



## **ABSTRACT**

This research has been done through an analytical and critical process, whose main objective is to determine the influence of B-learning, which stands for Blended Learning, in a Communicative-Approach English as a Foreign Language, *EFL*, classroom, Language Department, University of Cuenca, during the school trimester March - May. Constructivism was first in mind when creating virtual activities to teach English as a foreign language to fourth-level students at the University of Cuenca. Moodle was the main software used in order to teach the class with some other technological devices helping to create a virtual class, leading to B-learning. The virtual material created is there to promote motivation in the teaching faculty as well as in students, generating a multiplying effect.

**KEYWORDS:** B-LEARNING, LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA, COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH, APPROACH EFL



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# **UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA**

## **SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **MASTER'S PROGRAM IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH LITERATURE**

“B-LEARNING: ITS INFLUENCE IN A COMMUNICATIVE-APPROACH EFL CLASSROOM, LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA.”

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*Al presentar esta tesis como uno de los requisitos previos para la obtención del título de Maestría en Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada, por la Universidad de Cuenca, autorizo al Centro de Información Juan Bautista Vásquez para que haga de esta tesis un documento disponible para su lectura, según las normas de la universidad.*

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Cuenca, 29 de marzo de 2011



# ***AUTHORSHIP***

The ideas, opinions, and comments specified in this document are the sole responsibility of its author, Guillermo Pacheco.

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# **TO**

My Dear Parents Yermita and Vicente, to my wife Ma. Eliza, to my sisters, Ma. Lourdes and Sonia, to my nieces and nephew, Karen, Carlita, and Carlitos, to my family, who have always been there supporting me unconditionally, and to my friends and classmates, who, one way or another, were there to support me, as well.

**Guillermo**



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**Guillermo**



## INTRODUCTION

Technology came out with several purposes, but mainly scientific ones. However, its use has become widespread over all the different areas, and education is no exception. Nowadays, we can step into any institution and see how well-equipped they are, and yet we still wonder how it has been integrated into the educational field. This is how, little by little, technology has also become part of learning languages.

Integrating technology into the teaching and learning process implies four key components of learning that can be seen in successful technology integration: active engagement, participation in groups, frequent interaction and feedback, and connection to real world experiences.

First of all, there is *active engagement*. Having students use different devices or artifacts in order to achieve a goal, make the teaching-learning process more engaging. Students are breaking the barrier of the book and breaking, in some way, the monotony of learning something out of a book page by page. Experimenting new ways of learning, in any subject, will keep students curious and willing to do their best at the time they are sharing their findings with their peers. Thus, they will also be achieving the second key feature, which is *participation in groups*; students actively participate in different projects with their partners, such as outdoor and/or indoor research, such as researching the heart rates before and after a rehearsal.

The third criterion is *frequent interaction and feedback*. I believe this is one of the most important aspects because the teacher becomes a facilitator of the learning process due to the fact that he/she guides students along the way, but it is the students who are the ones in charge of their own learning. Therefore, the teacher is always there to provide feedback when needed.

Last but not least is the trait *connection to real world*. Sometimes, as teachers, we tend to bring up things which might not be useful in real life. However,



with the Internet, students are able to travel the world without leaving their classroom which makes their learning, this way, more memorable and lasting.

Because of this, technology has taken over education and has perfectly fitted into the curriculum due to its versatility. It can be adapted to both indoor and outdoor activities. It offers the chance to help students learn things on a face-to-face basis and also on a semi face-to-face one. Teachers are able to reach all types of students with all types of learning styles and yet still accomplish teaching-learning goals. Of course, in order to make it work, it has to be designed properly, taking into account the subject to be taught, the types of students, and also their individual backgrounds.

Finally, technology is like a good book, once you start using it, you simply cannot put it down. I have this idea because I love working with technology and I think it is such a great resource when we learn to use it properly.



## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE PROBLEM**

#### **1.1 TOPIC**

B-Learning: Its Influence in a Communicative-Approach EFL Classroom, Language Department, University of Cuenca.

#### **1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM**

##### **1.2.1 CONTEXTUALIZATION**

Latin-American students spend so many years in their classrooms with the goal of learning English as a foreign language. Unfortunately, students have not been able to accomplish their learning goals which can be clearly seen in freshmen students at the university when they take their placement test and most of them get into first and second level mainly. In the worst cases, there are students who do not even place in the basic levels; thus, they have to start at the most basic level required by the institution. The reasons for such results could be:

- ✚ According to the Ministry of Education, there are parameters each institution must follow to fulfill national requirements; however, it seems that the methodology used is unstandardized, even within the same institution, let alone nationally. Students are not internalizing what they are learning; instead, they are thinking and performing mechanically.
- ✚ The resources that have been used to teach English as a foreign language might not be suitable due to the fact that a textbook cannot be considered a complete resource. There are plenty of other resources which can be used alongside any textbook, disregarding the place it comes from or where it was made.



- ✚ Finally, the number of students per class does not allow the teacher to reach everyone the way someone would do with smaller groups, making the teaching-learning process for the individual a process for the masses rather than a significant one.

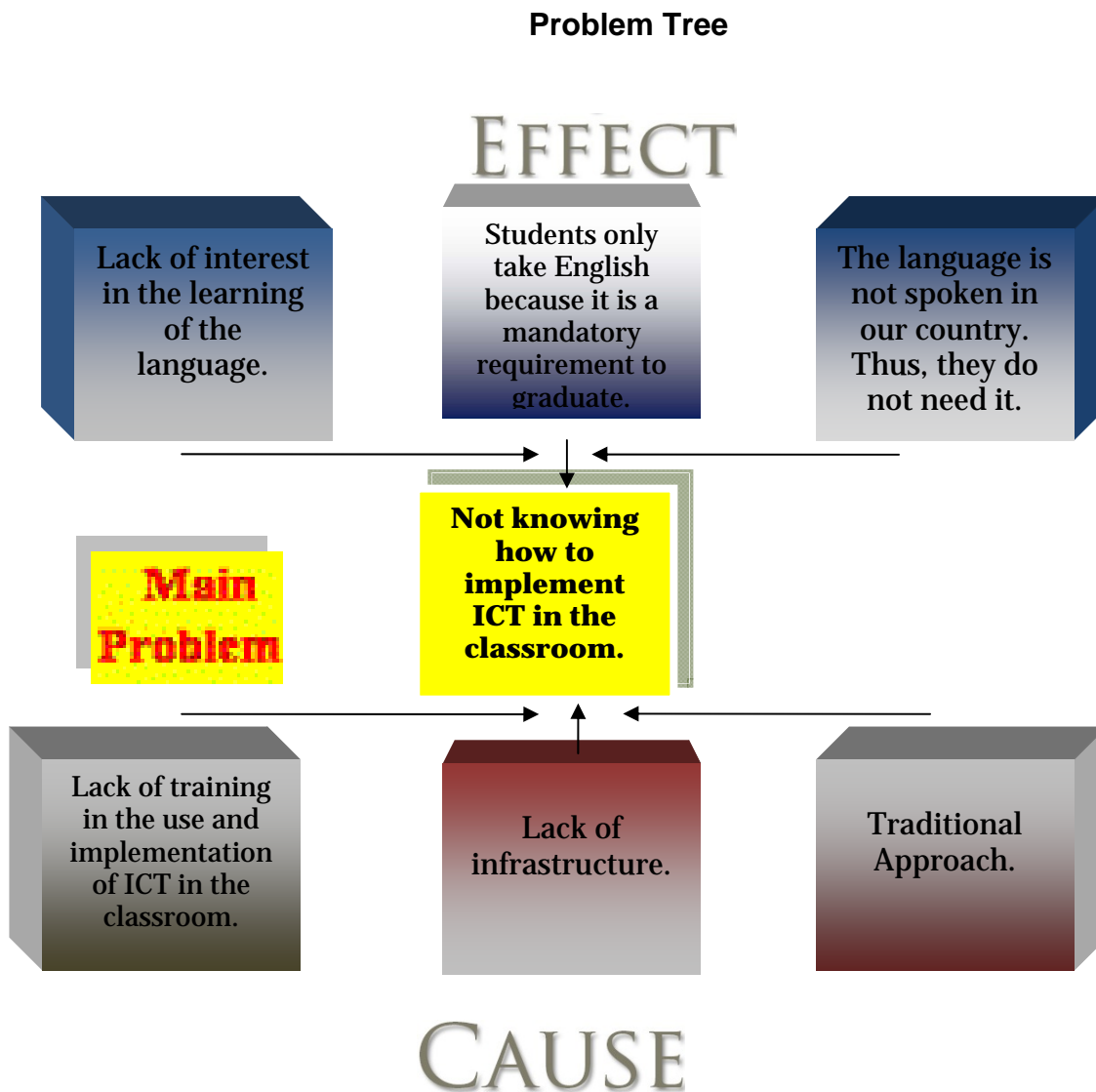


Figure 1 - Problem Tree



## Main Problem

Not knowing how to implement Information and Communication Technologies or also known as ICT in the classroom.

## Causes

- ✚ Lack of training in the use and implementation of ICT in the classroom.
- ✚ Lack of infrastructure.
- ✚ Traditional approach.

## Effects

- ✚ Lack of interest in the learning of the language.
- ✚ Students take English because it is mandatory to graduate.
- ✚ The language is not spoken in our country. Thus, they do not need it.

## Cause Description

- ✚ **Lack of interest and lack of training in the use and implementation of ICT in the classroom:** Although we now know it is paramount to be up to date, it seems we do not care about it. Teachers seem to be reluctant to take any course related to technology, either because some feel their time has already passed, some might think it is not relevant because where they work they may not have access to it, or simply because they do not want to. Some institutions do offer continual training courses and try to motivate their staff to take them, but it seems it is hard to get them interested.
- ✚ **Lack of infrastructure:** Some institutions do have computer labs, but most the institutions do not have proper spaces for teachers to take their students to take advantage of what technology offers nowadays.



✚ **Traditional approach:** The methodology has been standardized and teachers in the field are pretty well aware of it; however, it is not being applied as it should be. Teachers are still applying the same methodologies their teachers must have used years ago. With these outdated ideas, teachers turn something that should be communicative into something pretty traditionalist.

### **Effect Description**

✚ **Lack of interest in the learning of the language:** In our environment it is said that it is not that students do not like English; on the contrary, it is the teacher they do not like. I totally believe that teachers are the ones who should look for resources to create engaging activities so students will see the learning of the language not as an abstract process, but, as something both challenging and fun.

✚ **Students take English because it is a mandatory requirement to graduate:** At the University of Cuenca and most institutions, the learning of English as a foreign language is a prerequisite to either continue studying or to graduate. Students, themselves, do not see the learning of a language as something that may provide them with greater opportunities to achieve success further down the road in their professional development, but as merely a requirement to pass.

✚ **The language is not spoken in our country. Thus, they do not need it:** Unfortunately, English is not a language spoken officially in Ecuador. Thus, students do not see the relevance of learning it.

### **1.2.2 CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

The purpose each EFL teacher pursues is to help their students learn and reach a point where they have developed skills to be able to use the language as it is meant to be used. This is the challenge we face as teachers at the Department of





Languages nowadays. Most of us have always been looking for different strategies or techniques to approach our students' needs and thus make the learning of the language much more significant and memorable; and yet, we have sadly seen our students failing.

It is important to say that alone, the effort the institution puts into raising the quality of the teaching-learning process is not enough; it also depends on the enthusiasm that we need to work with, as teachers. Moreover, the fact of being able to share and being aware that we do not understand or know everything will give us the chance to be ready and willing to learn and to work collaboratively in order to help improve the teaching-learning process.

### **1.2.3 PROGNOSIS**

The implementation of technology in the learning of English as a foreign language must be sorted out immediately; otherwise the process will continue giving poor results, affecting students from the Department of languages, University of Cuenca, whose hopes of learning English and becoming fluent might not come true.

Finally, if nothing is done to correct this situation, the learning of English will continue deficient; but worse than that, students will continue attending classes and not getting anything out of them.

### **1.2.4 PROBLEM SET UP**

Towards the solution to the problem, the following question has been raised:

Does B-learning influence the communicative approach?



## **1.2.5 DEFINING THE OBJECT OF INVESTIGATION**

### **1.2.5.1 SPATIAL DEFINING**

The research will take place at the Language Department, University of Cuenca, with the students of the fourth-level Intensive courses during the trimester March- May, 2010.

### **1.2.5.2 TEMPORAL DEFINING**

The estimated time which this research project will require is necessary to take into account possible inconveniences which may occur during the execution of the project itself.

## **1.3 JUSTIFICATION**

As it is well-known, technology is power and, as such, can serve many purposes. Thousands of people now have a computer on their desk with as much capability at their fingertips as was once housed in an expensive and complicated mainframe. Keeping constantly up-to-date is now one of the key elements of the current professional standards our society requires. Consequently, the Internet should be seen as a useful tool that puts the chance of being up-to-date in the palm of our hand rather than as a simple tool which is merely in vogue.

Since the Industrial Revolution took place, e-learning has arisen to ease personal specialization. Hence, as time has passed by, technology has always offered different options to share information, from printed material to radio, TV, and video conferencing.

The Internet has contributed to the educational field by making it a virtual experience. In a blended learning environment or also known as B-learning, the institution should provide written, multimedia, video, or audio information through a



website which is normally restricted from outsiders. At the very beginning, students are given a username and a password which will let them gain access to the virtual class. The teacher keeps track of what the students do over time through different features that a virtual platform offers such features are; forums, journals, chat, quizzes, activities, and even video conferencing.

Finally, it must still be noted that some people may see b-learning as the conversion of printed material to be displayed in a browser, perhaps with a series of linked pages and a table of contents, but without much interactivity.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

- ✚ To determine the influence of b-learning in a Communicative-Approach EFL classroom, Language Department, University of Cuenca.

### **1.4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- ✚ To apply the virtual platform, Moodle, to a Communicative Approach EFL classroom.
- ✚ To analyze the outcomes obtained from the class to determine whether b-learning positively influences the learning of English as a foreign language or not.
- ✚ To fully develop two virtual units by means of Moodle.
- ✚ To optimize time by means of the creation of activities, which can be worked on at home and practiced in class.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 RESEARCH HISTORY**

After researching the topic, I have come to the conclusion that there has not been a previous investigation into the effects of the use of B-learning, more specifically Moodle, in the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language.

#### **2.2 BASIS**

##### **2.2.1 Philosophical Basis**

Knowing and being able to speak another language can help people achieve goals from designing bridges to winning wars, as well as from expressing their deepest feelings, achieving spiritual goals, or establishing and determining linguistic theories. Language is mankind's greatest treasure. Bringing people together over space and time unlocks great mysteries. Therefore, learning a language is to move from one mystery to another, and teaching it is to observe and guide that movement and transition.

B-learning enhances the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language and its basis on the use of a virtual platform optimizes time and improves the quality of both teaching and learning.

This research has been based on the effort and struggle students, learning English at the University of Cuenca, go through as they pursue their learning goals. This project intends to help them learn a foreign language through a different approach, one that is pretty much more likely to make their goal of becoming speakers of a foreign language a reality.



This project first presents the history of b-learning and how it is being used; this approach aims to help students become critical and independent thinkers. It does not leave out the fostering of moral values that students need to develop and grow, so that, in the not too distant future, they not only become consummate professionals, but also become upright and responsible human beings serving our society.

### **2.2.2 Educational Psychology Basis**

This research is based on constructivism, where students develop thinking strategies that allow them to settle into the socio-constructivist paradigm, raise problems to be solved independently, support their own ideas and challenge others in both real and existential contexts.

### **2.2.3 Sociological Basis**

Ecuadorian society is under a capitalist system where the vast majority of people are poor and the minority are rich, creating advantages for certain people and disadvantages for others. This is where education plays an important role, since it is the social restructuring mechanism. It is, therefore, essential to train professionals with leadership and critical thinking skills who can contribute to the improvement and development of our society.

## 2.3 BASIC CATEGORIES

The following are the basic categories which have been determined with the purpose of guiding the essential aspects of this research.

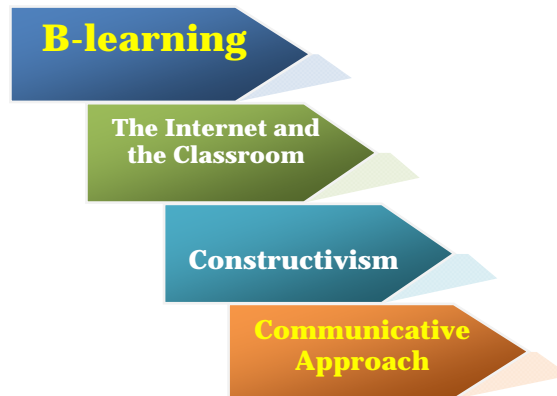


Figure 2 – Basic Categories – Conceptual Inclusion.

### 2.3.1 B-LEARNING

#### 2.3.1.1 Conceptualization

To have a complete understanding of what blended learning (B-learning) is, it is important to explain what e-learning is. According to Robin and Rennie, the term e-learning has evolved into different names such as b-learning, adjunct mode, hybrid learning, enhanced learning, and experiential learning.

But what is e-learning itself? Stephenson says that E-learning does not have just one definition; rather, it is the natural evolution of distance learning, which, if we track back in time, has always incorporated new technology for its own benefit. Thus, e-learning is a source which is being used as a complement to face-to-face education. (7)



Natalie Aranda, in her e-article entitled “A brief history of e-learning and distance education”, mentions that distance learning may have started about 100 years ago in England, when people used to get shorthand classes by mail. Little by little, the computer was introduced and then technology made mailing systems much easier and friendlier to use. Thus, people entered the world of distance learning and then, with the unstoppable advance of technology, into the teaching-learning process through different software and devices.

Garrison and Vaughan say that b-learning is the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences. They also add that the basic principle is that face-to-face oral communication and online written communication are optimally integrated such that the strengths of each are blended into a unique learning experience congruent with the context and intended educational purpose. The authors also believe it important to say that b-learning is not an addition that simply builds another expensive educational layer, rather, it represents a restructuring of regular classes with the objective of enhancing engagement and extending access to Internet-based learning opportunities. (5)

According to Wang, Fong, and Kwan, blended learning involves the combination of two fields of concern: technological and instrumental considerations are, to a greater or lesser extent, combined with pedagogy and educational theory. The result of this is that blended learning suffers from considerable difficulties in definition, and its theoretical foundation is correspondingly weak. (1)

In conclusion, the word B-learning arises as the mixture of the words blended and learning, which encompasses the process of learning by means of attending regular classes and also working online to support, information, and master what has been already taught on a face-to-face basis.



### **2.3.1.2 Why B-learning?**

Most of the time, teachers see their effort going nowhere, either because of the number of students they have per class, or because of the amounts of material they have to cover during a certain period of class. B-learning has become a very good option for teachers, in the sense that it provides students and teachers with the opportunities. The following points were collected during the practical development:

#### **Students**

- ✚ They can learn things on their own due to the fact that students can go through the material in advance.
- ✚ They can participate without fear of being embarrassed. Shy students have the chance to interact with classmates in different activities, such as projects, forums, and debates. (This information is based on student interviews.)
- ✚ They can catch up with faster students. Slow learners may need more time to grasp what they have learned in class. B-learning provides the chance to have everything online, so they can go over something they might not be sure about or might not have understood in class.
- ✚ Constant in-touch assistance. Students can constantly be in touch with their professor/teacher to get one-on-one assistance. There are various ways to get in touch, for instance e-mail, chat, postings, telephone, and Skype.

#### **Teachers**

- ✚ The teacher uploads the material into a virtual platform and the student can go over the contents in advance.
- ✚ The teacher can offer a great variety of material that students can use for their own benefit.
- ✚ The teacher has the opportunity to work away from the book and make his/her classes much more engaging.





- ✚ The teacher has more chances to become successful in the development of his/her role due to the fact that students learn contents in their own way, so the class, rather than being an introduction to a theme, it is actually one where students reinforce what they have already learned.

As a matter of fact, during the launch of a new e-learning strategy in July, 2003, the UK government stated:

“E-learning is important because it can contribute to fulfill education objectives: raise the level of education; enhance quality of education; break barriers to learning and participation in the process; be ready to become a professional; update both academic and working skills, and finally, guarantee each student reaches his/her best”.

Universities around the world are promoting the use of e-learning in the classroom as a means of achieving higher goals and reaching foreign markets. Teachers use e-learning to provide a great variety of learning activities, ease different levels of engagement, and offer access to a wider spectrum of resources. Some teachers see e-learning as a significant means that lets students connect with people who share the same learning interests and to integrate personal development into their future jobs.

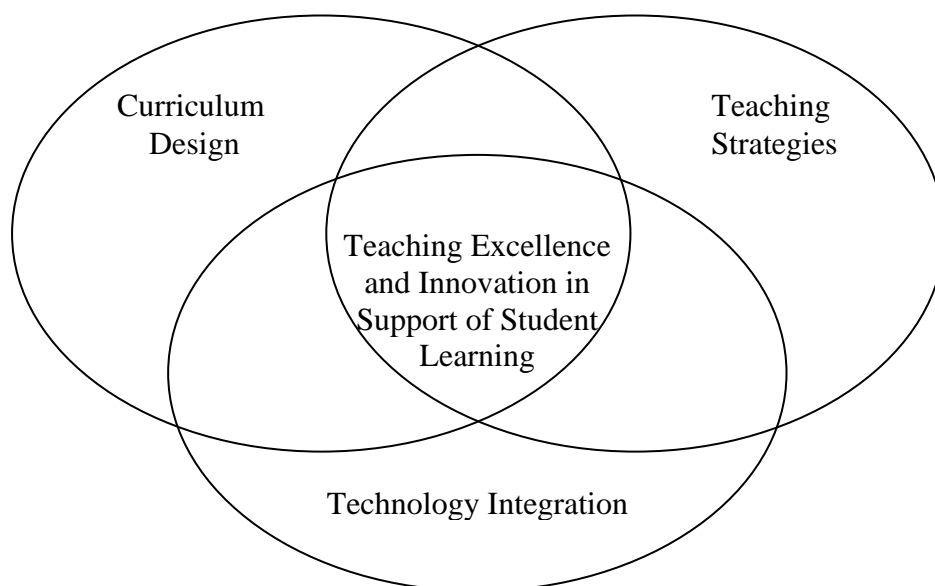


Figure 3 - Program outcomes for a Blended Faculty Community of Inquiry – Bersin & Associates.



As we can see in the previous graph from Garrison and Vaughan (57), teaching excellence and innovation in support of student learning encompasses three important aspects which cannot be neglected when implementing b-learning in the class, curriculum design, teaching strategies, and technology innovation. The authors also mention that in order to develop teaching strategies it is recommended that the program provide opportunities for the participants to develop experience and skills with online discussions, group work, and computer mediated assessment practices. (57)

Josh Bersin, the author of *“Blended Learning Book: Best practices, proven methodologies, and lessons learned”* has worked using technology for training and education for about thirty years. He says that Blended learning is the latest step in a long history of technology-based training; however, it is far from over.

He also states that through years of experience and research it has been seen that people learn in different ways. He stresses that there are three primary ways an individual learns and that each individual favors one or two of them as their primary approaches (31):

- ✚ Visual Learners: Approximately 50 to 70 percent of the population are characterized as “visual learners,” meaning that they relate most effectively to written information, diagrams, images, and pictures. Visual learners like to take notes, write on the whiteboard, and create and view PowerPoint® slides with graphics. Most Internet-based courseware is targeted toward visual learning.
  
- ✚ Auditory Learners: Approximately 20 to 40 percent of the population are characterized as “auditory learners,” people who learn best by hearing. These are people who like to listen to lectures and take notes later, and who often excel at public speaking and direct interaction.



✚ Kinesthetic Learners: A smaller percentage of the population, (5 to 20 percent), learns best through touching and doing things. These are people who learn by imitating, trying, holding, and feeling things. He also asserts that students’ deepest learning takes place by doing, often called “experiential learning.”

He suggests that in order to be able to choose the right principle or the right technique, teachers should consider the following hierarchy of six modes of learning in order to be able to get the most out of blended learning. (34)

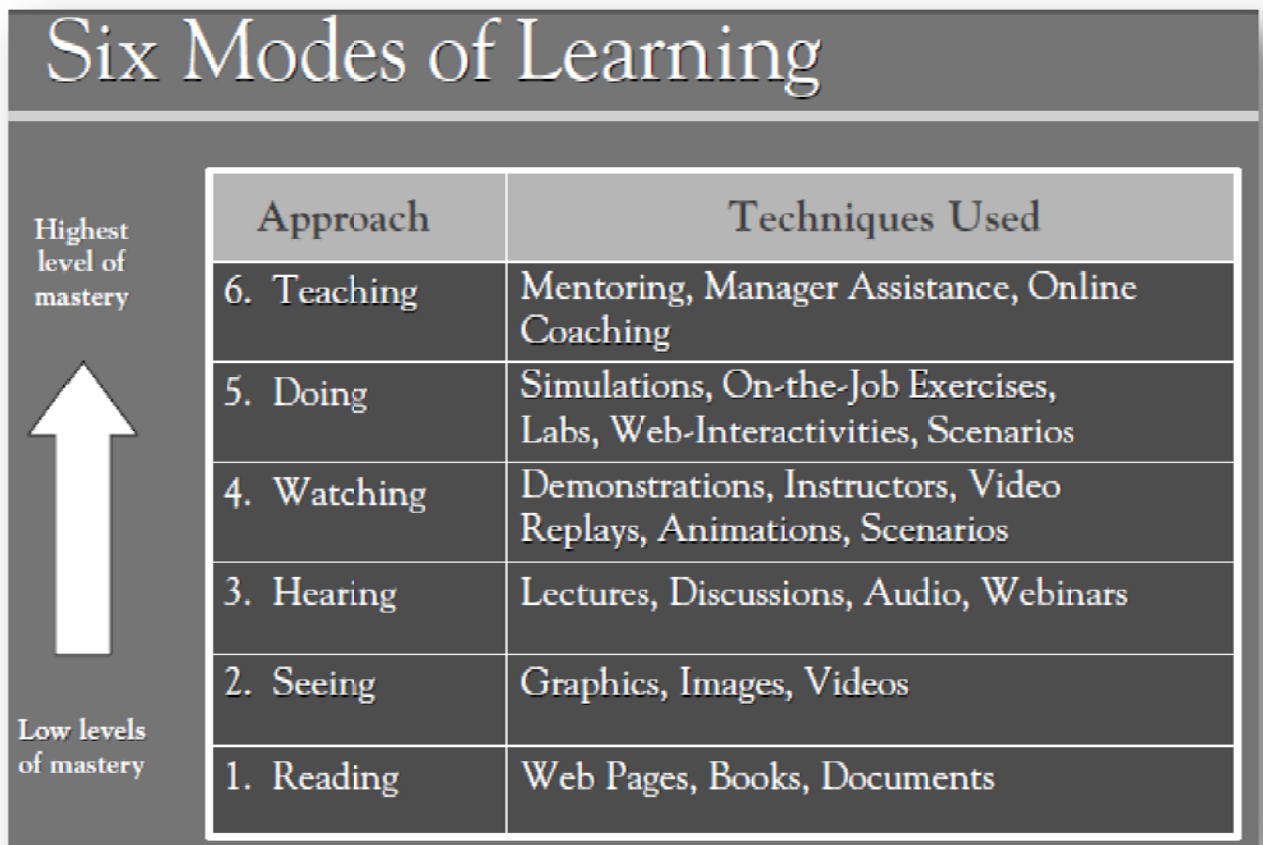


Figure 4 – Six Modes of Learning – Bersin & Associates.



### 2.3.2 THE INTERNET IN THE CLASSROOM

Technology has evolved and has contributed to changes in education. If we look back in time we can see that several devices have made some significant contributions to education. For example:

The overhead projector first had its teaching purpose back in 1945 when the US Army used it to train soldiers in different war tactics. Then its use spread worldwide. Even now, some teachers still use it with transparencies. The creation of the overhead projector helped make the leap to something much more modern such as the projector. In the mid 1990's scientist worked hard to come up with the first Digital Light Processing projector or also known as DLP projector. Now, it is common to find a projector in each institution, sometimes in each classroom. This technology has helped teachers to bring new methodologies and new activities into the classroom to make the teaching-learning process far more engaging.

Now to the computer. The first commercial computer was launched in 1951 (*The History of Computers*). From then, it became widespread and its uses vary from scientific to educative ones. As computers have evolved, so has the software used in education. Indeed, the Internet has made such a great contribution, not just to the educational field but to all fields. Thus, we come to talk about it and its use in the classroom.

It is, indeed, worth saying that there are thousands of ways of communicating by means of an Internet connection. Dudeney says that you can get almost anything from out there with just two things: the World Wide Web or also known as WWW and electronic mail or e-mail. (3)

But what is the World Wide Web? Dudeney defines it as “the medium of choice for both new and experienced users on the Net, and for good reasons: it’s visually attractive, easy to use, easy to understand, manages to combine many other Internet-based forms of communication into a single manageable package” (3).



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

Nowadays, we can easily see that institutions are becoming quite familiar with computers and the Internet. Low costs have also made the Internet accessible to everyone, not just to schools. Therefore, it has opened up a world of possibilities for both teachers and students. Teachers can get material and resources from thousands of sites such as .edu, .org, or .com sites; while, students can get access to worldwide knowledge with just one click.

Dudeney recommends that before taking students into a computer lab or taking them into a virtual class, teachers should know the technology themselves. (32) He also points out that before introducing students to the Net, they might have to introduce students to basic computing skills as well. (33) Taking these aspects into consideration plus the experience I gained through the process, I can say that b-classes have to be well-planned and structured so students really know what they are doing and really walk away with what was taught in class. Teachers ought to be aware that they will have to go through the material in advance to make sure that the language and content are what they want for their class.

### **Main aspects on a virtual environment**

According to Barbera there are nine aspects which should be taken into account when developing virtual environments (29):

- 1. Planning:** it is one of the key components of developing virtual environments due to the fact that students will always be eager to know what is next. Some teachers might have lot of teaching experience; however, when dealing with blended learning there will always be the desire to know what we are about to work on next.



- 2. Content presentation:** it is important to keep in mind that the clearer the instructions and content are, the more confident students will feel when working on activities. Some teachers might use information just to fill gaps; however, when writing long texts, we might end up writing things we should not have.
- 3. Participation:** this implies having students do activities which will lead them to significant meaning. Having students analyze, relate, read, write, criticize, and reason will help them achieve learning goals.
- 4. Interaction:** there might be confusion between participation and interaction. Participation means physically being there; while interaction implies working together at the time information is shared for any purpose. Thus, we can say that students work interactively with their teacher when both parts work together towards the achievement of a single objective.
- 5. Follow-up and assessment:** it is paramount for teachers to explain students the rubrics he/she will use to order to keep a fair grading record to the students. If otherwise, students might do their activities, feel they have participated and yet not receive the expected grades. Thus, teachers should always explain how they are going to be evaluated and how much of their effort it will imply.
- 6. Technology expertise:** knowing how an artifact or device works might make the difference when providing assistance to students. If we intend to get into this teaching-learning virtual process, we should be aware of the principles it encompasses. On the contrary, teaching regular classes probably would not require someone to know that much about technology.



7. **Feedback:** providing immediate feedback keeps students motivated and involved. On the contrary, if a student does not receive a response after one, two, or three mails he/she might lose interest and will not achieve his/her learning goals.
  
8. **Faculty collaboration:** the purpose is to bring professionals together through videoconferencing or any other means of communication. Also, it is important to mention the fact that working collaboratively increases the results of the multiplying effect. We learn first and then we pass it onto somebody else, this person in turn will do the same and thus ICT spreads.
  
9. **Teaching-load and teaching-time:** in virtual environments there might be one disadvantage; normally, the teacher works one-to-one, making each need one consult. On the contrary, in a regular class, the teacher usually works with the class as a whole.

### **Digital Equity**

One of the issues that might arise when dealing with technology and virtual environments is the fact that some institutions do not have an adequate infrastructure. This is why we come to talk about digital equity.

Digital equity refers to the idea that everyone should have access to what technology offers nowadays, regardless of their economic situation. Thus, we believe that the best way to deal with a situation where students have limited access to computers is by having different stations where one group of pupils will be working on the computers; meanwhile the other groups are working on something else related to what is being taught. These groups will rotate, so everyone will get a chance to be exposed to the technology.

Looking for approaches which can integrate students with technology is no longer a problem nowadays; I believe that a lack of resources is no excuse for not



delivering a significant class. It all depends on the creativity of the teacher to make his/her class successful.

### **2.3.2.2 Moodle**

According to the *Moodle* site, it is defined as a Course Management System or *CMS*, also known as a Learning Management System because of its acronym *LMS* or a Virtual Learning Environment, *VLE*. It is a free web application that educators can use to create an effective online learning site. Institutions around the world have made Moodle part of their curriculum. The word Moodle was originally an acronym for *Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment*, which is mostly useful to programmers and education theorists. It is also a verb that describes the process of lazily meandering through something, doing things as and when it occurs to you to do them, an enjoyable tinkering that often leads to insight and creativity. As such the name applies both to the way Moodle was developed, and to the way a student or teacher might approach studying or teaching an online course. Anyone who uses Moodle is a *Moodler*.

The University of Cuenca is no exception. Professors have used and are using Moodle for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. This is why I have become so interested in applying blended teaching-learning to my classes. Now I will explain in detail Moodle's features and how I used them.

As its definition says, Moodle helps professors/teachers create a learning management system and a virtual learning environment. As a teacher I had to cover six units of a textbook in a trimester in *Intensive Courses*, so I developed 5 units virtually and 1 unit was taught on a regular basis. In order to carry out this project and to use Moodle properly, several steps had to be taken:

#### **Overview**

First of all, students were introduced to what Moodle is. They did not need a password to begin with because it was an introductory class. They were to share





computers and to follow a step-by-step process to learn what they were to do later on. At this stage I noticed that some students lack basic computing skills, which were also reviewed.

## **Signing up**

Once they knew what a virtual platform was, they were ready for the second step. First of all, students needed to register and get a username and a password to be able to log into a class on Moodle. Once they met the requirements, there were a couple more tutorials, so they were not afraid to use of the platform itself. Since technology can seem a little bit overwhelming, students might get the wrong impression. This is why the facilitator should always be there to coach students on the use of the platform. Little by little, students were asked to do more challenging activities.

## **Support**

It is advisable to get students' email addresses and telephone numbers so they can have constant support. I added my students to my messenger account, thus we had options to choose from in case of need, such as:

- ✚ E-mail: both teacher and students should have each other's email address.
- ✚ Chat: this is another option which can be used by the students to reach either the teacher or another peer.
- ✚ Telephone: technology might fail sometimes and unfortunately we do not know when this will happen, so, the telephone can be a good option in a moment like this.

As a result, I can say that students got 24/7 support which made them feel comfortable and they were pretty well aware that, in case of a certain situation, they had someone to rely on.



## Creating the material

This might be the most overwhelming part of working with a blended approach due to the fact that the material to be taught has to be uploaded in advance. It requires time to create and to look for material which could be suitable for accomplishing both teaching and learning objectives. In order to create and collect material I followed these steps:

- ✚ Since I have to use a certain text book and cover certain units, I looked for the main topics to be taught and the objectives I had to achieve.
- ✚ With this in mind, I analyzed, unit by unit, the topics to see what activities I could do and which ones were suitable for the students. At this stage I did not know my students; however, I knew what level I was going to teach.
- ✚ I first created a class with its corresponding password, so just my students would have access to it. The activities I created were varied, picking from the many options that Moodle offers:

RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES
<b>Insert a label</b>	Assignments
<b>Compose a text page</b>	Glossary, database
<b>Compose a web page</b>	Forum, chat, choice
<b>Link to a file or website</b>	Journal, lesson, quiz
<b>Display a directory</b>	Survey
<b>Add an IMS Content Package</b>	Wiki

Figure 5– Activities offered by Moodle – Moodle Trust.



## Working with a virtual environment

I think this was the most challenging but the most rewarding part of the project. On the one hand, it was challenging as I had to read each of my students' comments, either in a forum, journal, or an assignment. I went through every piece of writing in order to collect information about the classes, about the platform, and about the activities, in order to provide students feedback. I was online almost 24/7 so they could ask for help at any time, even during weekends and holidays. If there was a day that I was not going to be available, they knew it in advance, but they still could send me an email. On the other hand, it was rewarding, because I could see the effort they put into all their activities. And one thing that caught my attention was the fact that I had some shy students who would chat and ask things in English and little by little I noticed they felt more confident and they would come up to me in class and speak in English. Finally, there was an on-line grading sheet where students could, always and at anytime, check their performance.

## Moodle - Principles

According to *Moodle*, it has been created with the purpose of supporting teaching based on Constructivism. However, there are five key principles which are the pedagogical basis for Moodle. These five important principles are:

- 1. We are all potential teachers as well as potential learners.** Moodle offers a great variety of activities which can help students take a guiding role in learning. For instance, a student can be a moderator in a forum. Therefore, little by little students help each other by asking questions and providing information among themselves.
- 2. We learn well by creating and expressing to others.** This is another positive aspect Moodle offers due to the fact that students are asked to come up with material of their own creation in order to collaboratively work with peers. Thus, they are creating at the time they are expressing new ideas to others.



3. **We learn a lot by watching others.** This is a clear example of Constructivism due to the fact that we can get the best out of ourselves when we are asked to come up with answers in order to reveal our knowledge. In other words, students are building their own knowledge by analyzing, consulting, reading, and performing activities which help them be part of this construction.
  
4. **Understanding others transforms us.** I can say from my own experience that this point is totally relevant towards the enhancement of the teaching-learning process. I had the chance to chat with my students and they would tell me things which they would not tell me on a face-to-face basis. This way I was able to make some methodological changes in order to help them overcome any situation they were going through. I believe that not being able to talk straight to the teacher is one of the problems students face in a regular class. As a result, there is a lower learning performance in a regular class.
  
5. **We learn well when the learning environment is flexible and adaptable to suit our needs.** This is definitely true and nowadays, teachers have to understand that there are different ways in which students learn. Reading a book, page by page, is not going to help students master academic skills; instead, they will become memorizers. As a result, they will not be able to cope with what being a professional really encompasses. During the development of the practical part I could see that students gave their best when they worked with activities related to their likes. Also, they worked really hard and when there was a difficult situation they knew they could overcome it.

### **Moodle – Philosophy**

Moodle says that from a constructivist point of view, people actively construct new knowledge as they interact with their environments. It also states 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.” (Moodle)

It is also known that 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.

It is clearly seen that the activities Moodle has were created with a single objective to help students construct their own knowledge. By posting a comment on a forum, by creating a topic to be discussed, by raising different issues, by reading somebody else’s opinion, their minds fill with information, which is processed and assimilated. Afterwards, they will be able to deal with situations related to what they have done previously, and of course related to their own environment.

Additionally, Moodle asserts that if we were to read a document and tried to remember it the next day, we would not be able to do so. However, if we were to explain it to someone, make a presentation on it, or simply relate the information to your own context, then it is more likely that you would have a better understanding of the issue. (Moodle)

Moodle is also based on Social Constructivism. It is a term that defines a particular view of education. It acknowledges constructivism as a description of what each learner experiences, while focusing on the power of constructing artifacts (like text) within a social environment. In other words, education is best served by creating experiences that would be best for learning from the learner's point of view, rather than just publishing and assessing the information you think they need to know. Each participant in a course can be a teacher as well as a learner. A 'teacher' in this environment is an influencer and role model of class culture, connecting with others in a personal way that addresses their own learning needs, and moderating



discussions and activities in a way that collectively leads students towards the learning goals of the class.

### **2.3.3 CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Several approaches have been developed through time with the purpose of understanding how people learn and also to help learners acquire contents more accurately and adequately. Therefore, teachers have been given a great variety of options to choose from, in order to be able to carry out the teaching-learning process more effectively. One of these approaches is the cognitive one, known as *constructivism*. According to Williams & Burden, Jean Piaget has been the dominant figure in cognitive developmental psychology, and as such he is one of its contributors. (21) However, there are other important psychologists advocating to this approach, such as, Jerome Bruner, and George Kelly.

First of all, Jean Piaget, who spent more of than a half century exploring children's thought processes and beliefs about the world, Piaget proposed that changes in children's thinking and perception, can be described in terms of four stages of increasingly more logical thinking. Moreover, he believed that children are not just passive receivers of environmental stimulation, but are naturally curious about their world and actively seek out information to help them understand and make sense out of that world.

Piaget also added that children's knowledge is not limited to a collection of isolated pieces of information. Instead, children use the information they accumulate to construct an overall view of how the world operates. Thus, Piaget reached his assumption that children construct their own body of knowledge from their experiences that is why his theory is known as a *constructivist theory*. In Piaget's terminology, the basic unit of organization is a *schema* – an organized group of similar actions or thoughts.



In other words, he says that the schema of a seven year-old child is not the same as the schema of a twelve year-old child. According to Piaget, over time, children's schemas are modified with experience and become increasingly better integrated with one another. The schemas change over time; however, the processes by which children develop these schemas remain the same. Piaget proposed that learning and cognitive development occur as the result of two complementary processes – *assimilation and accommodation*. The processes of assimilation and accommodation are pretty important in learning because they let us see how cognition is developed and the way it happens.

Williams & Burden define *assimilation* as a process of dealing with an object or event in a way that is consistent with an existing schema. (22)

For example, the infant may assimilate a new teddy bear to her putting-things-in-the-mouth schema. The seven-year-old may quickly identify a new slithery object in the backyard as another snake. But sometimes a new object or event cannot be easily interpreted and assimilated in terms of an existing schema. In these situations, one of two forms of accommodation will occur: either an existing schema will be modified to account for the new object or event, or else an entirely new schema will be formed to deal with it. Assimilation and accommodation typically work hand in hand as children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children interpret each new event within the context of their existing knowledge (assimilation), but at the same time may also modify their knowledge as a result of the new event (accommodation).

Therefore, our students can only benefit from new experiences when they can relate those experiences to their current understanding of the world. When we present new material to students who do not have relevant background knowledge about a particular topic, they will have difficulty assimilating or accommodating to new material.



The Russian psychologist Lev Semionovich Vygotsky (1896-1934) who is considered the pioneer of social constructivism, he gave the starting point to others to develop further studies and to help establish diverse social conceptions about learning. Within the past ten years, many prominent psychologists (including a number of information processing theorists) have rediscovered a principle Vygotsky proposed more than fifty years ago – that children’s cognitive development is facilitated and enhanced through their interactions with more advanced and capable individuals such as parents and teachers.

The essence of his social findings still remains. Vygotsky considered the individual as the result of the historical and social process where language plays a paramount role. Moreover, he thought that knowledge was an interactive process between the individual and the environment (meaning social and cultural environment). He rejected theories which would undermine learning and would consider psychology as just the accumulation of reflexes or associations between stimuli and response.

According to Vygotsky (1922), we can best understand and describe children’s cognitive capabilities when we look at two aspects of their development simultaneously. (40) First of all, we can determine the extent to which children can perform tasks *independently*; this is their *actual developmental level*. And secondly, we can determine the extent to which they can perform tasks *with the assistance of a more competent individual*; this is their *level of potential development*.

Children can typically do more difficult things in collaboration with adults than they can do on their own. For example, a child just learning how to use a baseball bat can hit a baseball more successfully when an adult is present to guide his swing. A child can play more difficult piano pieces when an adult helps him locate some of the notes on the keyboard. A student may be able to read more complex prose within a reading group at school than he is likely to read independently at home.





The range of tasks that children cannot yet perform independently, but can perform with the help and guidance of others, is known as the *zone of proximal development* known as *ZPD*. A child's zone of proximal development includes learning and problem solving abilities that are just beginning to develop within that child – abilities that are in an immature, embryonic form. Vygotsky proposed that children learn very little from performing tasks they can already do independently. Instead, they develop primarily by attempting tasks they can accomplish only in collaboration with a more competent individual – that is, when they attempt tasks within their zone of proximal development.

Thus, it is suggested that in order to promote our student's cognitive development, then, we should present some classroom tasks and assignments that they can perform successfully only with assistance – that is, tasks within each student's zone of proximal development. Tasks that students can perform on their own – those within student's actual developmental level – may be insufficiently challenging to promote cognitive growth. The implication for us as teachers is that students with different zones of proximal development need different tasks and assignments – a strong case for as much individualized instruction as we can reasonably provide.

Another important contribution to learning made by Vygotsky is *scaffolding*, which is a technique used to assist children when performing difficult tasks. Let's analyze the following situation, when constructing a new building; the builder will sometimes construct an external structure – a scaffold – around the building. This scaffold provides support for the workers (a place where they can stand) until the building itself is strong enough to support them. As the building becomes increasingly self-supporting, the scaffold becomes less necessary and is gradually removed. In much the same way, an adult guiding a child through a new task may also provide an initial scaffold to support the child's early efforts in performing the task. (40)



As teachers, we should provide sufficient support (scaffolding) to enable our students to perform challenging tasks successfully and then gradually withdraw the support as they become more skilled. Depending on the task and the particular student, we can provide a variety of support mechanisms to help students master tasks within their zone of proximal development.

Based on this, I consider it important to analyze some aspects brought up by Larry M. Ludewig in order to become successful students. He thinks that these are the key components to reach successful learning objectives:

- ✚ They are responsible and active, get involved in their studies, accept responsibility for their own education, and are active participants in it.
- ✚ Have legitimate educational goals and are motivated by what they represent in terms of career aspirations and life's desires.
- ✚ Ask questions to provide the quickest route between ignorance and knowledge.
- ✚ Learn that a student and a professor make a team. Most instructors want exactly what you want: they would like for you to learn the material in their respective classes and earn a good grade.
- ✚ Do not sit in the back, and minimize classroom distractions that interfere with learning.
- ✚ Take good notes which are understandable and organized, and review them often.
- ✚ Understand that actions affect learning. Successful students know their personal behavior affect their feelings and emotions which in turn can affect learning.
- ✚ Talk about what they're learning. Get to know something well enough that they can put it into words.
- ✚ Do not cram for exams. They know that divided periods of study are more effective than cram sessions, and they practice it.
- ✚ Successful students do not procrastinate. They have learned that time control is life control and have consciously chosen to be in control of their life.



I consider that when we start our professional teaching, we are not aware of the different issues learning encompasses. However, we learn on the way, and despite the years of experience we acquire, we will never thoroughly understand what it takes. Another important aspect to mention is the fact that we were always taught, in university, to look for an approach that best fits our students' needs. However, we were taught through traditional and teacher-centered methods, creating, somehow, confusion. The training freshman teachers receive is based on traditional approaches rather than modern ones. If the educational system took psychologists' findings into account, students would not be spending twelve years studying English as a foreign language without accomplishing it.

Resorting to my personal experience, I would say that theories, related to the psychological process of learning a language, have highly influenced my teaching perspectives because now I realize that students are the center of the class rather than passive actors of a classroom. I clearly manage to help students reach their learning goals by having them participate in class through activities that best fit their needs, but above all, by letting them be the authors of their own learning. Thus, I see myself using the scaffolding technique, which is Vygotsky's social approach; I guide my students through the process, so they can become highly confident when using what they have already learnt. And in the end, they feel they can perform tasks on their own, and also if they come across any trouble, they are able to make the necessary changes and modifications; they are able to use the language properly.

Since I have been involved in the process of training teachers, I can say that there has been a change in the teachers' minds. They have become aware that students should not be seen as passive members in the process. So, that is why we can see, nowadays, more teaching training and teachers pursuing their teaching-learning objectives. It has been just a matter of time. However, I feel we still keep and have traditional classrooms, which tremendously neglect students' learning.



Additionally, we can clearly see that not all students learn in the same way, or at the same pace. Therefore, we, as teachers, have to be conscious of the need to learn different favorable strategies and techniques which can help us assist students in the way they are meant to be.

In conclusion, whatever new approach or methodology comes out, we should take into account that we – the teachers - should be the ones looking for new ways to turn learning into a memorable and successful process. A process where students can feel they are doing their job properly, but above all, to help them become independent and autonomous thinkers. I would like to conclude with a personal thought: *It is not what we teach, but the way we teach it.* In other words it does not matter what it is that we have to teach, but the resources, creativity, and effort we put into teaching it.

#### **2.3.4 COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH**

Nunan says that without doubt, the most pervasive changes to teaching practice over the last twenty years are those that can be described as communicative language teaching as its acronym *CLT*. (9) Therefore, the Communicative Approach has become one of the most used and most popular in the teaching-learning process of English as either a second or a foreign language. According to Larsen-Freeman, when we communicate, we use the language to convey different functions, such as, arguing, persuading, asking, or promising. She also implies that these functions do not happen in an isolated situation; instead, they happen within a social context, a real one. She believes that since communication is a process, it is not enough knowing forms, meanings, and functions of the target language; instead, interaction is necessary to bring communication along. (123)

#### **Communicative Approach: Features**

David Nunan (279) says that the Communicative Approach lays its foundation on five basic features:



1. Stressing on the learning of the target language by means of interaction.
2. Introducing texts which have authentic vocabulary.
3. Providing students the opportunity to focus, not just on the linguistic part of the language, but on the process itself.
4. Enhancing personal experiences as a contribution to the teaching-learning process.
5. Trying to link the learning of the language within the class with the learning of the language outside of it.

### **Techniques and Materials**

The Communicative Approach encompasses the following types of techniques and materials in order to help students achieve communicative competence:

- ✚ Authentic Material
- ✚ Scrambled Sentences
- ✚ Language Games
- ✚ Picture Strip Story
- ✚ Role-Play

Finally, I can say that main contribution of the Communicative Approach is to help students, on one hand, communicate; and on the other hand, help teachers realize what communication implies. If teachers really want their students to communicate, they should be the ones then who clearly understand what *being communicatively competent* means.



## CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 BASIC METHODOLOGY

The basic methodology for this investigation will be quali-quantitative, which is the approach used to scientifically study a small research sample. The importance of good planning is paramount when suggesting and making changes in education. Therefore, to deal with these changes and thus to be able to help improve the teaching-learning process, I will follow these steps:

- ✚ Study thoroughly of the way technology is used in education.
- ✚ Create workshops to train teachers on the use of the material uploaded in Moodle.
- ✚ Make a strategic plan which will help teachers make good use of the activities created for this Project.

### 3.2 TYPE OF RESEARCH

This research will be descriptive, which means that we are well-aware of the problem but have no knowledge of the solution. Therefore, we will carry out this research to get an answer. I will also highlight relationships, differences, stages, and points of view of the topic being researched.

### 3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

This research Project will take place at the Language Department, University of Cuenca. Students from two 4<sup>th</sup>-Level Intensive courses will be participating in the practical part of this investigation.

- ✚ **Scope:** University of Cuenca.
- ✚ **Time:** Summer trimester, 2010.



- ✚ **Elements:** two fourth levels. Intensive courses. Language Department, University of Cuenca.
- ✚ **Total Population:** everyone taking 4th level, intensive courses. 58 students.

Chart 1

Population	Number	Total	Percentage
Students	58	58	100%

Source: Language Department.  
By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

### 3.4 DATA-GATHERING TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

In order to collect information and data a survey, a pre and post-test, and an interview will be applied.

### 3.5 DATA-COLLECTION PLANNING

One of the most important aspects to take into account is data-collection planning because it will actually determine the reliability and validity of the research. Getting reliable and valid information requires time, care, and devotion. Therefore, the data-collection will be carried out by means of two types: *primary and secondary data-collection* through the following techniques; *surveys, content-analysis, performance tests, and interviews.*

### 3.6 DATA-PROCESSING PLANNING

Various steps will be followed in order to process the information:

- ✚ Get the information from the sample being used in the research.
- ✚ Set up the criteria to classify the information collected.
- ✚ Define the tools to be used in the data-processing stage.

The following tools will be used to handle these aspects:

- ✚ Tabulation of the information gathered through the different techniques.
- ✚ Graphic representation of the obtained results.



# CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 RESULTS - ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

##### STUDENT SURVEY

##### QUESTION 1

1. El texto y la plataforma se complementan.

Chart 2 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	39	66%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	19	32%
Esta en desacuerdo	1	2%
Completamente en desacuerdo	0	0%
No opina al respecto	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses  
Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

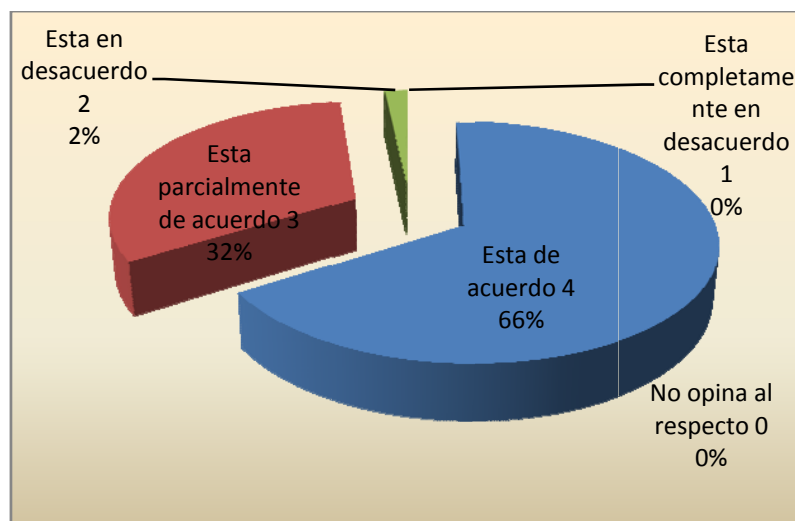


Figure 6 - Student Survey.





**Analysis & Interpretation:** It is seen that a 66 % of the sample agrees that the text and the platform (Moodle) complement each other. However, we also see that 32 % partially agrees. Based on the percentages, it is obvious that just a few students disagree with the idea that they complement each other. It is demonstrated, based on the percentages, that students can see the benefit of working with the platform.



### QUESTION 2

2. La plataforma virtual (Moodle) facilita el aprendizaje del ingles como lengua extranjera.

Chart 3 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	40	68%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	18	30%
Esta en desacuerdo	0	0%
Completamente en desacuerdo	0	0%
No opina al respect	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

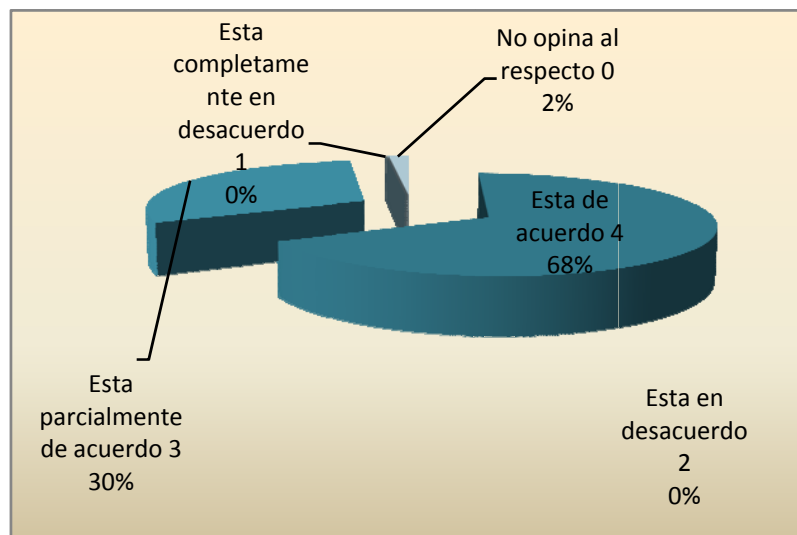


Figure 7 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** 68 % of the students agree that the platform helps the learning of English as a foreign language. I could also corroborate this fact with the data collected during the interviews. Most of the students said the platform helped them express their thoughts using the target language without feeling embarrassment or shyness. This is good because this was one of the things that helped this research reach a successful conclusion.



On the other hand, we also have some students who were not happy with the methodology; but it was interesting to find out through the interviews that it was not because they did not actually like the platform itself, but rather, it was due to their lack of knowledge in using the technology.



### QUESTION 3

#### 3. La plataforma dificulta el aprendizaje del ingles como lengua extranjera.

Chart 4 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	1	2%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	0	0%
Esta en desacuerdo	9	15%
Completamente en desacuerdo	40	68%
No opina al respecto	9	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

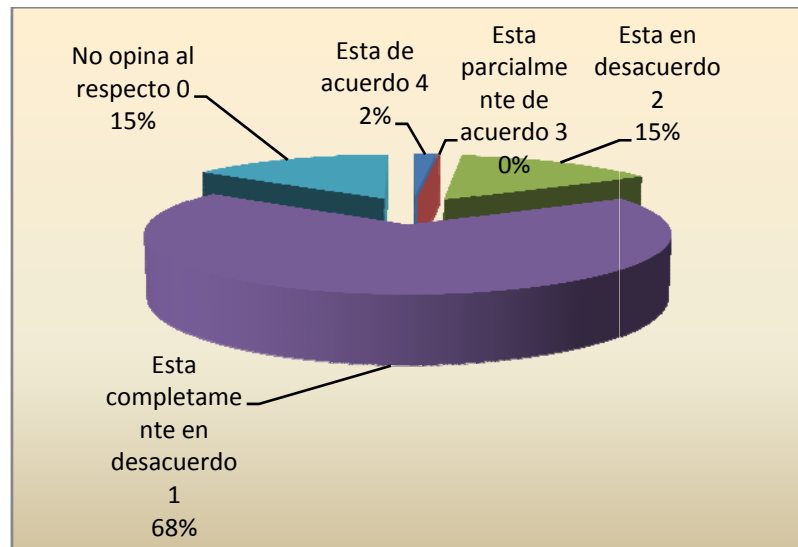


Figure 8 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** As we can see there is no contradiction with the previous item. The answers mirror the previous results. Some students did manifest negative opinions against the platform, not because of the platform itself, instead due to their lack of knowledge in the area of computers.



### QUESTION 4

#### 4. La plataforma ofrece la flexibilidad de trabajar al ritmo personal.

Chart 5 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	48	81%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	7	12%
Esta en desacuerdo	1	2%
Completamente en desacuerdo	3	5%
No opina al respecto	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

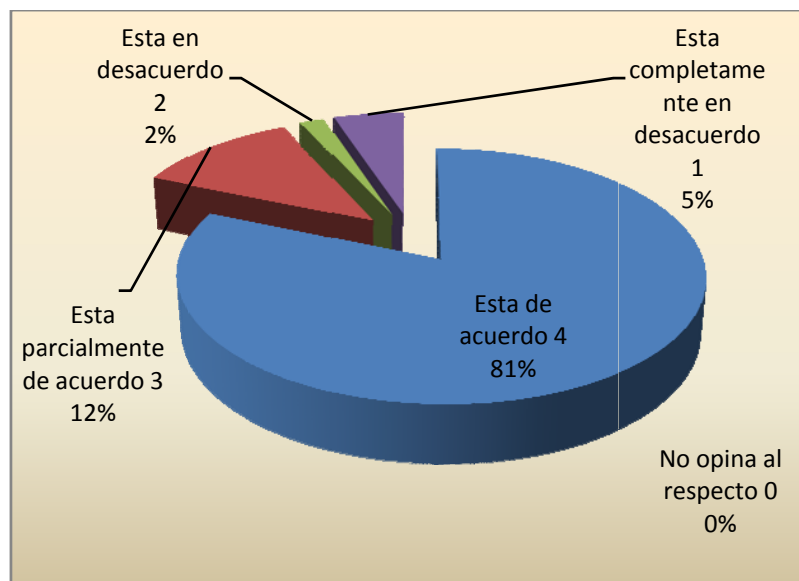


Figure 9 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** This is an interesting possibility that the platform offers to students. As we can see a strong 81 % concur that the flexibility the platform offers is incomparable to what the book offers. Within a certain period of time, students were allowed to post their homework or assignments on Moodle, which allows students much greater flexibility as to when they do their assignments; something that is not possible when teaching a regular class.

### QUESTION 5

5. Los contenidos presentados a través de la plataforma son más actuales y relevantes.

Chart 6 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	43	73%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	16	27%
Esta en desacuerdo	0	0%
Completamente en desacuerdo	0	0%
No opina al respecto	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

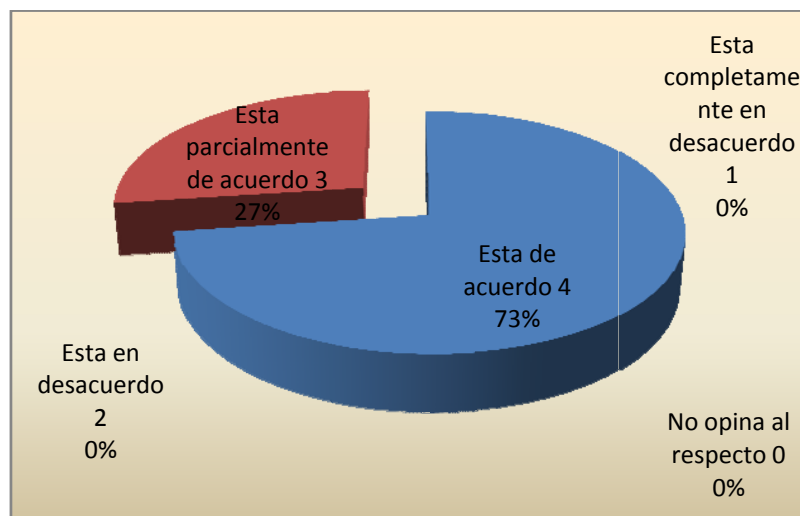


Figure 10 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** A great opportunity I had was creating the material on my own. I had the chance to include topics according to the students' age and interests, as well. Meanwhile, the book does not change at all because it is static; it is aimed at a very general audience. The value of being able to choose up-to-date and relevant material is powerfully supported 100%, of which 73 % totally agreed while the other 27% partially agreed.



### QUESTION 6

6. El texto presenta temas apropiados para el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Chart 7 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	11	19%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	20	34%
Esta en desacuerdo	19	32%
Completamente en desacuerdo	9	15%
No opina al respecto	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

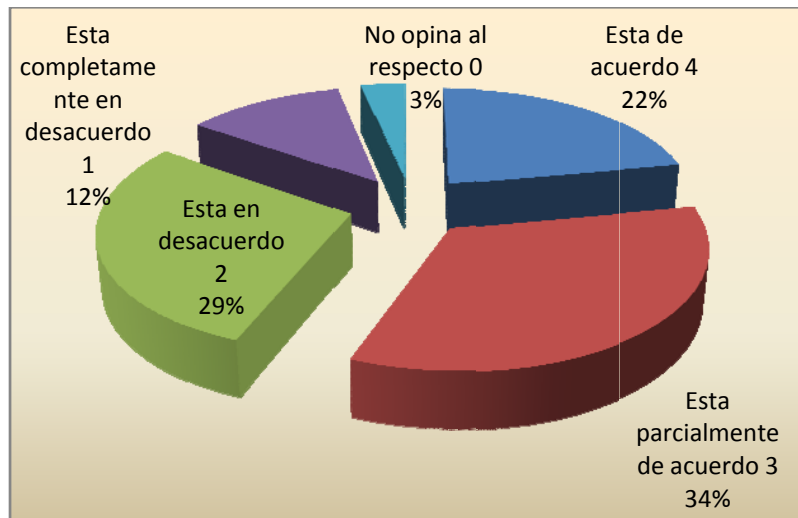


Figure 11 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** This statement focuses on the topics themselves, rather than the way they are presented. This is why I believe there might be contradiction with the previous item. However, it clearly shows a much lower opinion of the book contents when compared to those of the platform.



### QUESTION 7

7. Trabajar con la plataforma me da mayor confianza cuando aprendo, que trabajar con el texto.

Chart 8 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	24	40%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	27	46%
Esta en desacuerdo	7	12%
Completamente en desacuerdo	1	2%
No opina al respecto	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

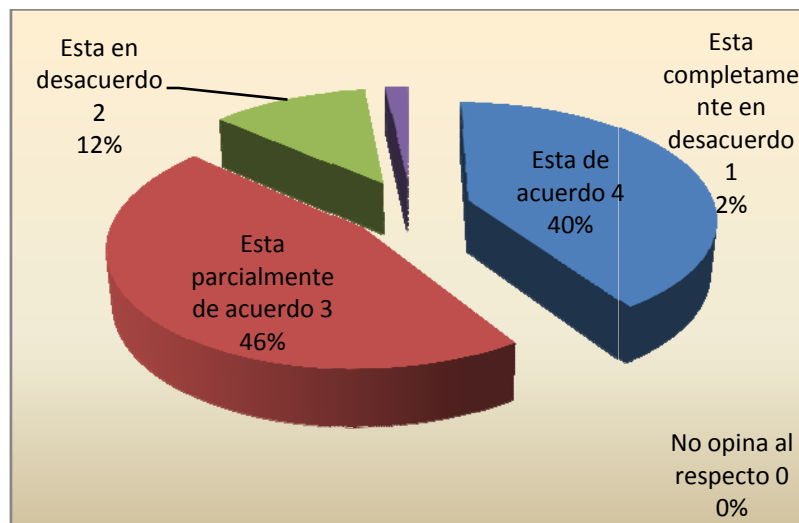


Figure 12 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** One thing that caught my attention was the fact that most of the students in the interviews brought up the fact that somehow the platform helped them overcome shyness. They had to participate in forums which were free from the possibility of stage fright because they were online. This way the students managed to become more confident and thus to speak in class whenever they were required to do so. We can see that the majority, 86 %, of the whole sample sees eye to eye with the fact that the platform, definitely, gave them greater confidence when they learned.





### QUESTION 8

#### 8. La plataforma me ofrece más posibilidades de ampliar vocabulario.

Chart 9 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	36	61%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	20	34%
Esta en desacuerdo	2	3%
Completamente en desacuerdo	1	2%
No opina al respecto	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

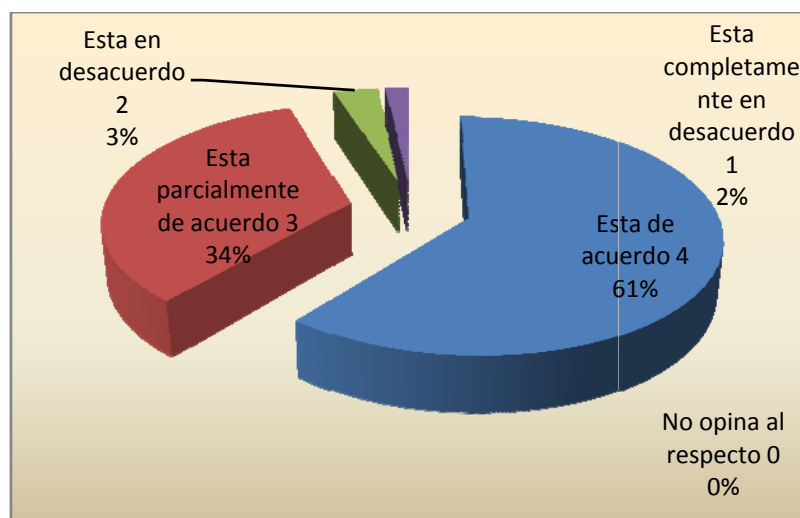


Figure 13 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** The opportunity to give students several online resources which they could rely on, really helped them build vocabulary. However, 5 % of the sample thought it did not help them. On the contrary, a strong 95 % thought it did help them. As well as the online resources I received mails or pop-up windows on the chat from students asking me the meaning of certain words. I assisted them 24-7 online, so they had someone to turn to for help.



### QUESTION 9

9. La plataforma me ofrece la opción de desarrollar una destreza en base de otra.

Chart 10 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	32	54%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	20	34%
Esta en desacuerdo	2	3%
Completamente en desacuerdo	0	0%
No opina al respecto	5	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

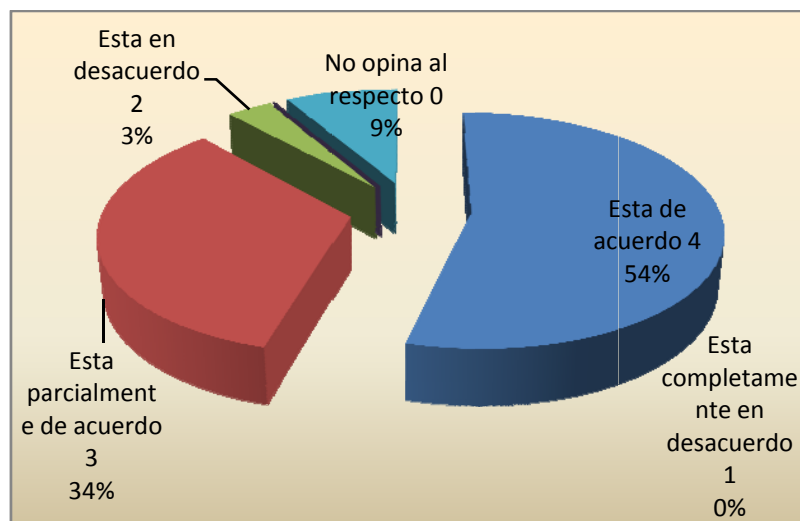


Figure 14 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** One of the advantages the platform gives students is the chance to build up skills one on top of another. Students do reading to come up with writing, or they do reading to come up with speaking. It is called the integrated approach. It is seen that 88% of the students realized what they were doing while working on their tasks online. Some of the students commented it was much easier to come to class knowing what was to be worked on during that period of class. Their marks improved gradually during the trimester.



### QUESTION 10

10. El texto me da la oportunidad de afianzar mis conocimientos.

Chart 11 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Está de acuerdo	15	25%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	27	46%
Esta en desacuerdo	9	15%
Completamente en desacuerdo	8	14%
No opina al respecto	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

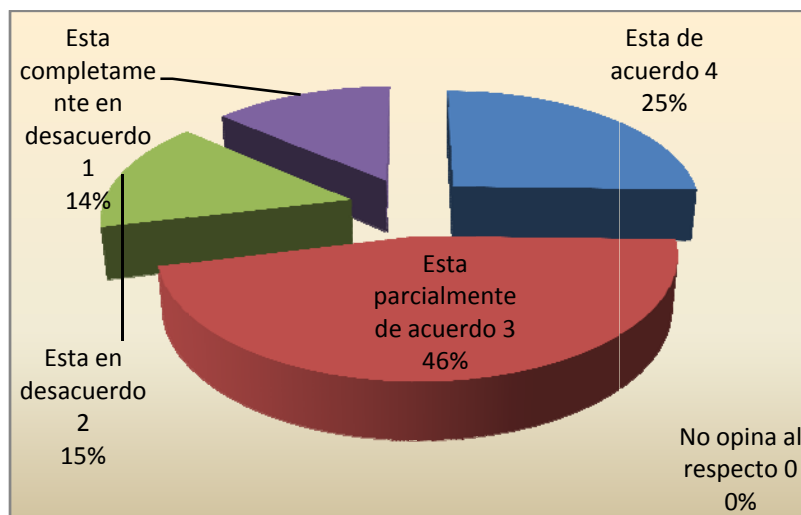


Figure 15 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** 25 % of the students said that they agree with the statement that says that text provides opportunities for them to strengthen their knowledge and 46 % partially agree. The answer is totally positive due to the fact that students also had the contents of the book, so they could go over them any time at home.



QUESTION 11

11. Me siento más seguro usando el texto, que la plataforma.

Chart 12 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	2	4%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	12	20%
Esta en desacuerdo	18	31%
Completamente en desacuerdo	25	42%
No opina al respecto	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

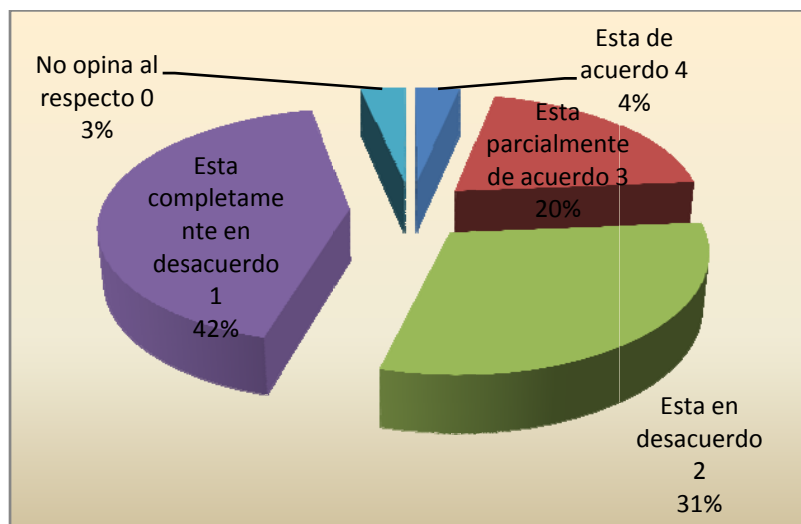


Figure 16 - Student Survey

**Analysis & Interpretation:** If we refer to the previous analysis we will see that the results for this item are in total concordance with questions 2 and 3. It is noteworthy that students are almost totally in favor of the platform. To confirm it, 73 % of the students said they felt much more confident using the platform rather than the book; 42 % completely.



### QUESTION 12

12 El texto limita mi aprendizaje, porque no presenta lenguaje autentico, ni actividades en contexto.

Chart 13 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	15	25%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	23	39%
Esta en desacuerdo	10	17%
Completamente en desacuerdo	10	17%
No opina al respecto	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

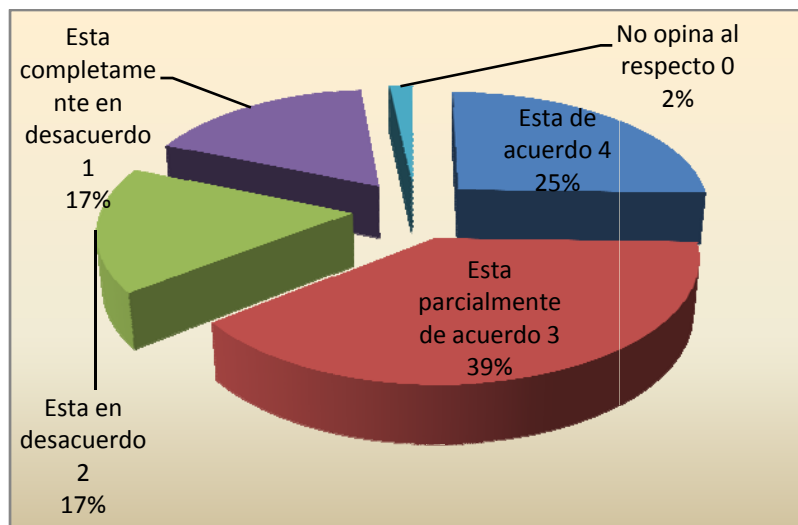


Figure 17 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** One of the cons the textbook presents is its notorious lack of updated vocabulary, while, the platform has its versatility which helps it to be up to date, but first and foremost, to include authentic vocabulary. As we can see in the diagram 64 % agree that their learning is being limited by the lack of authentic vocabulary used in the book.



### QUESTION 13

13. Prefiero clases basadas en la metodología tradicionalista. (Solo con un texto)

Chart 14 Student Survey.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Esta de acuerdo	0	0%
Parcialmente de acuerdo	5	8%
Esta en desacuerdo	11	19%
Completamente en desacuerdo	40	68%
No opina al respecto	3	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey applied to the students of the fourth-level intensive courses Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

By: Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

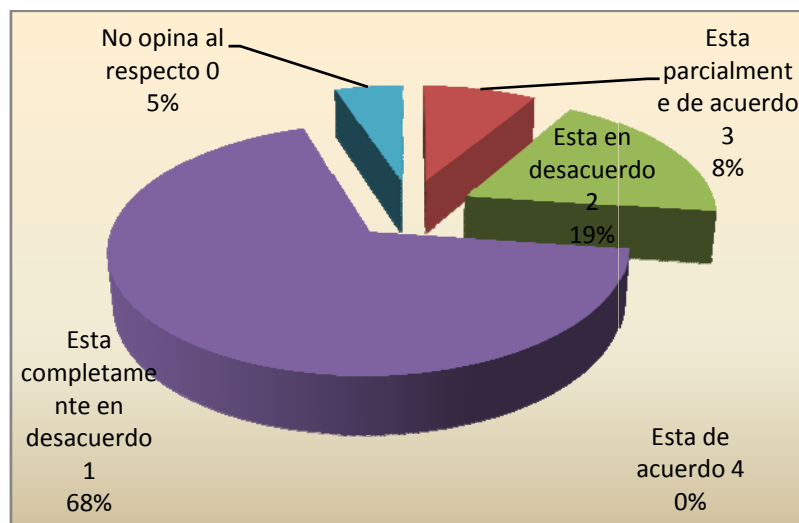


Figure 18 - Student Survey.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** During interviews some students said that due to their lack of knowledge in computing plus a lack of time, they would rather work with the book. It was much easier for them and thus they only had to do homework now and then. But luckily, 87 % do not agree with them, telling us that they did enjoy working on the platform, Moodle.

## ORAL INTERVIEWS

In order to get statistics on how both approaches worked, the students from both classes were interviewed and recorded. Students were asked to give honest answers and it was also emphasized that their answers would have absolutely no influence on their final grades. Here are both the questions asked and the statistics of the results obtained during the interviews of both the afternoon and the evening classes.

### ORAL STUDENT INTERVIEW AFTERNOON CLASS

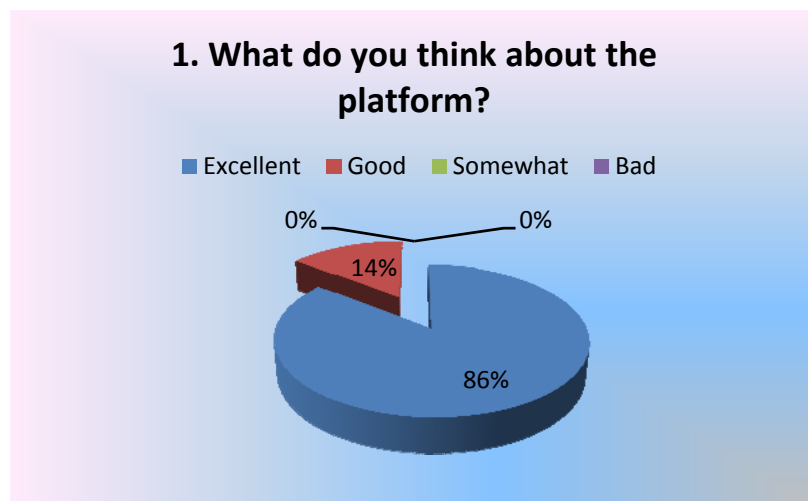


Figure 19 - Student interview.

Chart 15 Student interview.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	24	86%
Good	4	14%
Somewhat	0	0%
Bad	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Interview applied to the students of the fourth intensive courses, afternoon class, Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

**By:** Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** It is clearly seen that the majority of the students thought the platform was excellent, while just a few thought the platform was good. On the



contrary, none said they did not like the platform. It is rather obvious that the students really enjoyed working online and being part of this hybrid learning approach. Some of the positive aspects they added while interviewed were as follows:

- ✚ They were able to be in touch with the latest technology and that they were exposed to updated topics.
- ✚ Working with the platform gave them the chance to be ready to go for postgraduate courses.
- ✚ The teaching was much more personalized.
- ✚ They could manage their time more flexibly.
- ✚ Some of them were shy; however, they had the chance to express themselves by means of the forums.
- ✚ They were not only learning English, but computing, as well.
- ✚ The platform facilitates the learning of English as a foreign language.
- ✚ They were able to do their tasks anywhere they were.
- ✚ Classes are not obstructed by either administrative issues or holidays.



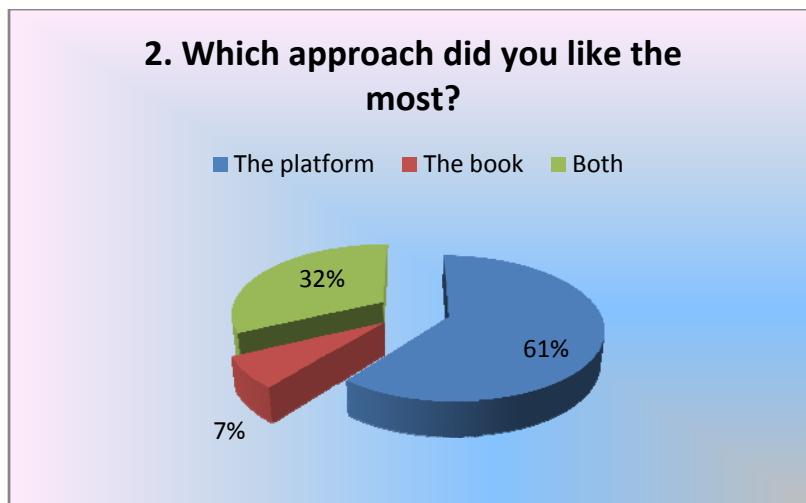


Figure 20 - Student interview.

Chart 16 Student interview.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
The platform	17	61%
The book	2	7%
Both	9	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Interview applied to the students of the fourth intensive courses, afternoon class, Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

**By:** Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** It is noteworthy that the students who reported that they did not like working with the platform was due to their lack of computing knowledge. They asserted that their Internet connection was way too slow, or that their Internet connection would fail. These arguments cannot be taken as valid ones because they are not part of the platform. Moreover, just a few mentioned that they rather worked with the book because it was much easier and that the book itself was less work than the platform. In contrast, most of the students were totally in favor of the platform, due to the fact that they were able to work with updated topics and the technology, itself, provided them with tools to enhance the learning of the target language.

I believe that it is totally remarkable the fact that some students supported the use of both approaches the platform and the book. Their arguments were that both complement each other and that both provided help when learning the language or



dealing with homework. Also, they said that the platform did not have contents from previous level, while the book did.

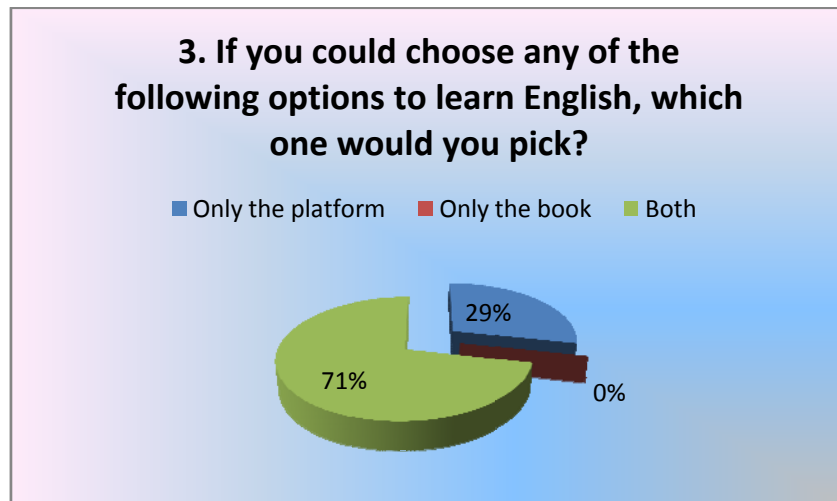


Figure 21 - Student interview.

Chart 17 Student interview.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Only the platform	8	29%
Only the book	0	0%
Both	20	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Interview applied to the students of the fourth intensive courses, afternoon class, Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

**By:** Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** In question number 3 we can see that there is an apparent contradiction with the previous question. In the latter question most of the students preferred working with the platform. However, in question 3, they say that they would rather learn English by using a combination of both the platform and the book.

Based on the interviews and based on what I could see while the teaching the course, I can say that this contradiction arises because some students, who grew up in a traditional system, were afraid of the academic load they had to deal with. Moreover, some of them were not capable of handling technology the way they were supposed to.

In the end, I could conclude that the fact that part of the student population belong to a traditional system can make the adoption of the platform into the curriculum difficult; however, there are ways to achieve it.

### ORAL STUDENT INTERVIEW EVENING CLASS

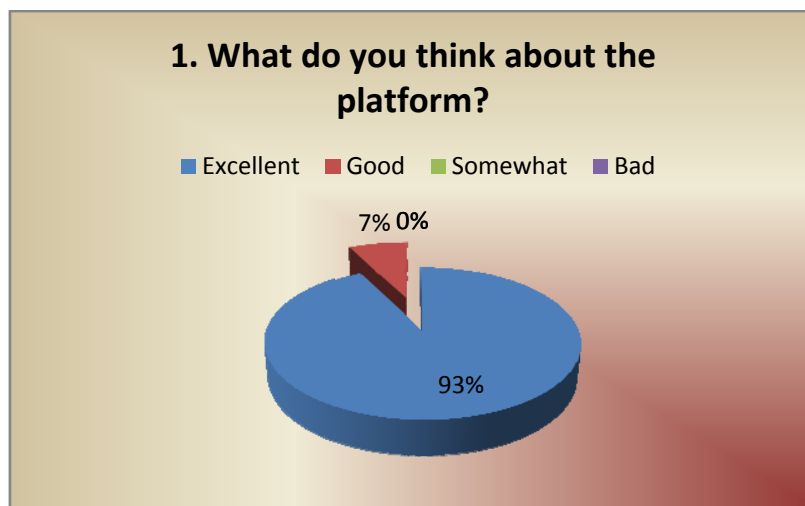


Figure 22 - Student interview.

Chart 18 Student interview.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	25	93%
Good	2	7%
Somewhat	0	0%
Bad	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Interview applied to the students of the fourth intensive courses, afternoon class, Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

**By:** Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** It is obvious that all of the students had a positive opinion of the platform, due to the fact that most of them thought it was excellent. No student said they did not like the platform. The majority are overwhelming in favor of the platform. Students also mentioned some positive traits about the platform:



- ✚ They can share homework with peers.
- ✚ The platform really works.
- ✚ Updated readings and activities.
- ✚ The platform helps us (students) optimize our time.
- ✚ We can work anytime and anywhere.
- ✚ The platform is not as boring as the book is.
- ✚ The possibilities to practice English are higher than the book's.
- ✚ We learn more vocabulary.

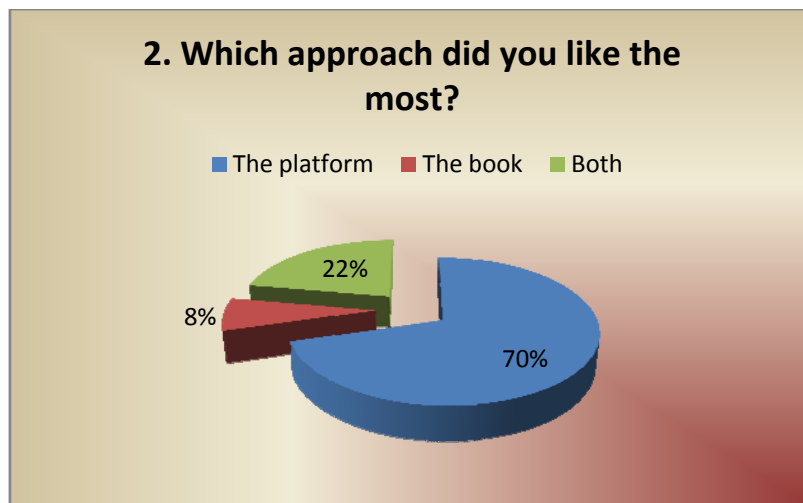


Figure 23 - Student interview.

Chart 19 Student interview.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
The platform	19	70%
The book	2	8%
Both	6	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Interview applied to the students of the fourth intensive courses, afternoon class, Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

**By:** Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** As in the afternoon class, the students who manifested dislike for working with the platform said it was due to their lack of computing knowledge. They asserted that either their Internet connection was way too slow, or that their Internet connection would go down. These arguments cannot be taken as valid as they refer to technical difficulties rather than issues with the platform itself. Moreover, this 8 % mentioned that they rather worked with the book because it was much easier and that the book itself was less work than the platform. In contrast, 70 % were totally in favor of the platform due to the updated topics and the technology itself, which provided them tools to enhance the learning of the target language.

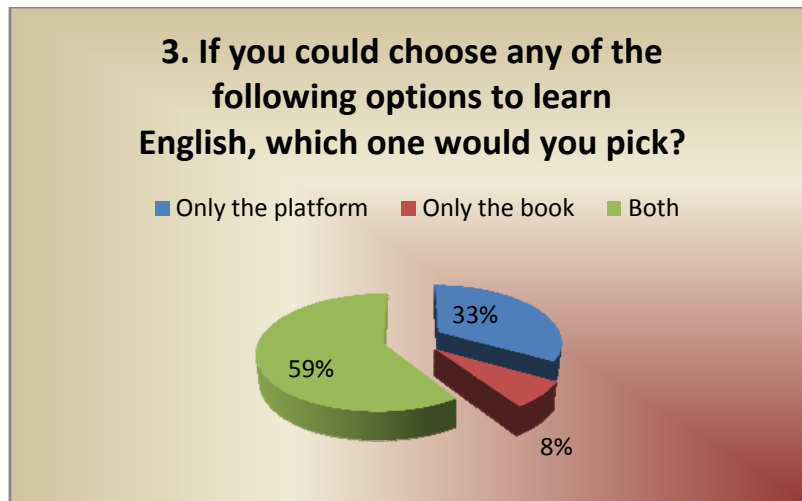


Figure 24 - Student interview.

Chart 20 Student interview.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Only the platform	9	33%
Only the book	2	8%
Both	16	59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Interview applied to the students of the fourth intensive courses, afternoon class, Department of Languages, University of Cuenca.

**By:** Vicente Guillermo Pacheco Salazar.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** Regarding question number 3, the contradiction between question 2 and 3 is much more notable than the afternoon class. In the latter question 70 % preferred working with the platform; however, in question 3, 59 % said that they would rather learn English by means of a combination of the platform and the book.



### PRE & POST-TESTS RESULTS

In order to demonstrate the results of the pre and post-tests, five categories were created: *A (Excellent: 90-100)*, *B (Good: 80-89)*, *C (Average: 70-79)*, *D (Passing: 60-69)* and *F (Failing: 0-59)*. The grades were then calculated and placed into their respective categories mentioned above. The information will be displayed in percentages in order to be able to get a clearer view of what their scores were at the beginning and what the scores were at the end of the semester.

Thus to be able to see if there was any effect on the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language when using e-learning, it was necessary to have a pre-test and a post-test to see what the level was - *starting stage* and what the level is - *ending stage*. Therefore, these are the results of both tests and also the results of both groups. However, it is noteworthy to say that there was no comparison between the groups previously mentioned.

#### Afternoon Class Pre and Post - Tests

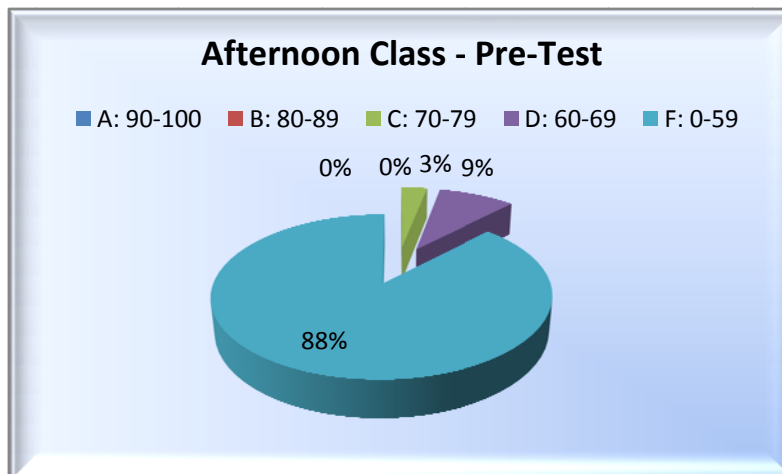


Figure 25 - Pre-Test to afternoon class.

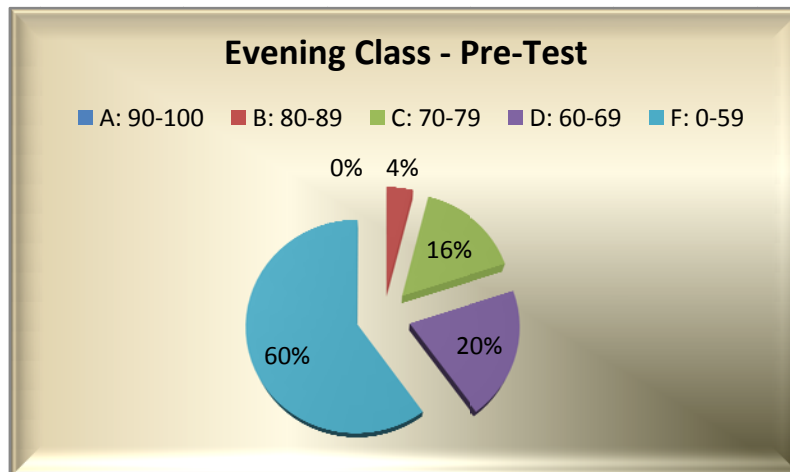


Figure 26 - Pre-Test to evening class.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** Unsurprisingly, there is low student performance due to the fact that they did not have previous knowledge of what they were tested on. The results show that 29 students out of 33, in the first case, and 15 students out of 25, in the second one, got grades lower than 60. Thus, it is clearly seen that students' performance would put them in a failing category. I believe that no matter what approach is used, students will always get failing grades due to the fact that there is no previous knowledge.

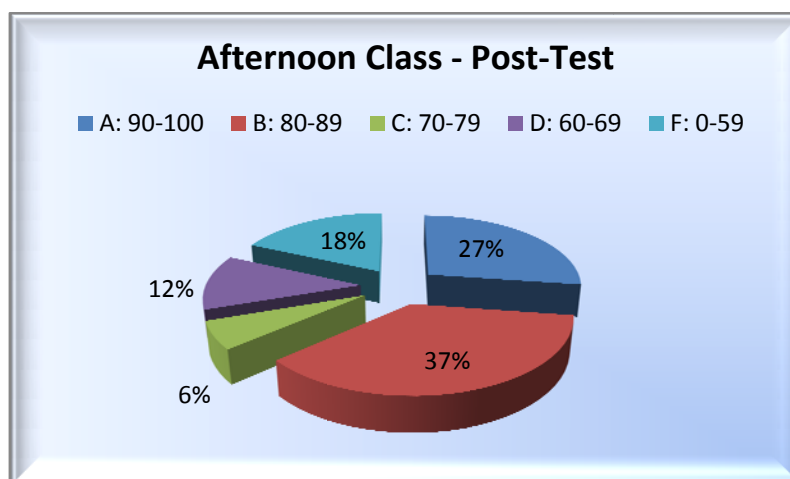


Figure 27 - Post-Test to afternoon class.



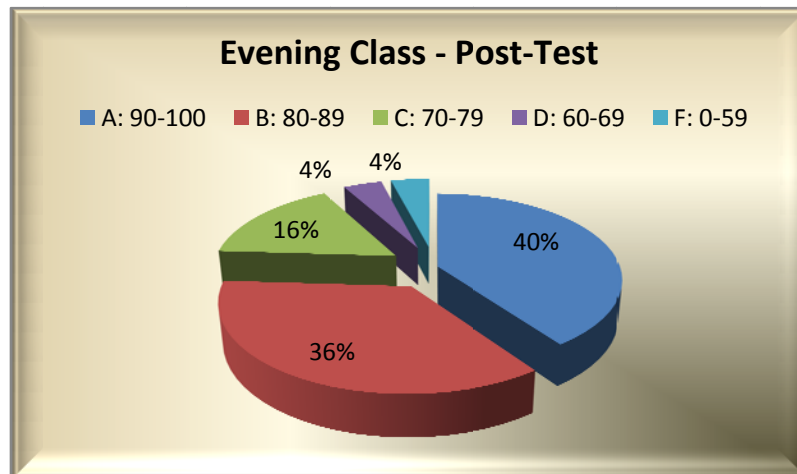


Figure 28 - Post-Test to evening class.

**Analysis & Interpretation:** On the contrary, we can see that 21 students out of 33 and 19 students out of 25 got grades higher than 80. These findings allow me to conclude that the methodology applied really worked and students really took advantage of what was taught in class. Now, there is a counterpart if other approach had been used, would students have gotten better grades anyways?



## CAPITULO V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions have been written based on the research carried out, the practical part, and the obtained results during the making of this Project:

- ✚ The fourth level students are concerned to see that their knowledge on the target language is not as base-grounded as they would have expected. As a result, they are not confident enough to communicate. Therefore, students show disregard for the language and a much stressed apathy, lack of creativity due to the methodology that has being used.
- ✚ During these teaching years I could have seen that teachers show no interest in using technological resources in order to carry out their role as teachers of English as a foreign language. It seems there is also contradiction between the methodology teachers are supposed to use and what they really use in class. A traditional approach seems to be in vogue still and also a translation approach. There is a lack of pedagogical update making students' needs, interests, and problems neglected and not worked out.
- ✚ There is a lack of technological resources at the Language Department, University of Cuenca. There is only one computer lab with about 25 computers available. As a result, teachers run into difficulties when trying to book the lab. Normally, classes have between 25 to 35 students, which is a large number to work with. I think there should be more labs, so teachers can actually make technology part of their classes. The more teachers use resources, the more opportunities students will have to learn.



✚ The department in charge of Moodle, at the University of Cuenca, should polish some basic details which would make a big difference:

1. Students who come from different universities or have already finished their studies had trouble getting their usernames and passwords to get access to the platform.
2. Some current students could not log in as shown on the login screen.
3. Some students posted their activities and they would not appear displayed on the platform.
4. The platform itself changed the name of the creator of the class; instead, it displayed somebody else's name or names.
5. The person in charge of the platform had several duties other than the platform, so he was really short of time to assist the students and myself on this issue.

✚ It seems it is becoming common for students to be absent the very first week of class which caused delay, too. There is also the fact that sometimes students register for one class and then later on, they drop out.

✚ Due to the fact that some students could not sign up, I fell behind a week. As a result, I started later than expected.

✚ Some students lacked basic computing skills and they did not have an e-mail account, which also caused delay.



## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As a professional in the field of education and willing to commit myself to constant training to be up-to-date, I would like to make the following recommendations:

- ✚ Teachers should break barriers and work on the idea that traditional approaches might help sometimes; however, they are no longer suitable to accomplish today's objectives.
- ✚ Set up requirements in order to get promoted. The institution itself should find a way where teachers can look forward to constantly being updated through the taking of workshops, lectures, and training in general dealing with current educational issues.
- ✚ Nowadays, computers and devices have become pretty affordable. It is not like in the past when talking about purchasing a computer was something unreachable due to its price. It has changed now and should also change in our environment. If we really want to raise the level of education, computers, software, and devices should be bought immediately. Thus, professionals will one way or another catch up with what working with technology encompasses.
- ✚ In order to cope with technical problems related to Moodle or any other software, I strongly believe that there should be one or two people dedicated to it. As a result, they would be able to assist anyone, anytime. This is one of the most important steps we need to make in education, learning that each professional should be directed towards his/her strengths, in that way any task, any job will be carried out properly.



- ✚ I think that like students, teachers also need motivation. We are worried about the way colleagues look at us, the way they treat us, how they talk to us; and while we spend our energy towards these unrelated issues, we lose objectivity and neglect our job as teachers. I guess that we are very good at making excuses but what about solutions? We should focus on the daily improvement of ourselves as people as well as ourselves as professionals.



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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1

### ENCUESTA

La presente encuesta tiene por objeto conocer los criterios que los estudiantes de los cuartos niveles Intensivos, tienen sobre el uso de B-learning, en el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera. Por favor llene la siguiente encuesta marcando con una **X** los campos respectivos.

**Datos Informativos**

**Nombre:**

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>1. Género</b>	<b>2. Edad</b>	<b>3. Número de niveles estudiados en el Departamento de Idiomas de la Universidad de Cuenca.</b>
F <input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
M <input type="checkbox"/>		

Está de acuerdo	Está parcialmente de acuerdo	Está en desacuerdo	Está completamente en desacuerdo	No opina al respecto
4	3	2	1	0

1. El texto y la plataforma se complementan.	4	3	2	1	0
2. La plataforma virtual facilita el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera.	4	3	2	1	0
3. La plataforma dificulta el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera.	4	3	2	1	0
4. La plataforma ofrece la flexibilidad de trabajar al ritmo personal.	4	3	2	1	0
5. Los contenidos presentados a través de la plataforma son más actuales y relevantes.	4	3	2	1	0
6. El texto presenta temas apropiados para el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera.	4	3	2	1	0
7. Trabajar con la plataforma me da mayor confianza que trabajar con el texto.	4	3	2	1	0
8. La plataforma me ofrece más posibilidades de ampliar vocabulario.	4	3	2	1	0





9. La plataforma me ofrece la opción de desarrollar una destreza en base de otra.	4	3	2	1	0
10. El texto me da la oportunidad de afianzar mis conocimientos.	4	3	2	1	0
11. Me siento más seguro usando el texto, que la plataforma.	4	3	2	1	0
12. El texto limita mi aprendizaje, porque no presenta lenguaje autentico, ni actividades en contexto.	4	3	2	1	0
13. Prefiero clases basadas en la metodología tradicionalista.	4	3	2	1	0

**GRACIAS POR SU COLABORACIÓN**

**Appendix 2**

**TECHNOLOGY SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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
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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 3

#### Pre-Test and Post-Test

#### Final Exam: 4th Level Intensive English (Pre-Test and Post-Test)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Vocabulary: Match the words with their definitions (5 p)

- \_\_\_ 1. **save up for**
- \_\_\_ 2. **waste of money**
- \_\_\_ 3. **possessions**
- \_\_\_ 4. **ashtray**
- \_\_\_ 5. **can opener**
- \_\_\_ 6. **tissues**
- \_\_\_ 7. **floor** (for example, "She lives on the fifth floor")
- \_\_\_ 8. **old-fashioned**
- \_\_\_ 9. **rugs**
- \_\_\_ 10. **comb**



- A. a flat container you use to put the ashes in when you are smoking a cigarette (or anything else you might be smoking at the time)
- B. opinions, machines, clothes, etc. that used to be popular in the past, but they are no longer modern or popular
- C. a thick piece of material that is used to cover part of the floor in a room
- D. something that is not worth buying because it has little value or use
- E. to keep money instead of spending it, especially because you are trying to get enough money to buy something special
- F. a thing with a sharp edge that you can use for opening cans of food
- G. a flat plastic or metal thing you use to make your hair tidy; to make your hair tidy using a comb
- H. the room or rooms on a particular level of a building; also referred to as a 'story'
- I. the things that you own
- J. a piece of soft paper that you use as a handkerchief (for example, to dry your nose or eyes)

**2. Change the following sentences from either active to passive or viceversa. (5 p)**

- I ate all of the cookies. \_\_\_\_\_
- The yellow car was driven by Steph. \_\_\_\_\_
- They closed the bridge for repairs. \_\_\_\_\_
- They are repairing the computer. \_\_\_\_\_
- The house is cleaned everyday. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Write definitions for the following objects of people using the words *that* or *who*. Example: A corkscrew is the thing you use to open a bottle of wine. (3 p)**

antique dealer / person / buy and sell old furniture  
\_\_\_\_\_

eraser / thing / correct mistakes  
\_\_\_\_\_

mechanic / person / repair cars  
\_\_\_\_\_



**4. Answer the questions using *for*, *since*, or *all* so that the sentences are true for you. (3 p)**

How long have you been studying your major? (since)

\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in Cuenca? (for or all)

\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known your best friend? (for)

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Writing: Your composition should be around 100 words. Choose one of the following topics. (9 p)**

1. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live and why?
2. Going on a trip. What should I bring?

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**6. Reading: Read the following excerpt and then answer the questions below. (5 p)**

In the twentieth century, architects in large cities designed structures in a way that reduce noise and yet made as comfortable as possible. They used such techniques as making walls hallow and filling this wall space with the materials that absorb noise. Thick carpets and heavy curtains were used to cover floors and windows. Air conditioners and furnaces were designed to filter air through sound proofing materials. However, after much time and effort had been spent in making buildings less noisy, it was discovered that people also reacted adversely to the lack of sound. Now architects are designing structures that reduce undesirable noise but retain the kind of noise that people seem to need.

Which is the main topic? \_\_\_\_\_

A lack of noise according to some surveys; it could be good or bad for people. \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following is **NOT** mentioned as absorbing sound?



- a) Filled hollow walls
- b) Thick carpets and heavy curtains
- c) Air conditioners and furnaces
- d) Air filters

Architects are designing:

- a) New techniques of soundproofing
- b) The ideal noise
- c) Structures with some noise
- d) Adverse buildings

According to the passage, people live most comfortably with:

- a) Noisy furnaces
- b) Silence
- c) Hollow walls
- d) Certain noises