many teachers” (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 1999). IBM first introduced the Personal Computer back in 1981; it was a hit because people could finally have access to this type of technology at home, work or in the classroom which did not take up that much space. During this time people became familiar with this product and saw the benefits of the computer and this new form of technology. A few years later the computer became even more versatile when the Internet was created, this was done by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the *World Wide Web Foundation* mentions that he “documented what was to become the World Wide Web with the submission of a proposal specifying a set of technologies that would make the Internet truly accessible and useful to people.



At first both the personal computer and the Internet were expensive but nowadays they are a lot more affordable. As a matter of fact, the *World Bank website* has demonstrated that many schools around the world have now incorporated technology into their classrooms. Furthermore, ICT gives teachers the ability to teach the target language and they can learn a lot because language is learned by using it.

Finally, the use of technology is a great addition to the classroom and it is a commodity that teachers can now have at their disposal and as previously mentioned many schools are now using it and incorporating it the best they can into their classes and the academic student curriculum.



## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### 1.1 Topic

The present study will be done in order to determine the effect of Moodle in the developing of both the reading and oral communication (speaking) skills in a business English class at an intermediate level.

#### 1.2 Description of the Problem

##### 1.2.1 Contextualization

In Ecuador students of all ages in schools, high schools and universities have been taught *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) because it is a must in the language curriculum in the Ecuadorian educational institutions. In recent years there have been advances in EFL in Ecuador but the level of proficiency in adults is still considered very low according to the website *Education First – English Proficiency Index* (EF – EPI) which ranks Ecuador 44<sup>th</sup> amongst 54 countries that consider English a foreign language.

When students graduate from either a public or private high school they have to take an entry English exam at any university. At the Universidad del Pacífico there are 15% of students who go on to intermediate English courses when taking a placement test. The majority of students end up in the basic or very basic levels. Some of the reasons that have caused this might be:





- Most students are only taught with the traditional method which means students are getting lectured and receive direct instructions from the teacher. In many situations there is not enough student involvement or interaction with the teacher.
- The text books that students are using in many situations are not adapted to our context or culture; this could be because when publishers develop a book they generalize it so that it can be sold in many different countries around the world.
- Finally, most teachers solely depend on textbooks that the educational institution supplies and are unaware that there are other types of resources and methods that can be used in a classroom.

### **Main Problem**

At the Universidad del Pacífico, teachers are not using up to date teaching methods such as ICT in the classroom because out of the 30 classes that are offered there, only 5 classes are using ICT. Also the university has not lately acquired the updated printed material, textbooks, to help students develop the reading and speaking skills when taking business English.

### **Causes**

- There has not been any training on how to use technology to teach business.
- There is little to no contact with the target language outside the classroom.
- There is a lack of updated resources to develop both the reading and speaking skills.

### **Effects**



- Students are still exposed to a traditional methodology.
- Students are not accustomed to using technology to further their learning of business English.
- Students are not in touch with updated English lexicon.

### **Cause Description**

- **Teachers are not preparing themselves with the new forms of teaching such as ICT:** Reasons behind this situation could be first because teachers do not have enough time to take courses because the Ecuadorian government in recent years increased teaching time to 20 hours a week for part-timers and 40 hours a week for full-timers. Second, there are teachers who might be actually scared of technology itself and become easily frustrated with it. This is a major obstacle because they also believe that they will not be able to learn these new devices. They consider themselves out dated when it comes to technology and they say that it is only for the younger generations. Finally, it also should be taken into account that the university throughout the past 11 years has not provided any updating training courses to improve teaching methodologies.
- **The contact with English outside the classroom is insufficient:** Many students only practice their English during the class itself and have almost no contact with it outside of the classroom. This is because English is not an official language in Ecuador; therefore, they are surrounded by their native language and do not have that many opportunities to use it. Another reason could be that most students see English as just a subject that they have to pass but what they fail to realize is the benefit it will have in their future.
- **The Universidad del Pacífico does not provide updated resources:** Even though the university has invested large sums of money in the physical infrastructure such as: buildings, desks, Internet bandwidth, computers,



projectors, among others; they lack updating their resources in the Language Department, in this situation specifically the business English class; as a matter of fact, the textbook that is being used has not been updated for the past 9 years.

### **Effect Description**

- **Students are not accustomed to using technology in the classroom:** This could have been because many teachers prefer using the traditional method of teaching because that is how they have learnt over their years of study and the one they feel most comfortable with. When teachers use this conventional method they might not focus on the students needs or their personal opinion but instead the use of this method focuses on making students know concepts by memorizing them and do exercises systematically.
- **Students do not put sufficient effort into learning the language:** When it comes to using technology that the university supplies them, they only use it to interact with other people through social websites, not realizing that their university is providing them with a great medium to be used also for educational purposes. Also as they are not encouraged to use technology to further their learning, as they do not see it in class, there is no initiative from them to using English.
- **Students are not up to date with English terminology:** One of the main reasons that this could be happening with students at the Universidad del Pacífico, is because the students are continuing to use the textbook that has not been updated for the past 9 years and because of this they are using outdated terminology that any new text book would offer them. That is why the use of ICTs will update them in such terminology.



### **1.2.2 Critical Analysis**

The Universidad del Pacífico began in the city of Cuenca in 1998, it is a university that specializes in the study of business. The mission of the university is to form business professionals with an entrepreneur attitude, high ethical and moral values so they can contribute to the economical development of our country. In the formation of such professionals English is a pivotal part of their studies as they will have to use it in their daily lives or in their profession. That is why students at this university receive English classes throughout their major. During their first year they receive general English, in other words: Beginner – Intermediate – Advance levels. As part of their second year courses students begin to receive more specialized English classes in the areas of Reading, Writing and Conversation and in their third year the students receive three different courses of Business English.

To be able to accomplish the mission it is necessary not only for students to contribute with their valuable time and effort but most importantly teachers must understand it is they who are the people in charge of facilitating the learning process the best way possible so that students can accomplish their learning goals set by the university.

### **1.2.3 Prognosis**

The proper and effective use of technological resources, gathered into a single platform in a business English class at the Universidad del Pacífico must be put in to effect as soon as possible, especially to help students develop their reading and speaking skills. If the university continues to use the outdated material, the result will be that their knowledge of business English will be not up to date and this is something that students cannot afford to do in today's competitive and technological market as they will become the new business people.



### **1.2.4 Research Question**

In order to find a solution to the problem at the university, the following question has been thought of:

To what extent is the use of Moodle an effective medium for developing the reading and speaking skills in the teaching of business English?

### **1.3 Justification**

The number of students interested in majoring in business at universities not only nationally but also internationally has increased in recent years. In Cuenca there are three universities that offer business English classes, the Universidad del Pacífico, Universidad Politécnica Salesiana and the Universidad del Azuay. However, there has not been any interactive business material developed with Moodle to learn business English.

Thus, there is a need to promote business English in education institutions through educational materials which focus on reading and speaking skills. The reason behind this is so that students can cope in today's business world without any problem.

During these last seven years of teaching business at the Universidad del Pacífico, it has been clearly seen that students have and are still undergoing the learning process through a traditional method plus out dated material. Therefore, there is a need to update both the methodology and the material.

### **1.4 Objectives**

#### **1.4.1 General Objective**

- To determine the effect of Moodle in the learning process of Business English at an intermediate level.



### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

- To create Moodle-based activities that are related to business in order to practice reading and speaking skills.
- To evaluate the above materials in terms of students' Business English language improvement.
  
- To share these materials with educational institutions that require an intermediate level of English in the area of business.



## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Research History

While investigating for this research I consulted resources from three libraries in the city of Cuenca and multiple on-line websites. It should be noted that I did not find any studies done in reference to the effect of Moodle in a business English class in the manner in which it will be applied in this investigation.

#### 2.2 Basis

##### 2.2.1 Philosophical Basis

The English language in our society, as in many other non-Anglo-Saxon countries, has gained strength in recent years because it is an essential worldwide language. Studying and learning this language is no longer considered a luxury rather a necessity either for study, work, tourism or simply as general knowledge. It is also said that people who know and understand this language will have countless opportunities in various fields of work. Therefore, this language is considered by many professionals a valuable asset.

The use of ICT in the classroom is a good medium for teachers and especially for students because it gives them freedom to find information that they need in order to complete the task. Students are taught to use the tools that the Internet provides and the lessons could be adapted to the students' needs because not all students learn in the same manner. There are many areas of the language that can be developed through audio and visual material to name a few.

In the following investigation we will look into *e-learning*, how it is being used in today's classrooms and what are the benefits that this medium brings to both teachers



and especially students.

### **2.2.2. Educational Psychology Basis**

The ICT method is based on constructivism, therefore students must be able to think things through and then support their opinions or ideas. Students must also be able to find solutions or alternatives to problems that may come about while doing a certain activity or exercise.

### **2.2.3. Sociological Basis**

According to The *World Bank website* in Ecuador “close to four million Ecuadorians, about 35% of the population, live in poverty. Another seventeen percent are vulnerable to poverty. One and a half million Ecuadorians live in extreme poverty and cannot meet their nutritional requirements even if they spend everything they have on food. Poverty is higher in rural areas, where two out of three poor people live”.

This is why education in Ecuador is deemed as a way out of this situation for many poor people and it is crucial to educate students not only to be successful but also to be critical thinkers who can add to the society as a whole.

## **2.3. Basic Categories**

In order to understand this investigation in a detailed manner the main aspects have been divided into basic categories:

- E-learning and b-learning
- The Internet in the classroom
- Constructivism
- Communicative Language Teaching





## 2.3.1. E-learning and b-learning

### 2.3.1.1 Conceptualization

Throughout recent years the use of ICTs in the classroom has grown immensely and that is why the definition of *Electronic Learning* mostly known as *e-learning* has had a different meaning and concept to different people. Dublin mentions that “everybody knows what you mean when you talk about e-Learning, however, the term e-Learning means different things to different people” (2). He goes on to give it his own concept which he considers is “computer-based training delivered over Intranets and the Internet (2).

In a study Singh, O’ Donoghue, and Worton conclude *e-learning* as “a term covering a wide set of applications and processes, such as Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via Internet, intranet/extranet (LAN/WAN), audio- and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, CD-ROM, and more” (Singh, et al., 1).

There are others, such as the European Commission which depicts it as “using new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to facilities and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration”.

The Higher Education Academy and the Joint Information System Committee (HEFCE) defines *e-learning* as “any learning that uses ICT”. They go on to mention that “with this definition one has to ensure that there is confident use of the full range of pedagogic opportunities provided by ICT. For higher education this will encompass flexible learning as well as distance learning, and the use of ICT as a communication and delivery tool between individuals and groups, to support and improve the management of learning” (HEFCE 5).

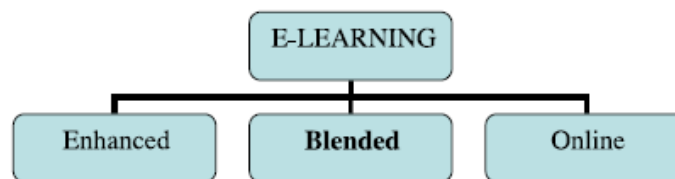
As seen, there are many types of definitions for *e-learning* according to different people/organizations and there is one definition that integrates and encompasses all the



areas that *e-learning* has. This particular definition is according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), it mentions that:

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance and/or support learning in tertiary education. While keeping a presiding interest in more advanced applications, e-learning refers to both wholly online provision and campus-based or other distance-education provision supplemented with ICT in some way. (OECD)

The role of blended learning, known as b-learning, takes on an important role once technology is set up; Garrison and Kanuka define it as “integrating the strengths of synchronous (face-to-face) and asynchronous (text-based Internet) learning activities”. They go on to mention that “Blended learning is distinguished from that of enhanced classroom or fully online learning experiences” (2-3). This is exemplified in the following figure:



Graph 1 - A continuum of e-learning - (Garrison and Kanuka)

The use of b-learning implicates a different approach to teaching a concept and this is beneficial for most students because it makes it easier to focus on the target language and it also gets them to work together either individually or in groups. When doing these activities teachers must keep in mind that since the Internet offers a vast quantity of resources at times it can make it difficult to select the appropriate material for an activity or assignment, this is because it is “a fundamental reconceptualization and reorganization of the teaching and learning dynamic, starting with various specific contextual needs and contingencies (e.g., discipline, developmental level, and



resources). In this respect, no two blended learning designs are identical. This introduces the great complexity of blended learning” (Garrison and Kanuka). Teachers must also take into account that there has to be a purpose for the material they are selecting for their class, whether it is to help students build up their vocabulary, grammar, or develop any skill such as reading or speaking skills.

### **2.3.1.2. Why E-learning?**

It is important to use the new resources that technology presently offers because we are in a world where everything is becoming more technological and the programs that we now find on the Internet should be used in the area of teaching, especially in business since it has become “an indispensable tool in the education of today’s students” (NetDay News).

*E-learning* makes reference to the use of technology, such as computers, laptop, tablets, and mobile phones among others, in order to learn or teach anytime or anywhere. Bearing this in mind, the *Intel* website states that *e-learning* has had a favorable impact in many areas such as:

- Students are more engaged and able to develop 21st century skills.
- Teachers have a more positive attitude toward their work and are able to provide more personalized learning.
- Family interaction and parental involvement may increase.
- Communities benefit from bridging the digital divide. Economically disadvantaged students and children with disabilities benefit particularly.
- Economic progress can result from direct job creation in the technology industry as well as from developing a better educated workforce.



Additionally to this, the *Intel* website states 5 common manners that technology has incorporated itself into education, they are the following:

- Teacher PC programs provide encouragement and financial assistance for teachers to acquire PCs and integrate ICT into their teaching practices. When most effective, these programs include professional development and policy modifications, as well as updated digital content and curriculum resources to help teachers use technology to enhance teaching and learning.
- PC labs are frequently used to offer technology access when resources are severely constrained. While PC labs provide some exposure to technology, they limit teachers' ability to incorporate technology into the curriculum, and often are used only to teach computer literacy.
- Classroom eLearning brings PCs into the classroom, typically via systems stationed at the back of the classroom or computers on wheels (COWs) that are shared by different classrooms. Students have a dedicated device for part of the school day, with the focus on using PCs to enhance learning across the curriculum and not simply to develop technology skills.
- One-to-one (1:1) eLearning provides each teacher and student with a dedicated laptop for use at school and, in many cases, at home. Laptops serve as personal teaching and learning tools that are used throughout the day for many educational tasks and subjects. In a 1:1 environment, students get the maximum value from access to PCs, Internet connectivity, and their integration into the education environment.
- In a flipped classroom usage model, students acquire basic knowledge and comprehension of assigned learning materials the night before, leaving the next school day an opportunity to apply these newly-acquired concepts to collaborative, problem-solving project-based learning.



As seen, technology provides and will continue providing, new alternatives and benefits for both teachers and students. When it comes to universities, Hicks, Reid, and George mention that there are demands for universities to “provide for a larger and more diverse cross-section of the population, to cater for emerging patterns on educational involvement which facilitate lifelong learning and to include technology-based practices in the curriculum” (143-151). Even though there are many universities around the world adopting this relatively new method of teaching the President of Penn State University recognizes that in today’s educational institutions the use of computers and online courses is “the single greatest unrecognized trend in higher education today” (Young 33).

The website *Kineo*, which helps increase business performance by means of learning and technology, identified the following 3 reasons why universities around the world are integrating *e-learning*:

**a. Enhanced Learning/Teaching:**

- Stronger Professor and Student relationships via out of classroom communication (blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, IM).
- Online, searchable and shared learning materials including assignments, lectures and media-rich content that is accessible anytime anywhere.
- Individualized assessment, diagnostics, and teaching.

**b. Increased Organisational Efficiency:**

- Relieve Administrative overhead: Deliver and hand in assignments online, less time spent grading, automated course registration and management.
- Automated testing and grade tracking in addition to cheating control, e-polling in lectures, improved attendance (virtual), accurate communication of deadlines/changes via student course calendar.
- More time spent teaching, less time spent managing.



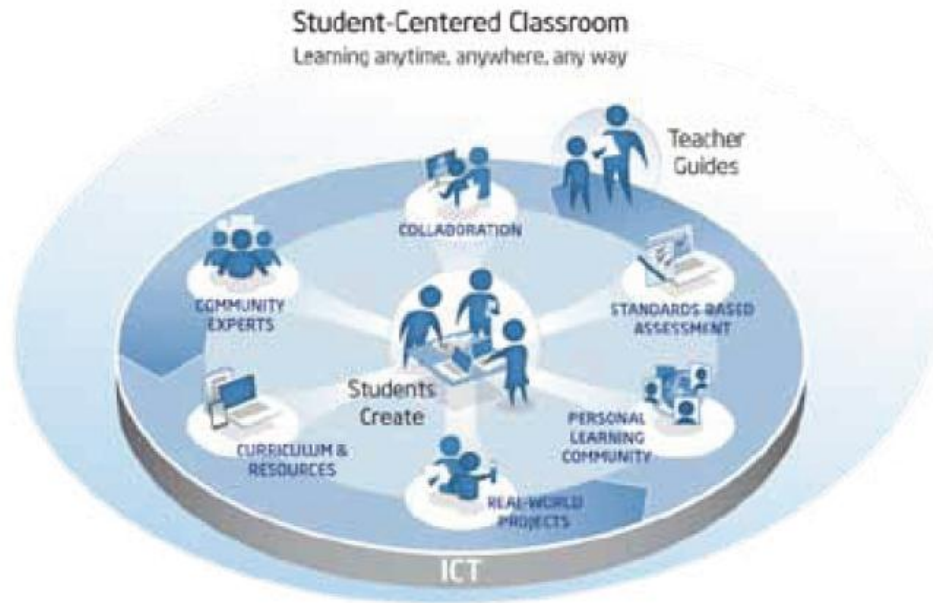
**c. Reduced Running Costs:**

- Reduction of costly and power-hungry computer labs with laptop student purchase programs and Wi-Fi infrastructure.
- Institutional growth and enrollment through online courses that can reach outside of campus and even globally e.g. an Open University model.

Providing various techniques when teaching a class also produces a very positive teaching environment because teachers must remember that not all students learn in the same manner and this is why it is important to select the appropriate learning style in reference to the students' needs.

According to Oxford there are different types of learners such as: visual, auditory, kinesthetic (movement-oriented), and tactile (touch-oriented). She goes on to explain each category, "Visual students like to read and obtain a great deal from visual stimulation. For them, lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup can be very confusing. In contrast, auditory students are comfortable without visual input and therefore enjoy and profit from unembellished lectures, conversations, and oral directions. They are excited by classroom interactions in role-plays and similar activities. They sometimes, however, have difficulty with written work. Kinesthetic and tactile students like lots of movement and enjoy working with tangible objects, collages, and flashcards. Sitting at a desk for very long is not for them; they prefer to have frequent breaks and move around the room" (Oxford 3-4).

The following figure that the *Intel* website provides shows how the previously mentioned learning styles are represented and put into effect in a typical ICT classroom.



Graph 2 – Student-Centered Classroom - Intel

### 2.3.2 The Internet in the classroom

The use of audio visual materials has been around for a long time; as a matter of fact, the online newspaper *New York Times* states that one of the first visual equipment that was used in a classroom at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the Stereoscope. This was a device that you put on over your head and look through special glasses, by using this; students had the opportunity to observe hundreds of images in three dimensions while the teacher gave an explanation of what they were seeing.

In the past most of the classes centered around the teacher and board, then “film strips, audio, and video recording and playback were additions to technological tools available to many teachers” (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 199).

The *Computer History Museum* website mentions that the first component to be considered a computer was built by Hewlett-Packard in 1939. It was called the HP 200A Audio Oscillator and it served as “test equipment for engineers”. This component has come a long way since then and when the Internet came about back in the 1990`s, the combination of the two made it even more of a remarkable device because it made the



possibilities limitless. As McKnight and Cukor state that the creative use of the Internet can considerably promote to the progress of developing societies and this because many countries that were considered third world countries decades ago have now developed and grown economically into significant powerhouses because of the Internet. A clear example of this could be China and India, which according to the management consulting firm *Mckinsey & Company* now “rank among the fast-growing players in the Internet’s global supply chain”.

This is why it should be taken into consideration that the computer and the Internet have not only helped us but they have definitely transformed themselves into a vital part of our lives, for example in the way we communicate in our social life, at work, at school, among others.

### **2.3.2.1 The Internet as a classroom tool**

When computers and the Internet were first implemented in classrooms it was considered a luxurious device and not many universities used them because of their high costs. Nowadays with their lowered costs it is easier for more universities and other educational institutions to acquire them. A United Nations report mentions that the use of ICT is “skyrocketing” in these facilities (2).

This is most likely because the use of ICTs has given teachers the ability to teach the target language and share information by using social networks (Facebook, My Space, Twitter), Podcasts, E-mails, Blogs, Electronic Video Chatting (Skype), Prezi along with many more other programs. ICT assists students to learn more effectively and helps teachers to do administrative tasks more efficiently (Dudeney 2). These technological activities are very motivating for students and they can learn a lot because language is learned by using it. Garret also believes that the Internet is a tool which allows learners to put into practice the target language by interacting with many people around the world (75).

Warschauer and Kern mention that the literacy and communication skill in new on-line media is critical to success in almost all walks of life and specifically the Internet





has had significant effects on second/foreign language teaching and learning (171). Computer technology serves as an excellent tool for language acquisition and research has shown that students are highly motivated when using computers (Jaeglin 130). Also a research that was conducted in 2002 reveals that students who use computers to learn English in a relaxing environment, gain confidence and improvement (Young 1), since “they can be provided with self-study activities to be developed at their own pace so that they can improve their skills in an independent way” (Yunus et al., 136).

In addition, the language input that is found on the web is almost always authentic which contributes even more to a student’s learning. It is said that the computer is a "medium in which a variety of methods, approaches, and pedagogical philosophies may be implemented" (Garret 75). It should be taken into account that the effectiveness of this method in a classroom depends on how it is used.

### **2.3.2.2 The ADDIE model**

According to a United Nations report done in 2011: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation (ADDIE) is one of the mostly used models when teaching an *e-learning* course. Furthermore, this UN report goes on to state and define each of the five categories into the following key terms:

#### **a. Analysis**

A needs analysis should be conducted at the start of any development effort to determine whether training is required to fill a gap in professional knowledge and skills; and e- learning is the best solution to deliver the training.

#### **b. Design**

The design stage encompasses the following activities: formulating a set of learning objectives required to achieve the general, high-level course objective; defining the order in which the objectives should be achieved (sequencing); and selecting instructional, media, evaluation and delivery strategies.



### **c. Development**

The development of multimedia interactive content is comprised of three main steps: content development: writing or collecting all the required knowledge and information; storyboard development: integrating instructional methods (all the pedagogical elements needed to support the learning process) and media elements. This is done by developing the storyboard, a document that describes all the components of the final interactive products, including images, text, interactions, assessment tests; and courseware development: developing media and interactive components, producing the course in different formats for CD-Rom and Web delivery and integrating the content elements into a learning platform that learners can access.

### **d. Implementation**

At this stage the course is delivered to learners. The courseware is installed on a server and made accessible for learners. In facilitated and instructor-led courses, this stage also includes managing and facilitating learners' activities.

### **e. Evaluation**

An e-learning project can be evaluated for specific evaluation purposes. You may want to evaluate learners' reactions, the achievement of learning objectives.

#### **2.3.2.3 Digital Equity**

The term Digital Equity, also referred to as Digital Divide, has been “traditionally described inequalities in access to computers and the Internet between groups of people based on one or more dimensions of social or cultural identity” (Gorski 3).

When it comes to using computers and technology in a classroom, depending on the educational institution where you are at in Cuenca, the problem could arise that the students cannot have access to a computer or the Internet. In the majority of situations this could happen either because the institution does not have enough financial



resources to acquire technology (computers and Internet) or another situation could be that there are too many students in the classroom and not all can use a computer.

These are unfortunate situations that may occur in any institution but it is the teacher's job to find the best solution to the problem in order for all students of the classroom to get access to these devices.

#### **2.3.2.4 Moodle**

The platform Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (Moodle), was created for people in the field of education so they can design and produce online interactive courses. Moodle as found on its website is a free Course Management Software (CMS) also known as Learning Management System (LMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is “currently used by more than 56 percent of higher education establishment in the United Kingdom and has been adopted by the Open University in the UK, the largest distance education provider in the world” (Dudeney & Hockly 153).

One of the biggest advantages in using this platform is that one can create a “blended-learning course involving face-to-face teaching, supported by online teaching using the synchronous and asynchronous tools within the system” (Sharma & Barrett 108). The Moodle platform is a free source; anybody can download the program and run it on their server. Teachers have the opportunity to give course information, discussion boards, quizzes and assessment collection by means of virtual platforms, blogs, e-mails, chats and videos; and students have the opportunity to work at anytime and anywhere, while using it they will also find course related documents, activities and communication. The use of different technological tools, as a medium, can go a long way to teach skills such as research, organization and synthesis of ideas (Richardson 27).



### 2.3.2.5 Creating the Material

The task of searching for material on the Internet has to be the most difficult undertakings at hand. Many people believe that it is simple as writing a title on a search engine and then you get what you need. They should try it first and then they will realize that this is far from reality because this process takes many long hours of searching on the Internet just to develop a single unit.

The reason behind this is because first your objectives and goals of the unit must be clear, then the material has to be up to date, after it has to be in accordance with the title of the unit that you are viewing and most of all it has to have to correct level of English that your students have in your course so they can understand it and relate to it not only in English but in their professional lives. At the end you have to go over it and edit anything that you believe is necessary.

Once this is done and you have the material of the unit, Moodle, as found on its website offers the following 14 useful activities: (Moodle)

#### **a. Assignments**

Enable teachers to grade and give comments on uploaded files and assignments created on and off line.

#### **b. Chat**

Allows participants to have a real-time synchronous discussion.

#### **c. Choice**

A teacher asks a question and specifies a choice of multiple responses.

#### **d. Database**

Enables participants to create, maintain and search a bank of record entries.



**e. External tool**

Allows participants to interact with Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) compliant learning resources and activities on other websites.

**f. Feedback**

For creating and conducting surveys to collect feedback.

**g. Forum**

Allows participants to have asynchronous discussions.

**h. Glossary**

Enables participants to create and maintain a list of definitions, like a dictionary

**i. Lesson**

For delivering content in flexible ways.

**j. Quiz**

Allows the teacher to design and set quiz tests, which may be automatically marked and feedback and/or to correct answers shown.

**k. SCORM**

Enables Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) packages to be included as course content.

**m. Survey**

For gathering data from students to help teachers learn about their class and reflect on their own teaching.

**n. Wiki**

A collection of web pages that anyone can add to or edit.



### **m. Workshop**

Enables peer assessment.

#### **2.3.2.6 Moodle - Principles**

The Moodle platform supports Constructivism based teaching and on their website they list the following five key pedagogical principals: (Moodle)

a. **All of us are potential teachers as well as learners - in a true collaborative environment we are both.**

This is a very important aspect to consider when teaching in general; it should be thought as something to make us humble because we do not know everything and like they say everyday you learn something new. This does not only happen in a classroom to students and teachers but it also happens to us as human beings in our daily lives. You must also keep your ears open and listen to your students, this will give you the opportunity to know when to ask certain questions because if this is timed correctly you will get even more participation from them.

b. **We learn particularly well from the act of creating or expressing something for others to see.**

Another important viewpoint that happens when teaching is when students work together and collaborate amongst themselves, for example, you can select 2 students to begin an online blog on the platform about a topic that is related to the unit where the other students can give their opinion and discuss their points of view. This gives them the opportunity to use the target language because they will be writing on the blog and activates their critical thinking in the sense that students will be responding to the other students with their own personal opinions. Apart from helping the students it gives the teacher the opportunity to have a secondary role as an observer or facilitator.



c. **We learn a lot by just observing the activity of our peers.**

In general, humans are natural born observers and thus not only learn from but also from others. This happens in many situations in our life and the classroom is no exception to this, for example, if a student enters a classroom and sees his classmates remain quiet when the teacher is speaking and raise their hand when they would like to speak, the student will most likely do the same as his peers. This could be considered one of many examples of Constructivism.

d. **By understanding the contexts of others, we can teach in a more transformational way (constructivism)**

The idea behind this principal is that we as teachers should know or at least have a notion of the people who we are doing the platform for. This is because it is crucial to know your audience. In this particular situation, the units on Moodle at the university should be adapted to the students' level of English and it should include topics that they are able to relate to with a problem. Thus the outcome will be that of benefit to students and not alienate them.

e. **A learning environment needs to be flexible and adaptable, so that it can quickly respond to the needs of the participants within it.**

In order to create the correct learning environment, you must be able to let your students participate as much as possible even though sometimes it may cross over with other activities that you have planned. As a teacher, it is also very important adapt along the way when an activity that you planned out is not working cut it short but on the other hand if you have an activity where you see a lot of student participation and enthusiasm towards the topic you must feel free to let it run its course.



### 2.3.2.7 Moodle – Philosophy

Moodle points out that “from a constructivist point of view, people actively construct new knowledge as they interact with their environments.” It also goes on to mention that “Everything you read, see, hear, feel, and touch is tested against your prior knowledge and if it is viable within your mental world, may form new knowledge you carry with you. Knowledge is strengthened if you can use it successfully in your wider environment. You are not just a memory bank passively absorbing information, nor can knowledge be "transmitted" to you just by reading something or listening to someone” (Moodle).

As seen, the idea behind Moodle is that it wants to make students think and build from their own knowledge or experiences. This helps students go far beyond a book and teacher environment. From a teachers perspective it helps build a student centered-environment and as previously depicted in *Figure 2*, is ideal for learning as a whole.

Additionally to this philosophy, Moodle is also based upon Social Constructivism; their website mentions that it “extends constructivism into social settings, wherein groups construct knowledge for one another, collaboratively creating a small culture of shared artifacts with shared meanings. When one is immersed within a culture like this, one is learning all the time about how to be a part of that culture, on many levels” (Moodle).

This makes reference to that teacher can be a student and vice versa. In other words they can switch roles during a class, thus everyone learns from each other and interacts with their surroundings. The end effect of this is that the people in the classroom learn in a collaborative and meaningful manner.





### **2.3.3 Constructivism**

#### **2.3.3.1 Conceptualization**

When it comes to acquiring a foreign language there are a certain number of factors that are involved in this process and because of this there have been many approaches/theories done throughout the years in order to help the teacher transmit the language effectively. Constructivism is one of the main approaches/theories used; one of its well renowned theorists John Dewey mentioned that “constructivists do not look for copies or mirrorings of an outer reality in the human mind”, but saw humans as “observers, participants, and agents who actively generate and transform the patterns through which they construct the realities that fit them” (40). Learners in this type of environment are considered to be at the core of the learning process and learning is affected by the following variables that we must keep in mind, the first one being aptitude.

Stansfield refers to this as a “prediction of how well, relative to other individuals, an individual can learn a foreign language in a given amount of time and under given conditions”. Next there is motivation; a person who wants to learn a new language must be motivated in doing so, Gardner and Lambert are responsible for proposing the 2 most recognized types of motivation that learners have; the first being Integrative Motivation which refers to a person’s real desires to be part of a foreign language speaking community, they feel identified with it and they are willing to have as much contact as possible with the language that they want to learn. The second type of motivation is Instrumental Motivation which makes reference to a person learning a foreign language for a functional need, for example: to get a promotion at work, getting into university, a certificate, among others. Opportunity is another variable; this works side by side with motivation because a person who is motivated in learning another language will look for and be open to opportunities. It is also very important when learning a new language to have the correct environment, some examples that should be considered are, if students are going to be working individually, small groups or as



an entire class. In a classroom, students should be encouraged to ask questions when they are not certain of something. A student's personality is another variable to take into account because if a student is introverted this will inhibit their learning because they will feel shy and will not have that much confidence in what they are doing or saying. That is why it is very typical to see that students who are like this try to avoid participating or answering questions. It is important that when dealing with these types of learners that the teacher must know how to say critique students but that would not affect them in a negative manner.

Jean Piaget was a Swiss born developmental psychologist and philosopher; he began his quest to find out why children answered incorrectly when they were asked to give a logical answer. He was also the first psychologist to do a systematic study of cognitive development and as found on the website *Simply Psychology* he divided the learning process into the following categories:

**a. Schema**

Piaget called the schema the basic building block of intelligent behavior – a way of organizing knowledge. Indeed, it is useful to think of schemas as “units” of knowledge, each relating to one aspect of the world, including objects, actions and abstract (i.e. theoretical) concepts.

**b. Assimilation**

Which is using an existing schema to deal with a new object or situation.

**c. Accommodation**

This happens when the existing schema (knowledge) does not work, and needs to be changed to deal with a new object or situation.

**d. Equilibration**

This is the force, which moves development along.



It is important to realize that students can only improve their skills when a new situation provided to them can combine with their previous life experience. If students are given new material that they cannot relate to, they will have problems when it comes time to assimilate and accommodate to this material.

Lev Semeonovich Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist. He was born in 1896 the same year as Piaget; even though his views are part of Constructivism they differ from Piaget because they focus on social interaction. He was a researcher and theorist of child development; however in his home country they did not appreciate his work. He wrote many books throughout his life time but there have been few books translated to English, the first one being “Thought and Language” in 1962. Since then his views on child development have become very important and many psychologists, child development theorists and educational researchers have promoted his views. Parts of Vygotsky’s original views have been modified and have currently been interpreted, thus making the current socio culture theory “neo-Vygotskyan”.

Language is a mental activity done with our voice, hands and gestures; through it we can communicate our thoughts, opinions and desires. David Olson has argued that once writing systems were developed, these “mental tools” provided humanity with words, sentences, phonemes, among others (qtd. Mitchell and Myles 195). In newer studies done by Warshauer and Thorne, they show that there are also newer forms of communication thanks to computer and technology such as chat rooms or text messaging were people use new and distinctive characteristics and symbols different from traditional written communication (195). A mature skilled person capable of functioning on their own is called self-regulation but when it refers to a child or a person who needs assistance in order to function on, we refer to them as other regulation. Both of these situations are typically done with language. Vygotsky is also recognized for an important theory he worked on that aids students in the learning process.

### **2.3.3.2 Scaffolding**

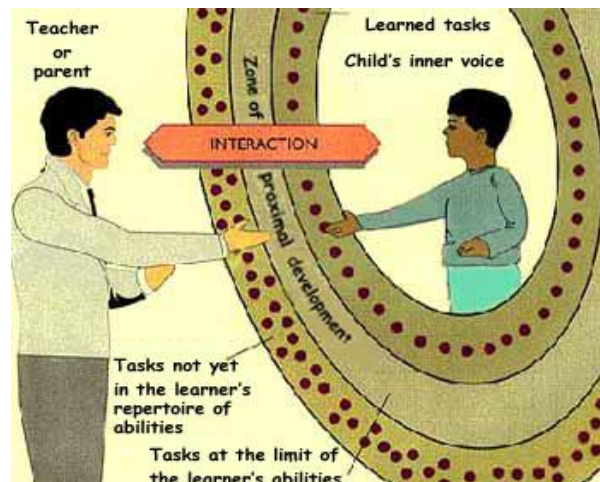
As part of the Neo-Vygotskyan view, this term refers to provision of appropriate



assistance to students in order that they may achieve what alone would have been too difficult for them to accomplish. There is also visual scaffolding which is an excellent form of making content understandable because it includes images and words that can be seen as well as heard. Wood *et al.* mention that scaffolding has the following functions during a class because they help in:

- Recruiting interest in task
- Simplifying the task
- Maintaining pursuit of the goal
- Making critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced, and the ideal solution
- Controlling frustration during problem solving
- Demonstrating and idealized version of the act to be performed

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) is where the most productivity occurs because they can achieve the task at hand with relevant scaffolded help. This was defined by Vygotsky as “The difference between the child’s developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with capable peers” (85). The following figure illustrates the ZDP:



Graph 3 – Zone of Proximal Development



The figure requires that for students to improve in their cognitive development, teachers ought to give their students assignments that they will be able to accomplish only with assistance in other words assignments that are in their ZDP. Teachers must also remember that not all students fall under the same characteristics of the ZDP; that is why when preparing an assignment we have to take into account that there are different types of learners that we should consider and include in it so it tasks that can be meaningful or challenging to them.

The theories that were presented have all to do with the learning process and the psychology behind it. These are characteristics that have a personal impact in the manner that I approach the classroom and what is being taught because I recognize that students must be the primary focus of the class and not just mere observers. That is the reason why Vygotsky's Scaffolding technique will help me steer students throughout the process and application of this investigation because they will feel assured with what will be taught. The idea behind this is that by the end of course students will be able to defend themselves on their own in a related situation and if they encounter any given obstacle they will be able to make the necessary decisions in order to express themselves correctly in the English language.

Through out the years that I have been teaching English I have noticed that students are more aware of new types of approaches that a teacher can use in the classroom, either by comments of other students or by personally seeing teachers use them in as part of their class. It is important for teacher to know about this because these types of techniques enhance teaching in a classroom and also help students obtain their goals and objectives in an effective manner. That is why I plan to use them as much as possible not only in the present but also my future classes and to maintain myself up to date on new teaching techniques or tendencies that may come out in order to provide students the best class possible.



## **2.3.4 Communicative Language Teaching**

### **2.3.4.1 Conceptualization**

There have been many methods of teaching used throughout the years but one of the most important methods has been the Communicative Approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The reason this came about was that many observers saw that “being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence; it required communicative competence” (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson 25). One of the main reasons why this approach has been used is because it focuses on students using the language in everyday situations and not only in the classroom. Since this method is very flexible teachers can use a wide variety of resources to apply in the classroom. That is why it is important to make classes seem as authentic as possible so that students can know how to act and react in these types of environments when they are not in class.

### **2.3.4.2 Characteristics**

Nunan mentions that there a list of five basic characteristics of CLT:

- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
  
- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
  
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on the language but also on the learning process itself.
  
- An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.



- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

### **2.3.4.3 Techniques and Materials**

The CTL method has very appealing aspects to it; this is due to the fact that it wants students to communicate efficiently and to be able to understand one another clearly. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson have mentioned the following list of techniques that can be used when using CTL (126-127):

- Authentic Material
- Scrambled Sentences
- Language Games
- Picture Strip Story
- Role-play

All of these aspects in this method are very important and should be considered when teaching, this is because CTL focuses on helping students to communicate and it also helps teachers to understand what is involved during communication. The most important factor is that the teacher is the ideal person that must understand how communication works and know how to transmit their knowledge effectively; therefore when students learn it from them they will be able to use it in the same demeanor.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Methodology

This research used a quantitative approach. Aliaga and Gunderson describe it as “explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods, in particular statistics”(1). The reason for using this approach is because the findings were measured using statistical data; this means that it enabled the investigation to use graphs/tables because the results obtained were quantifiable data. It also used methodological triangulation, according to Johnson the “value of triangulation is that it reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability (accuracy) of the information” (qtd. in Mackey and Gass 181).

The students worked on the topic which is “Your Great Adventure”. It encompasses the following units: Building Your Road Map, Knocking at the Entrepreneurial Doors, Why do you want to be an Entrepreneur?, What does it take to be an Entrepreneur? and Entrepreneurial Success. It is important to mention that the book *Small Business: An Entrepreneur’s Business Plan* was only used as a guide. However, the activities included in each of the units in the Moodle platform, come from online sources themselves and therefore are updated material.

At the Universidad del Pacífico most of the teachers in their schools are trying to incorporate Moodle into their classes. The exception could be in the Language School where only one teacher is using it on a consistent basis and this is why I have found it necessary to include myself in this area because I find that it might be a benefit to students. In the interest of achieving an efficient platform, the following categories had to be covered with students:





## **In Class Outline**

### **Overview**

Once the platform was ready, I had to do a general explanation of it to the students. All of the students had had access to the Internet and knew how to use a computer efficiently. When it came to using Moodle, most of them have received classes from other teachers of their career while using this platform; this is why they knew and understood what to do. There were only a few students that had not used the platform. Therefore, there was the need to provide them with some training on how to use it; a total of 2 sessions (4 hours) was required in order for these students to understand how to properly use Moodle.

### **Registering**

After the students understood how to use the platform and what it consisted of, they were asked to register themselves. All of the students were assigned randomly a student code which they went under during this investigation; the reason for this was so it can be kept anonymous. With this code they were asked to open an account and create their own password. I maintained myself at a near distance of them in case they needed any assistance during this procedure, for the most part there were only a few vocabulary definition questions asked during this time.

### **Support**

In order to answer the students' questions, at all time, of the platform or to know of any pending assignments in case they could not attend class, I asked students to first write down at least five other student email addresses, apart from my email address, of people they get in contact with. Secondly, I asked them to give their phone numbers to other classmates; all of the students in this course had a smart phone and had the application "Whatsapp" downloaded. After verifying this with the students I asked them to add the new phone numbers to their



application. And lastly, since many people are connected to the social media website Facebook, I found it to be an opportune time to use it for the purpose of communication. I asked students to friend classmates that were not on their account. The idea behind these options was so that students would be able to be in contact with various people in the event of a problem or situation.

### **Number of hours**

The time that was dedicated to the investigation was a total of 64 hours, 32 hours was strictly spent on the treatment group that participated in this experiment, the other 32-hour was used for the planning, course preparation, student follow up, evaluation and data analysis. Students at the university normally have two hours a day and a total of four hours per week of class.

## **3.2 Type of Research**

The type of research design was done in accordance to the Paradigm 2: Analytical-Nomological (Embleton 20). This was an experimental design; therefore there was an experimental group but not a control group. This was done in order to avoid lack of validity and bias.

## **3.3 Population and Sample**

The investigation was conducted on a Business 2 class from Universidad del Pacífico, the students that participated in this investigation were all third year business students and had been through various levels of English prior to being in this class.

### **Scope**

Universidad del Pacífico (Cuenca branch).



### **Time**

March – June 2013.

### **Elements**

One group of 3<sup>rd</sup> year business English students.

### **Total Population**

The total size of this convenient group is of 16 students. There were 6 men and 10 women. It is important to note that at the Universidad del Pacífico the student population is small compared to other universities in Cuenca. The average number of students per class range from 4 to a maximum number of 18.

## **3.4 Data Collection Techniques**

In order to collect data the following instruments were used: pretest, class assignments and at the end a post-test. Most of these tests and assignments that are on the platform were developed by the teacher using up to date business teaching content found on different sources from the Internet and others were personally designed. Besides, the students were asked to do a survey at the beginning of the investigation in order to know their computer skills and at the end they did a questionnaire in order to see what their attitude and feelings were towards this research. A different group of students from the university was asked to validate the content of the tests and surveys; after this was done it was then approved by the thesis Director. All of the details of evaluations are explained in the analysis. The teacher also kept at hand a personal journal.

## **3.5 Consideration of Extraneous Variables**

Some of the extraneous variables that occurred during this investigation were that some students were absent on the days of the explanation of the assignments,



luckily none of them were absent on the days of the application of the pre-test or post-test. Students' moods were another factor that may have affected the results; an example of this could be that since they knew that they were being part of an experiment it made them feel nervous at the time of doing the tasks. Another one was that students during this time also had their other courses were they needed to dedicate themselves to, in other words they could not concentrate all of their time to the assignments/tasks of this particular course. It should also be considered that some students may not have felt attracted to technology and may have tended to over generalize in reference to giving an accurate opinion towards the course itself.

### **3.6 Data Analysis and Organization Techniques**

Since this was a quantitative research investigation the gathered information was analyzed statistically by means of averages, percentages, correlations and comparative analysis. The results have been organized it into tables and graphs, with this the researcher was able to transform this information into text and conclusions.

### **3.7 Hypothesis**

The use of the platform Moodle influences the learning process of the reading and speaking skills in business English. In the following chapter there is a complete hypothesis verification that has been conducted.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

##### 4.1 Results – Analysis and Interpretation

In the area of education it is important to do a diagnosis at the beginning of an investigation in order to know the students level of English, which will determine their current situation. This investigation proposed the use of a virtual learning platform (Moodle) in a business English class, so it was essential that those involved in this process must have the necessary computer skills that would enable them to use the virtual platform.

An analysis of the educational process was done in two specific areas:

- Oral Communication (Speaking)
- Reading

This diagnosis also shows the results of the achievement levels, considering the two aforementioned categories and the level of student satisfaction in reference to the use of the virtual platform.

##### 4.1.1 Diagnosis

The diagnosis was done in the following three categories:

- Level of achievement in computer skills
- Level of Reading
- Level of Speaking



### 4.1.2 Computer Skills

However, computers and technology are being widely used in education; it does not necessarily mean every single student has a strong level of computer knowledge. This is why it was important to apply a 10-question *Technology Self-Assessment Questionnaire* (See Appendix 1) to all students who participated in this investigation to determine their level of computing skills. It was developed and validated by Professor Dennis Maloney and was not modified for this research, as the questions aimed the same objective.

Table 1: Technology Self Assessment (% of students)

Technology Self Assessment	Beginner	Elementary	Intermediate	High Intermediate	Advanced
Use email to communicate.			6,3	25	68,8
Create and send, email messages.			6,3	25	68,8
Use editing and formatting features.			6,3	25	68,8
Start up and shut down a computer.			6,3	37,5	56,3
Send, receive, open, and saves files.			12,5	31,3	56,3
Manage files: save, locate, and organize files.			6,3	50	43,8
Access the Internet and use search strategies.		6,3		50	43,8
Conduct research on the web.		6,3	12,5	56,3	25
Create a simple multimedia presentation.		12,5	25	43,8	18,8
Resolve technology problems.	6,3	12,5	12,5	50	18,8

Source: Jara



Table 2: Technology Self Assessment (% of averages)

Technology Self Assessment	Average (%)
Use email to communicate.	93
Create and send, email messages.	93
Start up and shut down a computer.	90
Send, receive, open, and saves files.	89
Manage files: save, locate, and organize files.	88
Access the Internet and use search strategies.	86
Use editing and formatting features.	84
Conduct research on the web.	80
Create a simple multimedia presentation.	74
Resolve technological problems.	73

Source: Jara

The graph shows that the participant group showed a good level of computer skills, this rules out the possibility of any difficulties that can come about. Some of the reasons for this are because students at the university have used computers throughout their studies and when it was time to use it in this investigation they knew what they had to do. The highest averages are in *Use email to communicate* and *Create and send email message* categories, the reason for this could be that students do this on a regular basis and its part of their everyday life. The category where students have the lowest average is in *Resolve technological problems*. It is because in general most students know how to use the computer and its basic functions. However, they do not have too much experience when it comes to fixing it because if they had a problem, they would ask the lab technician to fix it for them.

The average scores in the self-assessment are higher than 70%. This means that students have the necessary computer skills in order to use the platform.

#### 4.2 Level of Speaking (Pre-test)

In order to conduct this investigation it was necessary to do a pre-test. The



results of this pre-test will serve as reference and be used at the end of the investigation with the post-test so the relation level can be determined. Since these are business students, the pre-test was done while maintaining that criteria and it was also validated by a group of students of the same university (*See Appendix 2*). To be able to, somehow, measure how students developed the speaking skill, it was necessary to adopt a set of rubrics. Therefore, the rubric, which was developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, was used for this purpose (*See Appendix 3*).

- Organization
- Language
- Delivery
- Supporting Material
- Central Message

Once the speaking rubric was applied, the following results were obtained and are shown in percentages.

Table 3: Pre-test Speaking

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Pre-test (%)</b>
Organization	59,4
Language	48,4
Delivery	54,7
Supporting Material	48,4
Central Message	48,4
Average	51,9
Standard Deviation	0,58

Source: Jara





The highest percentage corresponds to the *Organization* category and there are no significant differences in the other categories. The reason for this could be the fact that they have experience in this area because when they have to do a presentation for another subject of their major, it usually follows the same procedure. The average is 51.9% and the dispersion (standard deviation) is of 0, 58% on average and 4.99% of dispersion across the 5 categories.

### **4.3 Level of Reading (Pre-test)**

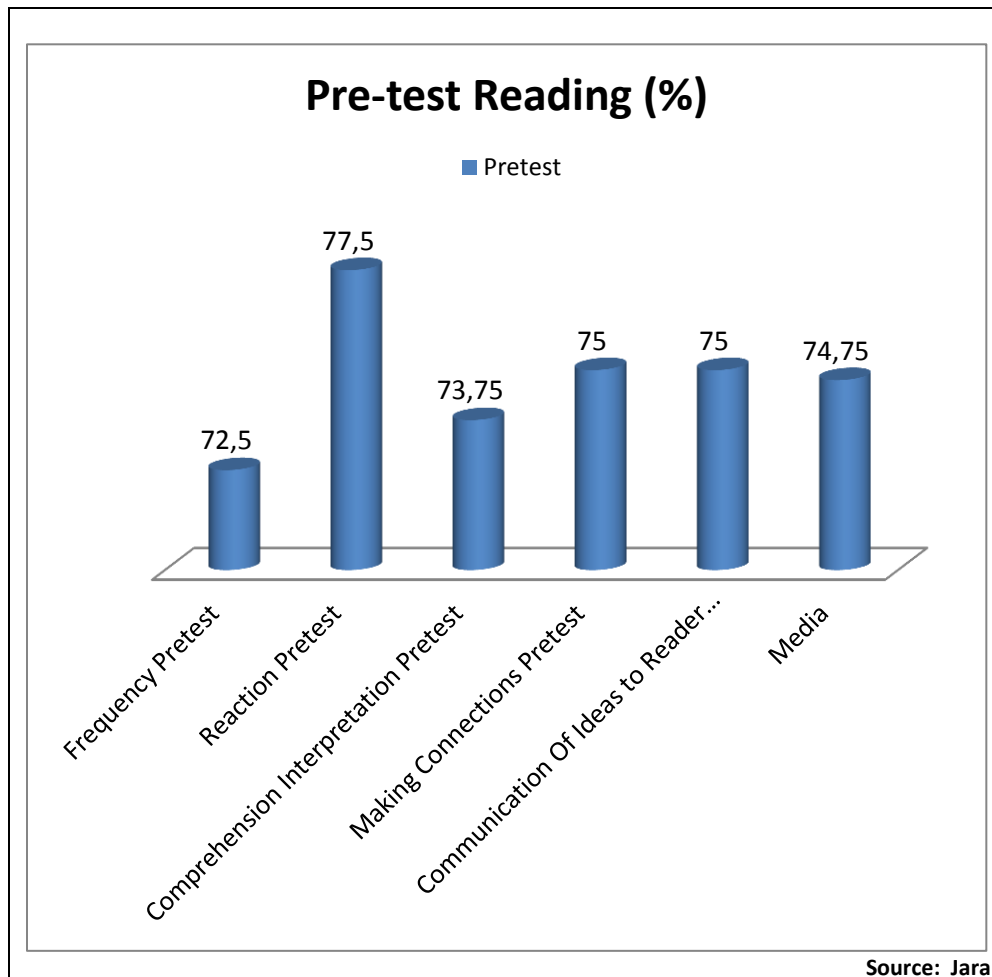
To carry out a comparative study between speaking and reading, a reading skill pre-test (*See Appendix 2*) was developed by the researcher. It is important to mention that the pre-test followed certain parameters to keep objectivity. Thus, a Rubric for Personal Response to Reading by Sandra Falconer Pace was adopted as it has been previously validated (*See Appendix 4*). It was used to evaluate each of the following categories:

- Frequency
- Reaction
- Comprehension Interpretation
- Making Connections
- Communication of Ideas to Reader.

The following results were obtained from the students that were participating in this research:



Graph 4: Pre-test Reading (%)



The data shows an average of 75% amongst the categories and the highest value being 77% which corresponds to *Reaction* category, there is not a notable variation with respect to the other categories and that the average dispersion of them is of 1.6%. It can be concluded from the values that were obtained that there is no variation between categories.

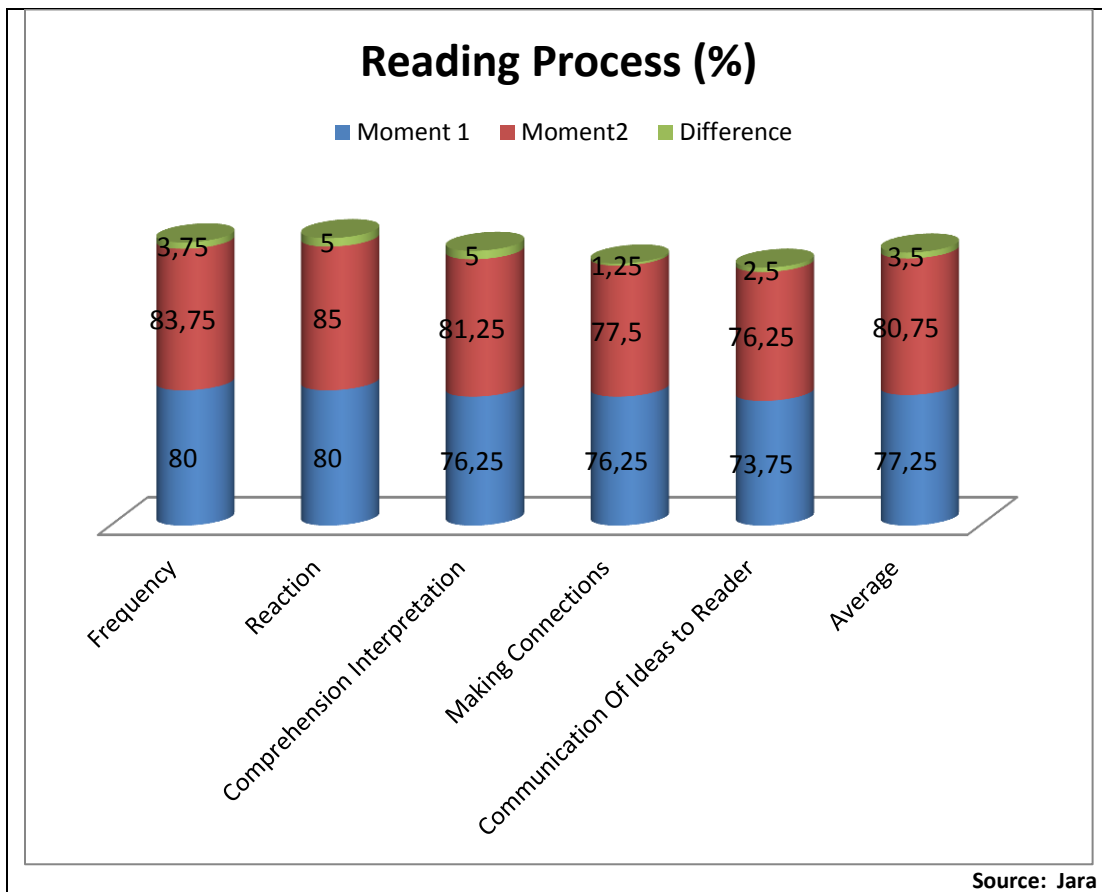
#### 4. 4 Process Results: Reading and Speaking

The two skills that this research focused on were *Reading* and *Speaking*, they were monitored throughout the investigation using the same rubrics used in the pre-test



in order to verify students' results. Moment 1 and Moment 2 make reference to the activities that were given to students and then were evaluated with the rubrics mentioned previously. Once the Moments were concluded, they were tallied and the following results were obtained.

Graph 5: Reading Process (%)

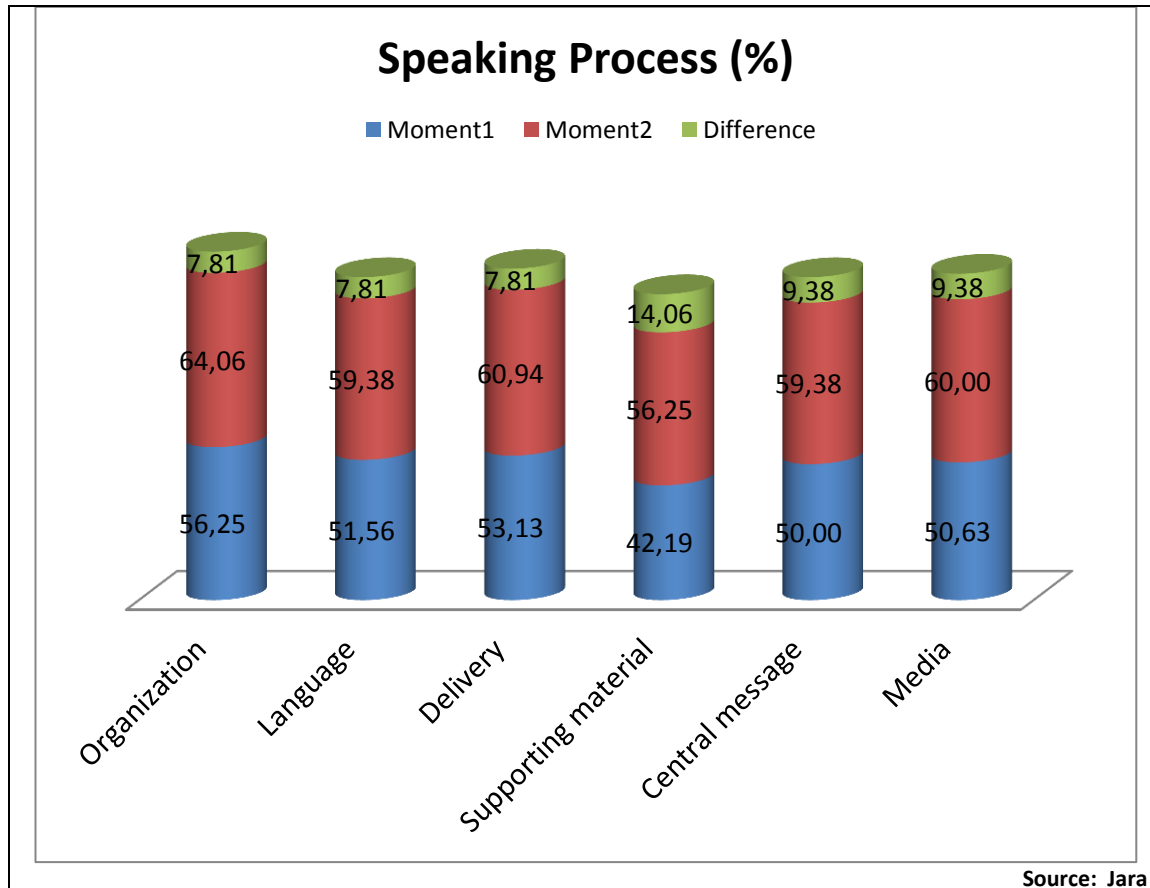


The graph above shows the overall *Reading* process. The highest average could be seen in the *Reaction* and *Comprehension Interpretation* category. This could be due to the fact that students showed interest in the units; therefore, they put more effort when doing the activities. Another factor was that they understood what they had to do after the task was given, thus when the evaluation was done, they were able to explain in more detail the reason behind their answers. There was an average increase of 3.5%



with a dispersion of 1.63% across the categories.

Graph 6: Speaking Process (%)



While the average increased by 9.38%, it should be noted that the highest grades are in the *Supporting Material* category which is 14%. The dispersion of the differences is of 2.4% and the variation in Moment 1 is 0.17% and 0.11% in Moment 2, which means there is no great difference in the achievement level between categories. It is important to note that Moment 2 has managed to decrease the dispersion; this means that students showed a more balanced performance in all categories.



#### 4.5 Level of Speaking (Post-test)

Once the pre-tests were concluded, it was necessary to do a post-test in order to observe if there were any changes after the units were done (See Appendix 5). The post-test was again developed by the researcher and it is important to mention that it followed similar parameters as the pre-test to keep objectivity. The post-test covered the same previous categories which were in the *Speaking* category. The following results were obtained in the post-test:

Table 4: Level of Speaking (Post-test)

Categories	Post-test (%)
Organization	79,7
Language	70,3
Delivery	68,8
Supporting Material	68,8
Central Message	62,5
Average	70,0
Standard Deviation	6,19

Source: Jara

The results obtained show that students have the highest average in the *Organization* category with an average of 79.7%. This could be because students were given a good amount of time in order to prepare for the activities or presentations that were to be done in the classroom. The next category was language with a 70.3% average and there were two categories that followed with the same average, which were the *Delivery* and *Supporting Material* category with a total of 68.8%. Students showed difficulties in the *Central Message* category, this means that in order to obtain a

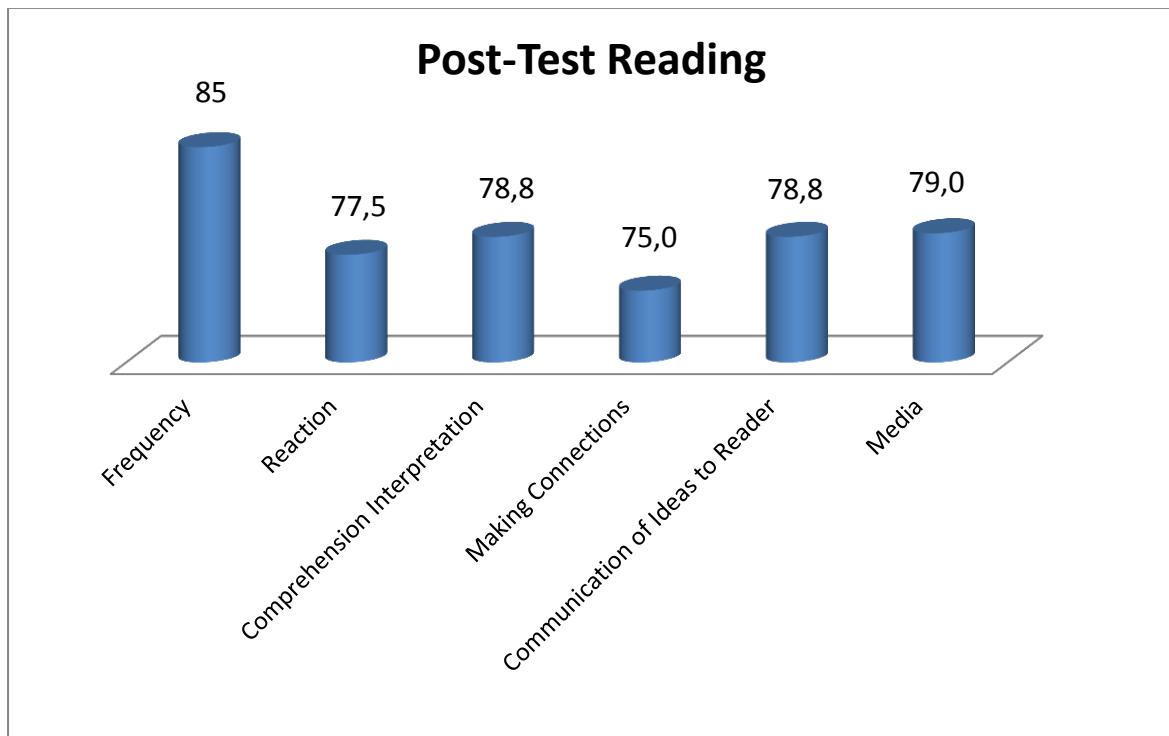


high average it will require students to put more effort and focus in what they are trying to transmit to their peers and teacher. The overall average reached by students in *Speaking* is 70% and the last category of the table shows the average dispersion between categories is 6.2%.

#### 4.6 Level of Reading (Post-test)

The reading rubric previously mentioned was used to evaluate students' progress in the *Reading* post-test (See Appendix 5), again it was done while maintaining objectivity and it was also validated by a group of students of the same university. The following results were obtained in each of the categories:

Graph 7: Reading Post-test (%)



Source: Jara



The results show that students achieve a higher average in the category of *Frequency* with 85%, one of the reasons that this happened could be because they read the questions carefully and clearly knew what was being asked of them. They had their biggest difficulty in the *Making Connections* category with 75%, this happened because they only concentrated on the information that they found but not all of them related their experience to what was being asked. In this part there were also two categories that had the same average of 78.8% which were the *Comprehension Interpretation* and *Communication of Ideas to Reader* categories and the *Reaction* had a value of 77.5%.

The overall average in the *Reading* category is of 79%. As for the dispersion, the average of differences between each category is of 3.3%. There is greater dispersion between the *Reading* and *Speaking* categories and one might conclude that students achieve higher averages with regards to this category than in the *Speaking* category.

#### **4.7 Pre-test and Post-test Results**

The most important educational process skills achievement percentage has to be that of the results and proper analysis of the data obtained in the pre-test and post-test of the *Reading* and *Speaking* categories.

The instrument that was used before and after for the pre-test and post-test were the same rubrics that were previously mentioned in the two categories.



Table 5: Pre / Post-test – Reading

Categories	Average (%)		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
Frequency	72,5	85	12,5
Reaction	77,5	77,5	0
Comprehension Interpretation	73,75	78,75	5
Making Connections	75	75	0
Communication of Ideas to Reader	75	78,75	3,75
Average	74,75	79	4,25
Standard Deviation	1,66	3,30	4,58

Source: Jara

While we can observe that there is an increase of 4.25% in the average, this increase is due to the *Frequency* category which has influenced the overall average. This can be due to the fact that since the beginning of the research students were aware of what they had to do and throughout the process they became even more involved with what was being asked of them, thus the percentage in this category increased. The categories of *Reaction* and *Making Connections* did not have any increase or decrease at all, even though they maintained themselves at the same percentage it is still considered normal. The reason for this was because students kept the same attitude when they were being evaluated as in the beginning. As a result of this, the dispersion in the post-test is of 3.3%.





Table 6: Pre / Post test - Speaking

	Average (%)		
Categories	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
Organization	59,4	79,7	20,3
Language	48,4	70,3	21,9
Delivery	54,7	68,8	14,1
Supporting Material	48,4	68,8	20,3
Central Message	48,4	62,5	14,1
Average	51,9	70,0	18,1
Standard Deviation	4,99	6,19	3,76

Source: Jara

The category with the highest percentage is *Language*, this is because the students were able to back their choices more effectively and they were also able to use appropriate vocabulary when they were being evaluated. This was a growing tendency during the investigation and because of this it obtained the largest increase. The other categories also have increases as seen in the chart and there has been an average difference of 18.1% in the results without any substantial dispersion between the categories of *Speaking*.

#### 4.8 Hypothesis Test Results

In order to determine whether there were differences in the various categories of the *Reading* and *Speaking* pre-test and post-test, a hypothesis test was performed considering the results obtained from before and after the use of the virtual platform used by students.



## Speaking

A hypothesis test is performed based on the average of differences in the values obtained in each of the categories, of the post-test minus the pre-test. If the values are positive, it will mean that the achievements were satisfactory.

The following assumptions were considered:

### **Null hypothesis**

The average performance after the use of the virtual platform is equal to the average performance before the use of the virtual platform.

### **Alternative hypothesis**

The average performance after the use of the virtual platform is higher than average performance before the use of the virtual platform.

$$H_0: \mu_d = \mu_a$$

$$H_1: \mu_d > \mu_a$$

The confidence level is of 95% with 15 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed test, the student statistical value  $t$  – is of 1.753. When doing the average analysis of two related samples, the following values for each of the corresponding categories were obtained:



Table 7: Speaking - Hypothesis Test

SPEAKING								
Tests/Categories	Related Differences					T	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
	Average	Standard Deviation	Standard average error	95% Confidence Interval difference				
				Inferior	Superior			
Post-test – Pre-test (Organization)	,813	,544	,136	,523	1,102	5,975	15	,000
Post-test – Pre-test (Language)	,875	,719	,180	,492	1,258	4,869	15	,000
Post-test - Pre-test (Delivery)	,563	,512	,128	,289	,836	4,392	15	,001
Post-test - Pre-test (Supporting Material)	,813	,750	,188	,413	1,212	4,333	15	,001
Post-test - Pre-test (Central Message)	,563	,512	,128	,289	,836	4,392	15	,001

Source: Jara

It is observed that the value of  $t$  in each of the samples are greater than 1.753, meaning that there is a rejection of the null hypothesis and because of this situation the alternative hypothesis is accepted. With this information it can be determined that there is a significant increase in student achievement when they use the virtual platform in reference to the *Speaking* category. If we analyze the values obtained in the table, they are very close or equal to zero, which leads us to conclude that the alternative hypothesis is accepted with confidence levels of 99%, meaning that the results obtained in the samples (considering the 16 students who worked with the virtual platform) are valid for the population.

### Reading

Using a similar analysis as the one previously mentioned in the *Speaking* category, a table was done corresponding to the categories of *Reading*, the results are the following:



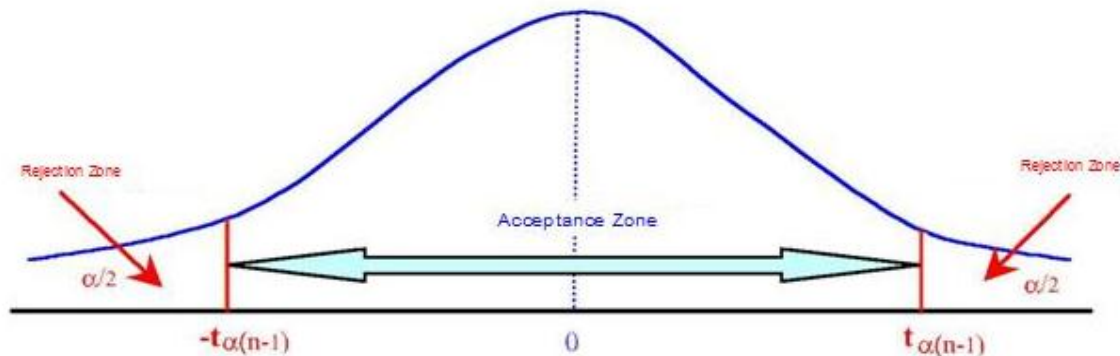
Table 8: Reading - Hypothesis Test

READING								
Tests/Categories	Related Differences					T	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
	Average	Standard Deviation	Standard average error	95% Confidence Interval difference				
				Inferior	Superior			
Post-test - Pretest (Frequency)	,625	,806	,202	,195	1,055	3,101	15	,007
Post-test - Pretest (Reaction)	,000	1,155	,289	-,615	,615	,000	15	1,000
Post-test - Pretest (Comprehension Interpretation)	,250	,775	,194	-,163	,663	1,291	15	,216
Post-test - Pretest (Making Connections)	,000	,730	,183	-,389	,389	,000	15	1,000
Post-test - Pretest (Communication Of Ideas to Reader)	,188	,655	,164	-,162	,537	1,145	15	,270

Source: Jara

If we look at the values of the  $t$  test, all of the categories except the first one are less than 1.753; this means that there is a non-rejection of the null hypothesis. There is a significant improvement, with a confidence level of 95% in the results of student performance after the use of the virtual platform only in the category corresponding to *Frequency*, but not with the other categories which show no differences.

Graph 8: Hypothesis Graph





## 4.9 Level of Satisfaction

In order to identify the level of satisfaction of students that used the virtual platform as a medium in the learning process, a satisfaction survey was developed (See *Appendix 6*). Once the data was collected it was put into the following table.

Table 9: Satisfaction Survey

Level of achievement	Percentage
Design and Setup	90
Clear Instructions	87,5
Work whenever I want	71,25
Time given was enough	83,75
Tasks were up to date	73,75
Improved Speaking and Reading	92,5
Knowledge of computers	88,75
Prefer using text book	86,25
Like to continue using platform	78,75
Overall impression	92,5
Average	84,5

Source: Jara

The data shows a value higher than 70% with the highest categories being in *Overall Impression* and *Improved Speaking and Reading*. The value of 71.25% does not affect the other categories. The average is of 84.5% and a dispersion (Standard Deviation) of 7.55% which gives us evidence that there was a high degree of student satisfaction.

## 4.10 Correlations

### 4.10.1 Speaking Correlations

An effort was made to show the relationships among the categories of Speaking, in



order to do this the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) now called the *IBM SPSS Statistics* was used. This program allows the user to do statistical analysis, it has been used extensively in the field of social sciences because it helps manage the quantitative data and it also measures the value between two separate variables. In this investigation the purpose of using the SPSS was in order to analyze the correlation matrix of the five variable categories in the four *Moments* with the purpose of finding high correlations coefficients and coincidences.

The results are shown in the following four tables:

Table 10: Correlations – Pre-test

Category		Pre-test - Speaking (Organization)	Pre-test - Speaking (Language)	Pre-test - Speaking (Delivery)	Pre-test - Speaking (Supporting Material))	Pre-test - Speaking (Central Message)
Pre-test - Speaking (Organization)	Pearson Correlation	1	,527	,705	,320	,414
	Sig. (bilateral)		,036	,002	,228	,111
Pre-test - Speaking (Language)	Pearson Correlation	,527	1	,458	,536	,518
	Sig. (bilateral)	,036		,075	,032	,040
Pre-test - Speaking (Delivery)	Pearson Correlation	,705	,458	1	,467	,606
	Sig. (bilateral)	,002	,075		,068	,013
Pre-test - Speaking (Supporting Material))	Pearson Correlation	,320	,536	,467	1	,246
	Sig. (bilateral)	,228	,032	,068		,358
Pre-test - Speaking (Central Message)	Pearson Correlation	,414	,518	,606	,246	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	,111	,040	,013	,358	

Source: Jara

The categories with correlation coefficients values above 0,7 are *Delivery* and *Organization*. They correspond to a 0.705 which means a moderate correlation exists between the two variables.

You could also consider the value of 0.606 as an average correlation between the categories of *Delivery* and *Central Message*. With these results we could consider that in practice *Delivery* should given more emphasis during the educational process because if this category is well worked, we would get better results in the other two



categories of *Central Message* and *Organization*, since the results show that it is directly related.

Table 11: Correlations – Moment I

Correlations - Moment I						
Category		Organization 1	Language 1	Delivery 1	Supporting Material 1	Central Message 1
Organization 1	Pearson Correlation	1	,711	,507	,543	,000
	Sig. (bilateral)		,002	,045	,030	1,000
Language 1	Pearson Correlation	,711	1	,474	,417	,000
	Sig. (bilateral)	,002		,064	,108	1,000
Delivery 1	Pearson Correlation	,507	,474	1	,255	,535
	Sig. (bilateral)	,045	,064		,341	,033
Supporting Material 1	Pearson Correlation	,543	,417	,255	1	,000
	Sig. (bilateral)	,030	,108	,341		1,000
Central Message 1	Pearson Correlation	,000	,000	,535	,000	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	1,000	1,000	,033	1,000	

Source: Jara

The coefficients greater than 0.7 would correspond to a moderate correlation among categories. It can be observed that the categories of *Language* and *Organization* correspond to Moment 1 which has a value of 0.711. Therefore, there is a slight increase in this ratio, since the result of the pre-test was of 0.527; the value increased to 0.711.



Table 12: Correlations – Moment II

Correlations Moment II						
Category		Organization 2	Language 2	Delivery 2	Supporting Material 2	Central Message 2
Organization 2	Pearson Correlation	1	,683	,633	,509	,552
	Sig. (bilateral)		,004	,008	,044	,027
Language 2	Pearson Correlation	,683	1	,503	-,149	,162
	Sig. (bilateral)	,004		,047	,582	,550
Delivery 2	Pearson Correlation	,633	,503	1	,059	,235
	Sig. (bilateral)	,008	,047		,827	,380
Supporting Material 2	Pearson Correlation	,509	-,149	,059	1	,602
	Sig. (bilateral)	,044	,582	,827		,014
Central Message 2	Pearson Correlation	,552	,162	,235	,602	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	,027	,550	,380	,014	

Source: Jara

In this second part of the process, which is known as Moment II, we can observe that the values are not greater than 0.7, this shows that there is no significant relationship between the categories, although we could consider the average values of 0.683 and 0.633 that relates to the *Organization*, *Language* and *Delivery* categories, which means that if we were to work more thoroughly in the *Organization* category this could lead to good results in the *Language* and *Delivery* categories.

The correlation also shows that the *Organization* category (first row) indicates average correlations with all of the other categories. While the other categories are related, their values are not low. If there was more work done in the *Organization* category the outcome could result in the increase of the other categories.

The data also shows a moderate relationship between *Central Message* and *Supporting Material* with a value of 0.602.





Table 13: Correlations – Post-test

Correlations – Post-test						
Category		Post test - Speaking (Organization)	Post test - Speaking (Language)	Post test - Speaking (Delivery)	Post test - Speaking (Supporting Material)	Post test - Speaking (Central Message)
Post test - Speaking (Organization)	Pearson Correlation	1	,231	,277	,277	,480
	Sig.(bilateral)		,390	,298	,298	,060
Post test - Speaking (Language)	Pearson Correlation	,231	1	,092	,092	,480
	Sig.(bilateral)	,390		,733	,733	,060
Post test - Speaking (Delivery)	Pearson Correlation	,277	,092	1	,000	,577
	Sig.(bilateral)	,298	,733		1,000	,019
Post test - Speaking (Supporting Material))	Pearson Correlation	,277	,092	,000	1	,577
	Sig.(bilateral)	,298	,733	1,000		,019
Post test - Speaking (Central Message)	Pearson Correlation	,480	,480	,577	,577	1
	Sig.(bilateral)	,060	,060	,019	,019	

Source: Jara

The correlation values obtained in this post-test show no significant relationship between categories, except in the *Central Message* one. If more work was done in this category it would increase the value and achievement of the rest of the categories. It also could be taken into consideration that if we were to increase the performance in all four categories: *Organization, Language, Delivery* and *Supporting Material* there would be an even higher value in the *Central Message* category.

If we consider as valid values that categories that are above 0.7 we can see that there is a moderate relationship between variables and one might conclude that the results of the correlations show that there is no relationship between categories; this means that students can develop the skills (5 categories) independently.

In other words, they can have a very good level of *Organization* but it does not imply that they can have it in the other categories; moreover they can have a good level in the *Central Message* category, even if the *Supporting Material* category is low.

Since this investigation was done at an educational institution we must consider that not only these mentioned categories were involved but there are other variables



which are related to psychology such as moods and anxiety. There also should be the consideration of other course assignments and mid-term exams, among others, that could affect their performance. All of these are strictly personal situations that could influence the development of each of the tests, I believe that values greater than 0, 5 should be considered as valid when analyzing the correlation coefficients.

#### 4.10.2 Reading Correlations

As in the case of *Speaking*, a correlation analysis has been done in the *Reading* area in the four Moments: Pre-test, Moment 1, Moment 2 and Post-test.

It has been taken into account the correlation coefficient values of any category greater than 0.6 corresponds to average values and any value close to 1 means that the relationship between the two categories is high.

Table 14: Pre-test Correlations

Correlations Pre-test						
Category		Frequency	Reaction	Comprehension Interpretation	Making Connections	Communication Of Ideas to Reader
Frequency	Pearson	1	,568	,380	,552	,394
	Correlation Sig.(bilateral)		,022	,147	,027	,131
Reaction	Pearson	,568	1	,326	,545	,545
	Correlation Sig.(bilateral)	,022		,218	,029	,029
Comprehension Interpretation	Pearson	,380	,326	1	,608	,608
	Correlation Sig.(bilateral)	,147	,218		,012	,012
Making Connections	Pearson	,552	,545	,608	1	,571
	Correlation Sig.(bilateral)	,027	,029	,012		,021
Communication Of Ideas to Reader	Pearson	,394	,545	,608	,571	1
	Correlation Sig.(bilateral)	,131	,029	,012	,021	

Source: Jara



We can observe that there is a moderate relationship between the *comprehension Interpretation* category with the *Making Connections* and *communication of Ideas to Reader* categories. This means that if a student has a good level of achievement in *Comprehension Interpretation*, chances are they would have good results in the *Making Connections* and *Communication of Ideas to Reader* categories.

As for the other categories, even though they do not show a statistically significant relationship, in practice and reality there are relationships because without a good level of achievement in the *Frequency* and *Reaction* category, it would be difficult for a student to make any progress in the other categories.

Table 15: Correlations Moment I

Correlations Moment I						
Category		Frequency	Reaction	Comprehension Interpretation	Making Connections	Communication Of Ideas to Reader
Frequency 1	Pearson Correlation	1	,433	,422	,281	,175
	Sig.(bilateral)		,094	,104	,292	,517
Reaction 1	Pearson Correlation	,433	1	,487	,609	,606
	Sig.(bilateral)	,094		,056	,012	,013
Comprehension Interpretation 1	Pearson Correlation	,422	,487	1	,881	,895
	Sig.(bilateral)	,104	,056		,000	,000
Making Connections 1	Pearson Correlation	,281	,609	,881	1	,895
	Sig.(bilateral)	,292	,012	,000		,000
Communication Of Ideas to Reader 1	Pearson Correlation	,175	,606	,895	,895	1
	Sig.(bilateral)	,517	,013	,000	,000	

Source: Jara

After working with the virtual platform the data in Moment 1 shows an increase in the coefficient correlation in the *Comprehension Interpretation* category with two other categories, *Making Connections* and *Communication of Ideas to Reader*. It also shows a value of 8.95, this means that there is a strong relationship between the categories of *Communication of Ideas to Reader* and *Making Connections*. This reason behind this is



that students are more aware of what they are reading and they are able to relate with it on a professional level with this the understanding of the readings becomes easier for them.

Table 16: Correlations Moment II

Correlations Moment II						
Category		Frequency	Reaction	Comprehension Interpretation	Making Connections	Communication Of Ideas to Reader
Frequency 2	Pearson Correlation	1	,265	,387	,272	,171
	Sig.(bilateral)		,321	,138	,308	,527
Reaction 2	Pearson Correlation	,265	1	,151	,280	,215
	Sig.(bilateral)	,321		,577	,294	,424
Comprehension Interpretation 2	Pearson Correlation	,387	,151	1	,586	,342
	Sig.(bilateral)	,138	,577		,017	,194
Making Connections 2	Pearson Correlation	,272	,280	,586	1	,701
	Sig.(bilateral)	,308	,294	,017		,002
Communication Of Ideas to Reader 2	Pearson Correlation	,171	,215	,342	,701	1
	Sig.(bilateral)	,527	,424	,194	,002	

Source: Jara

We would expect that the correlation coefficients values would maintain itself or increase; however, the data does not confirm this assumption because the values are considerably reduced in the second stage of the process. The reason for this was that the students were asked to finish reading their assignment at home, some of them did not do the reading and that is why they were not prepared for the evaluation. The value of 0,701 remains high but it is slightly lesser compared to the results of Moment 1. Another value that maintains itself is the average which is 0.586; this value shows the relationship between *Making Connections* and *Comprehension Interpretation*. The other results do not show statistically meaningful values.



Table 17: Post-test Correlations

Correlations Post-test						
Category		Frequency	Reaction	Comprehension Interpretation	Making Connections	Communication Of Ideas to Reader
Frequency	Pearson Correlation	1	,602	,325	,333	,000
	Sig.(bilateral)		,014	,220	,207	1,000
Reaction	Pearson Correlation	,602	1	,352	,361	,236
	Sig.(bilateral)	,014		,181	,169	,378
Comprehension Interpretation	Pearson Correlation	,325	,352	1	,455	,468
	Sig.(bilateral)	,220	,181		,077	,068
Making Connections	Pearson Correlation	,333	,361	,455	1	,218
	Sig.(bilateral)	,207	,169	,077		,417
Communication Of Ideas to Reader	Pearson Correlation	,000	,236	,468	,218	1
	Sig.(bilateral)	1,000	,378	,068	,417	

Source: Jara

The only value that shows an average correlation is the *Frequency* and *Reaction* which is 0,602. The coefficients which until Moment 2 had increased in this final test lowered to values of less than 0.5. This may be due to different conditions that could not have been controlled, e.g. the same state of mind of students when doing the exercises, stress, their other courses, among others. These are all psychological issues that may have influenced the results because in this type of educational research we must consider that there are factors that are not mathematically possible to control.

With these results we can say that there is neither a correlation nor a statistically significant trend between the categories of *Reading*.

#### 4.11 Comparative Analysis – Speaking Variable

The following table shows each of the categories of the *Speaking* variable, which are: Pre-test, Moment I, Moment II and Post Test.



Table 18: Speaking Variable

Category	Pre-test	Moment 1	Moment 2	Post-test
Organization	59,38 %	57,03	55,53	57,03
Language	48,44	43,62	43,09	43,62
Delivery	54,69	52,47	52,68	52,47
Supporting Material	48,44	45,70	45,35	45,70
Central Message	48,44	49,87	49,86	49,87

Source: Jara

In reference to the *Speaking*, the categories regarding *Organization*, *Central Message* and *Delivery* show higher results compared to *Language* and *Supporting Material*. Students' values are the lowest in the *Language* category.

If we make a comparison between categories within the four Moments, it could be concluded that there is no great difference between them. In the post-test, students achieved their highest values (scores) in the *Organization* category, but not in the other categories and it also must be taken into account that in the *Language* category, pre-test values are higher than in the post-test.

In regards to the *Speaking* the values are less than 60% in all categories and Moments throughout this educational investigation. When analyzing each Moment of the five categories, the following results are obtained:

### **Organization**

In this category, the results are slightly higher in the pre-test. The percentage difference is of 2.3%, this is because students were more organized in the beginning as opposed to the post-test.

### **Language**

It should be noted, that students also have a higher performance in this category.



The percentage difference in reference to the pre-test is of 4.8% and this is because students used appropriate language during their assessments.

### **Delivery**

The difference corresponds to a 2.2% and the result again was higher than the pre-test. Students made their presentations interesting and they looked comfortable when doing so.

### **Supporting Material**

The pre-test is higher than the post test by 2.7%. The reason behind this was that students did not appear to listen to the amount of time that was given to them, thus this affected their results in this category.

### **Central Message**

The trend also continues in this category, although to a lesser extent, 1.4%, the students gave an understandable presentation but it was not memorable.

In general, the data shows that in the *Speaking* category the results of students are higher in the pre-test than in the post-test. This can be due to the fact that students were more concentrated when they were asked to do the pre-test as opposed to the post-test where students did not prepare themselves enough for their answers and as a result it affected their post-test percentages.

## **4.12 Comparative Analysis – Reading Variable**

The following table shows each of the categories of *Reading* variable, which are: Pre-test, Moment I, Moment II and Post-Test.



Table 19: Reading Variable

Category	Pre-Test	Moment 1	Moment 2	Post-test
Frequency	72,50	80,00	83,75	85,00
Reaction	77,50	80,00	85,00	77,50
Comprehension Interpretation	73,75	76,25	81,25	78,75
Making Connections	75,00	76,25	77,50	75,00
Communication Of Ideas to Reader	75,00	73,75	76,25	78,75

Source: Jara

In general the results in the *Reading* process are greater than those of the *Speaking* category as they range from 72% to 85%. The students performed better in the category of *Frequency*, and it shows continuous progress throughout the process.

In a similar case, if we view Moment I we can see that in the *Communication of Ideas to Reader* category has a slight decrease in the beginning. The *Frequency* category is also higher in the pre-test. In the *Reaction* and *Comprehension Interpretation* categories, although there is an increase throughout the process, the values show a decrease in post-test results. This can be due to the fact that students were not able to understand some of the questions when they took the post-test.

If we make a further analysis in each of the categories, we have that in:

### **Frequency**

There is a steady increase throughout the process. It starts in the pre-test values of 72.5% and in the end it reaches a value of 85%. Students answered what was asked of them.

### **Reaction**

There is also a notable progress if we compare the results of the pre-test as opposed to the 77.5 decrease of the post-test which by coincidence is of the





same value as the beginning. One could argue that, apparently, there is not a good performance; however, this could be due to other variables such as not explaining their point of view clearly because if we analyze the other three Moments we notice there is an increase of values in each.

### **Comprehension Interpretation**

Similar to the previous category, the data shows an improvement in the first three Moments, but not in the post-test which has a value of 78.75. But we must take into consideration that this value is still higher than the pre-test which is of 73.75.

### **Making Connections**

There is a performance improvement in this category, although post-test values are equal to the pre-test of 75%. The reason for this was because they did not make enough references and connections to their personal experience.

### **Communication of Ideas to Reader**

Although the Moment 1 category has a lesser percentage, we can observe that there is continuous progress in the performance level of students. This happened because students understood the main ideas of the reading and were able to transmit them in a clear manner to the teacher.

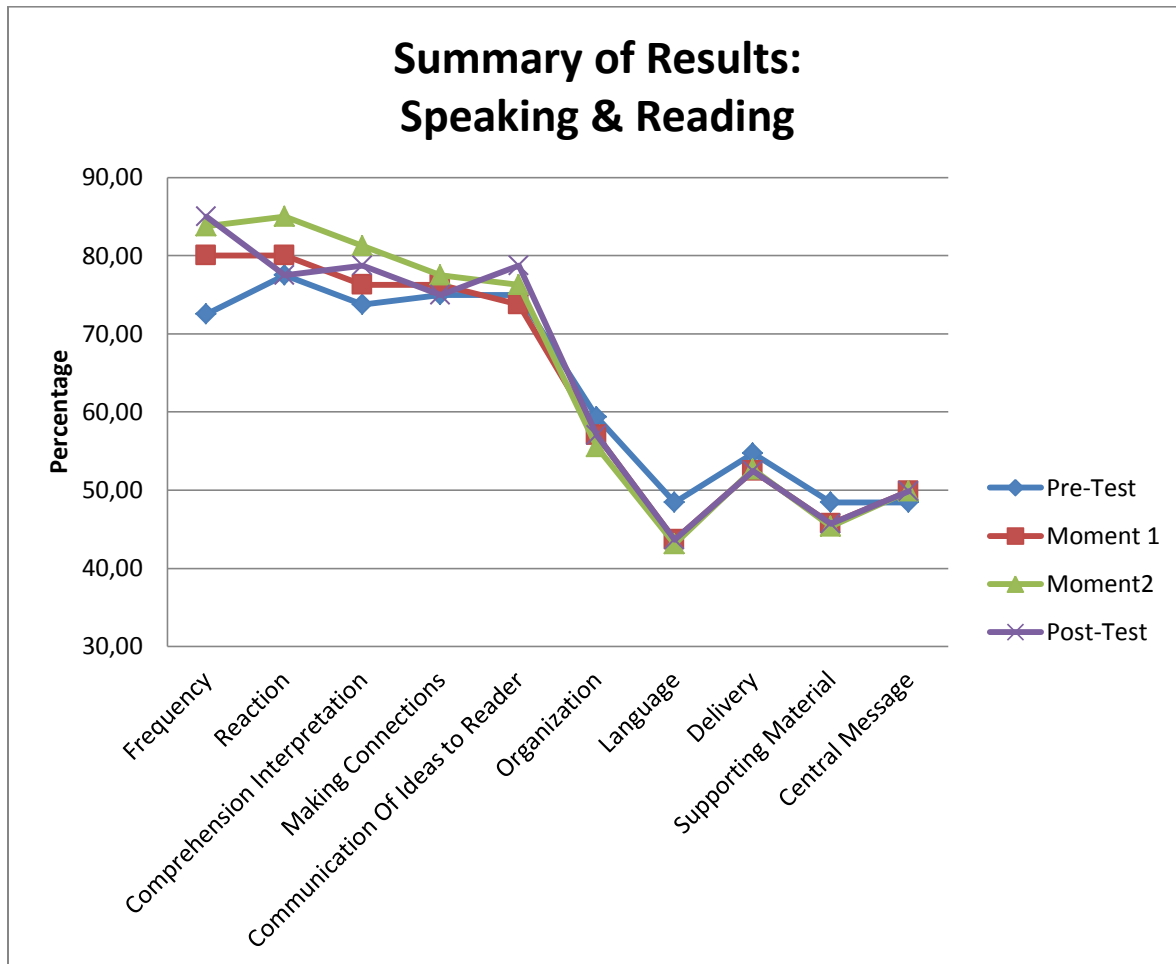
In general, there is a continuous performance progress in students that used the virtual platform due to different aspects already explained.

## **4.13 Final Analysis**

The two language skills that have been worked on were: *Speaking* and *Reading*. The values are shown in the following graph:



Graph 9: Summary of Results - Speaking and Reading



Source: Jara

The data and the graph show the highest level of achievement in *Reading* and within this *Reading* category, the best results are in Moment 2, which means before giving the students the post-test.

In the case of *Speaking*, the highest values are in the pre-test, without having meaningful changes between categories throughout the treatment. The highest values correspond to the *Frequency* category and the *Central Message* category has the lowest values.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To be able to contribute to this field of knowledge, it is important to determine the different conclusions and recommendations that have been reached along this research. The conclusions will be presented first and then the recommendations.

#### 5.1 Conclusions

This investigation, that was done with the intermediate English students at the Universidad del Pacífico, has provided me with new insights about teaching and the institution itself. During the time that I have been at the university (13 years), virtual platform-training was only offered once to teachers 6 years ago. This training was specifically an overview of what Moodle was, rather than how to use it with a teaching purpose. Based on this experience it can be concluded that the authorities may not have seen this as a new approach to teaching.

The Moodle platform experience in general was very satisfying but it did take a lot of hard work. The hard work was in reference to looking for the proper information to include in all the units of the platform, this was because it had to be related to the topic and needed to be coherent to the level of English students had. Besides, having to identify the proper activity that would match the intended learning outcomes was also time-consuming. It is also important to mention that the follow up in reference to correcting/grading assignments and presentations was also demanding because of the long hours it took to go over their corrections and verify that they received the proper grade. Finally, it is necessary to mention that a considerable amount of time was devoted for permanent assistance to students.

Moreover, students had to be consistently reminded to do their assignments so they would not fall behind and they were asked personally to not miss classes, especially on the days that they were being evaluated. Student absenteeism was



reduced to a minimum as I constantly brought up the need to finish our course as scheduled.

Even though the results of the use of the virtual platform were favourable it must be taken into consideration that we cannot generalize these results from this investigation to an entire population of students because it was conducted to a total of 16 participants.

The gratifying part of working with the platform was to see that the students in general really liked the material and enjoyed the classes as seen in the survey that was conducted at the end of the course. It was also evident because it was noticed in their reactions to the platform. They were very enthusiastic to see what they would have to do next. It was also rewarding to see how much information they gathered when doing an assignment and how well prepared they were when they had to do presentations. The most important aspect that was noticed was that midway through the course they started to communicate more in English because they felt more confident with the language and used the terminology that was found on the platform throughout their time in the classroom, this was evident in their *Reading* and *Speaking* categories because their results at the end of the investigation showed a general improvement in these categories, thus concluding that the use of technological resources, in this case a virtual platform, does influence the learning process in students in a positive manner.

Finally, the most important benefit from this investigation is that it could generate a change in the *Business* courses because it gave students a positive attitude towards new processes and activities to perform in class. It was also very helpful for my professional growth because it has given me the opportunity to apply a different tactic to teaching with positive results. The outcome that was acquired in this investigation can also contribute to the improvement of quality and academic excellence at our university.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Every educational institution that thrives to obtain academic excellence should be up to date on new and relevant teaching methods.



This particular investigation was based upon teaching with a virtual platform. Therefore, it is recommended that the university should apply more emphasis and use this tool to its full potential as it has both the platform and the infrastructure at their disposal. The university and its authorities should make their Language School personnel aware of this tool because not many teachers know that this exists at the university. It is also recommended that the university provide teachers with seminars on virtual platforms such as Moodle; most importantly it is teachers themselves that should be motivated to learn and acquire knowledge about this type of resource. Once this is done teachers will then have another instrument that could be helpful to them in their courses.

Students should be told at the beginning of the course that they must commit to the course and not to be absent or miss classes, otherwise the teacher will constantly have to remind them; thus taking up class time which can be spent on other meaningful tasks. It is recommended to have a commitment form that can be signed by the students, at the beginning of the course.

It is also recommended that teachers should not be assigned more than 2 virtual platform classes when given their schedule because of the hard work it takes to build an efficient and fully functional virtual platform course. As a matter of fact, the making of an activity can take a teacher up to 2 hours. Each unit encompasses an average of 6 activities. Students should be told at the beginning of the course that they must commit to the course and not to be absent or miss classes, otherwise the teacher will constantly have to remind them; thus taking up class time which can be spent on other meaningful tasks.

If given the opportunity to do this investigation again, it is highly recommended to have more students to experiment on. It would be interesting to see if the results that are obtained with more students are similar to those that were obtained in this present investigation that was performed on the business English intermediate students.

Authorities should promote training of the use of new teaching resources; in this case Moodle because students appreciated the fact that the virtual platform was different from their traditional courses that they had previously received at the university.



Also, there should be a policy within the institution, that new teaching resources should be implemented with the purpose of helping students to achieve their learning goals.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Technology Self-Assessment Questionnaire

- 1.** I know how to start up and shut down a computer system and peripherals; open and close files; navigate with scroll bars, mouse, and special keys.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

- 2.** I know how to manage files: save, locate, and organize files on a local computer and remote network spaces.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

- 3.** I know how to resolve commonly occurring technology problems (e.g. printer jam, ink cartridge replacement, and frozen computer screen).

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

- 4.** I know how to use the editing and formatting features of a word processing program (e.g., centering, spacing, fonts, margins, copy and paste, spell check).

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

- 5.** I know how to create a simple multimedia presentation using a design template.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner



**6.** I know how to create and send email messages: open, save, print, and delete messages.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

**7.** I know how to send, receive, open, and save files attached to email messages. Understand the risks associated with opening attachments from unknown sources.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

**8.** I know how to access the Internet and use search strategies to locate information.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

**9.** I know how to conduct research on the web.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner

**10.** I know how to use email to communicate with students, staff, parents, and the community.

Advanced	High Intermediate	Intermediate	Elementary	Beginner



## Appendix 2: Pre-test

### Reading

Read the following article from the Financial Times and answer the questions.

# Do not waste time and energy trying to beat your competitors

By W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne

We have looked at a number of factors that are often thought to be related to a company's potential to achieve high growth. We asked, for example, is high growth a function of young managers? Of being a small entrepreneurial upstart? Of big financial investments in the latest technologies? Of operating in a favourable competitive or industry environment? No systematic differences were spotted along any of these lines. But what we did find was a fundamental difference in the way companies approached strategy.

When, for example, Callaway Golf, the US golf club manufacturer, launched its 'Big Bertha' golf club, it rapidly rose to dominate the market. This was not because Callaway had no competitors – in fact, it had long-

standing ones. But the golf clubs of all the main manufacturers looked alike and were out of line with what players wanted: a golf club with a larger head that made playing more rewarding and fun. Callaway broke away from the pack with Big Bertha and earned high growth in revenues and profits. The competition, by contrast, so focused on one another, failed both to perceive and act on this opportunity.

High-growth companies in our study paid little attention to matching or beating the competition. Instead, they sought to make the competition irrelevant by offering buyers a quantum leap in value. The question they posed was not what would it take to be better than the competition, but what would it take to win the mass of buyers even without marketing? The

drive for this type of innovation pushes these companies to question everything an industry and competitors are doing, opening their eyes to the differences between what companies are competing on and what buyers actually value. This is not only the route to high creativity, but to tremendous cost savings. Just think of home products retailer Ikea; Direct Line Insurance; Home Depot, the US Do-it-yourself and home improvement retailer; news organisations CNN and Bloomberg, or Starbucks, the US coffee shops chain. The innovative ideas fuelling these companies' highly profitable growth are not the result of aiming to build advantages over the competition. They are the result of a drive to offer superior value to buyers.

From the *Financial Times*

### Speaking: Over to you

Can you think of a product or service where there is something you would like to improve? Could this improvement be a strategic opening for someone? For example, if you play a sport, are you completely happy with your equipment? Is there an improvement you would like to make? Do you think there is a strategic opportunity here?



## ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

*for more information, please contact [valve@aacu.org](mailto:valve@aacu.org)*

### Definition

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (all one) level performance.*

	Capstone 4	3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
<b>Organization</b>	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
<b>Language</b>	Language choices are imaginative, memorable and compelling and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
<b>Delivery</b>	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
<b>Supporting Material</b>	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis which significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis which generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis which partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis which minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
<b>Central Message</b>	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.



## Appendix 4: Reading Rubric

Rubric for Personal Response to Reading

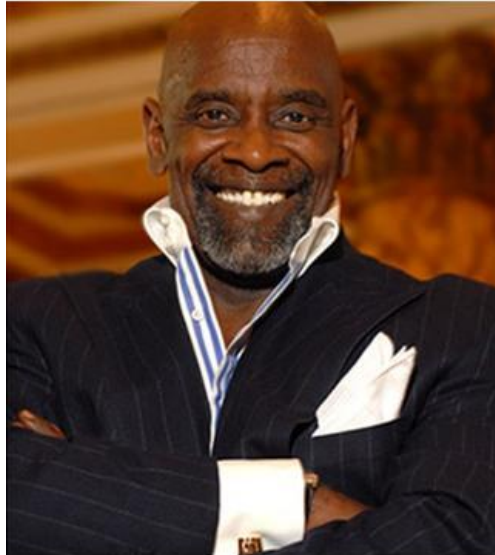


	Needs More Work	Fair	Good	Excellent	Outstanding	No Score
<b>Frequency</b>	Few response entries are completed.	Several response entries are completed.	Neatly all responses requested are completed.	All responses requested are done.	Completed beyond expectation – student completes more responses than asked to do.	<b>None completed.</b>
<b>Reaction</b>	Shows no interest in responses and provides no explanations for lack of interest in selections.	Shows limited interest; provides basic indication of reaction and gives only sketchy, formulaic reasons for liking/disliking a selection.	Shows considerable interest in selection, or explains clearly and with some detail why the selection does not interest this reader. Has thought beyond basic expressions of liking or disliking.	Shows interest in selection either positively or negatively through thoughtful consideration of main idea and details. Explanation is substantial and effective.	Shows passionate reactions positively or negatively to selection and explains insightfully and in depth how these reactions are produced by the content, style and/or point of view in the selections.	
<b>Comprehension Interpretation</b>	Explanation shows errors in basic understanding of plot, characterization and/or setting.	Explanation shows basic understanding of literal elements such as plot, setting and characterization.	Explanation shows a good understanding of literal elements and a beginning recognition of some abstract elements such as symbolism, theme, irony, etc.	Explanation shows excellent understanding of literal elements, recognition of more abstract elements and some explanation of their significance.	Explanation shows sophisticated understanding of textual elements, and makes insightful observations about abstract elements (symbolism, theme, irony, etc.)	
<b>Making Connections</b>	Chooses not to make connections to personal experiences or to prior knowledge.	Makes surface and obvious connections to personal experiences.	Makes logical and/or empathetic connections to personal experiences.	Makes logical and/or empathetic connections to and beyond personal experiences.	Makes multiple and insightful connections to personal experience and/or to other subjects, other texts, & other people's experiences.	
<b>Communication of Ideas to Reader</b>	Reader is confused about writer's intent and point of view or so little is provided that reader is uninterested.	Reader has some understanding of writer's basic intent and point of view.	Reader understands writer's main intent and point of view, and is given sufficient detail to develop some interest in them.	Reader has a clear understanding of writer's intent and point of view and is given enough detail and vividness of description to be interested and involved in what the writer is saying.	Reader's own understanding of the topic is enhanced by involvement with and interest in the writer's craft and depth of thought in explanation.	





## Appendix 5: Post-test



## Why Chris Gardner is Extraordinary

By: Peter Horsfield

We all face life's struggles and sometimes we are defeated, other times we become the victor. There are those just give up on the first provocation that life gives, there are those who give it a good fight down to the last drop of blood. It is often said that quitters never win and winners never quit. Such is Chris Gardner—a winner because he never quits.

His various failures became the springboard from which successes later in life will be based. His ability to just move on regardless of the odds proved to us that life's challenges are not permanent and that there is hope no matter what.

His tenacity inspired people because in these times of economic turmoil, a lot of us are facing the same situation and while many are already defeated, others took inspiration from Chris Gardner and continued the fight with the hopes that someday, just like Chris, the tides will turn to their favor.

Happy endings always inspire us. There is that part of us that want to experience the same happy ending that a character has experienced in a story. But the life of Chris Gardner is not only about happy endings, it's about how you pursue that happy ending and, while attaining the goal is rewarding, the journey towards the goal is equally so.



His philanthropic works are proof that he valued the journey that he has been through in that he is willing to give a helping hand to those who used to be on the same boat as he was. This is a man who doesn't forget life's lessons; rather he cherished them and continues to learn from them.

Listening to his keynote speeches is an experience like no other because you know that you are learning from a man who has been badly bent but not broken. His speeches are not the empty rants that you hear from rappers and pseudo-preachers, these rather are life principles learned the hard way.

Chris Gardner is an inspiration to a lot of us because we can all relate to the kind of situations that he has been through. How many experienced being left by a lover at a time when everything seems to crumble down? How many experienced homelessness after being left by the one you love? How many have to raise a child in the midst of all this?

We all experience these kinds of challenges but Chris is of different mold. Instead of giving in to the pressures, he fought it out until things go his way. This is the kind of person that inspires us because like most of us, he has experienced life's worst but unlike most of us, he never allowed it to define who he is.

The life of Chris Gardner is a life lived to the fullest. It's not only about making dreams come true, but also about living through the daily challenges until you attain those dreams. When you study the life of Chris, not only you will you realize that dreams do come true, but that there are practical steps that you need to take to make them come true. His life is not about the "pie in the sky" but the recipe of how he cooked that pie and it inspires us because we, too, would like to cook our own pie.

Another thing that inspires people about Chris Gardner is that his prosperity never changed him. A lot of people find prosperity harder to live than poverty in that it feeds deep seated greed that only finds expression now that they are wealthy.

Wealth is difficult to control because with it comes power and influence and the abuse of which, brings a man back to where he came from. Not so with Chris Gardner. He might have dressed differently, lived in a luxurious house, travelled a lot, and enjoyed most of what a wealthy man would enjoy, but he never forgot his roots.

His philanthropic endeavors are evidence that the man still identifies with where he came from. In his speeches we see a man who wants to pull us to where he is and enjoy the same things that he is enjoying. Looking at Chris Gardner, one will realize that dreams are possible and goals are reachable.

Chris Gardner is an inspiration and will continue to be one in the hearts of this generation and the generations to come. A man like him comes but once and the legacy that he left behind lingers and continues to warm our hearts. He is a successful father, a successful



businessman, and a life teacher like no other. That is why Chris Gardner is an extraordinary man.

## **His Accomplishments**

- Sponsors various philanthropic programs like the Cara Program
- Sponsor shelter programs at the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church
- He has helped provide funding for a \$50 million low-income livelihood and housing project in San Francisco
- Serves on the board of the NFI (National Fatherhood Initiative)
- He has served in various capacities at various foundations including National Education Foundation Board, Education Association's National Educational Support Personnel Award, The American Federation of Teachers' Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel Award.
- Recipient of the 25th Annual Humanitarian Award
- Founder and CEO of Gardner Rich & Co
- He received the Father of the Year Award from the NFI
- Founder and CEO of Christopher Gardner International Holdings

## **Speaking: Over to you**

After watching the movie “Pursuit of Happyness” you will have a speaking dialogue with the teacher. You will be asked to connect Units 1-5 of the platform with what you saw in the movie and answer the following question:

What characteristics did Chris Gardner have to make him an entrepreneur?



### Appendix 6: Satisfaction Survey

## Survey

The following survey will ask several questions in reference to the use of the Moodle platform that was used in the Business class at the Universidad del Pacifico. This survey is confidential.

Please fill out all information that is asked in the survey.

Student Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male  Female

Please read the following parameters that will be used in the questions of the survey:

- 4 – Strongly agree
- 3 – Somewhat agree
- 2 – Neutral
- 1 – Somewhat disagree
- 0 – Strongly disagree

Once read, please mark your answer with an **X**.

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree 0</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree 1</b>	<b>Neutral 2</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree 3</b>	<b>Strongly Agree 4</b>
1 – I like the design and setup of the platform.					
2 – I find the instructions on the platform clear and understandable.					
3 – The platform gives me the opportunity to work whenever I want.					
4 – The time given for assignments and activities on the platform was enough.					
5 – The tasks were up to date and related to the Business course.					
6 – The platform helped me improve my English skills, especially in speaking and reading.					
7 – You must have plenty of knowledge with computers to use the platform.					
8 – I prefer using the text book instead of the platform.					
9 - I would like to continue using the platform in my future business classes.					
10 – My overall impression of the platform is very good.					