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CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

DEVELOPING READING SKILL THROUGH THE FLIPPED METHOD IN LOW INTERMEDIATE LEVEL STUDENTS FROM THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA- AZOGUES BRANCH

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RESUMEN

El trabajo de graduación desarrolla un análisis sobre el vínculo entre la clase invertida y el desarrollo de la destreza de lectura comprensiva del inglés como idioma extranjero. Para realizar este estudio se realizó una revisión bibliográfica de las principales características de la metodología de la clase invertida y los elementos fundamentales para ser aplicada en el perfeccionamiento de la destreza de lectura comprensiva.

Este estudio fue conducido en Universidad Católica de Cuenca-Sede Azogues, en el cual se aplicó una entrevista a tres profesores del área de inglés, basados en la información obtenida de las entrevistas se puedo establecer los problemas que los profesores y estudiantes se enfrentan   al momento del proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del inglés. Además, se realizó un análisis de silabo del nivel bajo intermedio de inglés perteneciente esta institución con el propósito de establecer cuáles son los temas que van a desarrollar y así poder seleccionar lecturas, vocabulario y actividades que fueron incluidas en las 12 lesson plans que serán destinadas como una guía para profesores que estén interesados en la metodología del Flipped Classroom.

Palabras Clave: Clase Invertida; Lectura; Comprensión; Inglés.

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ABSTRACT

This graduation project develops a bibliographical research about the link between the Flipped Classroom Method and the development of reading skills for teaching English as a foreign language.

This study examines how the Flipped Classroom Method can help in the development of reading skills through the analysis of teachers´ surveys conducted at the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues branch. The findings show the problems that teachers and students have to face in the process of teaching learning/reading comprehension.

In addition, this study made an analysis of the syllabus of lower intermediate course from the Catholic University of Cuenca Azogues branch. This analysis helped establish the readings, grammar, vocabulary and activities for the lesson plans. Finally, the twelve lesson plans could be a guideline to help teachers make their classes more active and meaningful.

Key words: Flipped Classroom; Reading; Comprehension; English.

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DEDICATORY

To my lovely mom and dad that

always have encouraged me

to keep going in this project.

Author: Yanel Avilés

DEDICATORY

To God, my creator.

To my mom for supporting me along my academic life,

and giving to me her endless love.

To my brothers and sisters who had helped me during my whole life.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important skill for learning English as a foreign language. Students not only get vocabulary from reading, they also become able to understand the message in the text rather than just the words. The aim of the present project is to develop twelve lesson plans in order to help teachers to guide the students in the development of the skill of reading comprehension through the Flipped Classroom Method and the application of its advantages and techniques in the lesson plans that can help students overcome problems in this area of language learning.

The first chapter establishes the problem, and the objectives of this graduation project. The second chapter considers the theoretical fundamentals of both comprehensive reading instructions in the English language and in the Flipped Classroom Method. The third chapter lays out the methodology used for this project: the qualitative method, bibliographical research, interviews and the analysis of the syllabus. The fourth chapter contains an analysis of the current syllabus of the low intermediate English level used in the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch through interviews with teachers. The fifth chapter contains a description of the structure of the lesson plans and the model of twelve lesson plans based on the Flipped Classroom Method. Finally, the research finishes with conclusions and recommendations.

I. THE PROBLEM

1.1 Topic

This project has attempted to provide a guideline in order to develop reading skills in Low Intermediate Level students at the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch using the Flipped-Classroom Method.

1.2 Description of the problem

In Ecuador, up until recently, there was no national strategy to teach foreign languages. English, as a subject in the public educational system, was optional in elementary school and mandatory in high schools (EL COMERCIO, 2014). In 2016, English was implemented in public primary schools and the National Curricula offers a program based on the CEFR (Common European Framework for Languages) levels. Its pedagogical and teaching fundaments are the CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and the Communicative Functional Approach (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2014).

However, despite the effort made by the government to prepare teachers abroad and change old curricula in schools and high schools, it can still be noticed that the results of English education are poor and that is carried on to higher education. For example, a survey conducted by Education First demonstrated that Ecuador is located in the 48th position out of 60 countries evaluated with regard to their English level (Education First, 2013). This may have several variables such as the historical indifference to increase the English level, the application of old-fashioned strategies (Calle, 2012) or the lack of research about innovative methodologies to improve English language teaching and learning.

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Consequently, teachers use traditional methodologies/translation and focus just on grammar, leaving out the development of the communicative aspect of English (Calle, 2012). This could be one of the reasons why students who are admitted into universities do not have a good level of performance in the four skills speaking, reading, writing and listening.

The reading skill, which is an input skill, is a good model for writing and contributes to acquiring more vocabulary. One of the problems when developing reading skills is that Ecuadorian students have not developed the habit of reading in their mother tongue (Los Andes, 2014). The lack of this habit directly affects the L2 (second language), therefore it is a barrier for developing English proficiency. Also, through preliminary interviews with some teachers from the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch, it was possible to establish that most of their students present a low level of reading comprehension. One of the reasons to which this fact is attributed is that they do not have enough time to practice this skill in class.

1.3 Justification

Currently, English has become an essential element in education for its connections with international opportunity and technology. It is the world´s *lingua franca,* and therefore allows for professional development, business cooperation and a link for information around the world (Gavran, 2013). Moreover, in institutions of higher education, students must have English reading skills since most of the information and academic articles are in this language.

It is fundamental to mention that one of the least developed skills is reading comprehension since reading in Spanish is already a difficult task to fulfill. We need to

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remember that Ecuadorians read just half a book per year in 2012, and that in 2014, according to information from INEC--the official institute of statistics and census in Ecuador-- 27% of Ecuadorians did not indicate that they made a habit of reading (Los Andes, 2014). In English, the situation is even more complicated since the students do not have the tools to understand the language and they can become bored even faster than when reading in their native language.

According to Calle et al. "The major reason for the limited knowledge of and poor performance in English among the students graduating from high school is related to the absence and the lack of use of effective strategies on the part of English language teachers" (p. 7). Most of the students from public high schools come to universities with a low level of English. They are not able to reach the English standards demanded by universities.

To have a better level of English proficiency, it is fundamental to implement new strategies in order to achieve the required level of higher education. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to implement changes so students can improve their reading skills. In this context, the Flipped-Classroom Method (FCM) emerges as an alternative that has proved effective in different contexts. "Basically the concept of a flipped class is this: that which is traditionally done in class is now done at home and that which is traditionally done as homework is now completed in class" (Bergman & Sams, 2015).

This method would help create significant learning in the classroom because it drastically changes the role of the students and the teacher in the class. The way of teaching in the classroom is inverted; this means that students will study at home and will do other kinds of activities during class time. As was mentioned before, one of the problems that the teachers and students from the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch face is the limited time

for English classes. The Flipped-Classroom Method could be an alternative which would save time during classes with its inverted system.

The Flipped-Classroom Method has been applied in educational institutions with good results (Arfstrom et al, 2013; Pearson, 2015, Spartan College, 2014) and this project will be a basis for developing lesson plans and a guideline for applying the FCM in other contexts.

This work has the potential of benefiting the English learning system in the Catholic University of Cuenca since the lesson plans are going to be related to innovating teaching guidelines, incorporating a new perspective of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). In addition, this could be of significant assistance for teachers and students. Moreover, Article 31 from the Ecuadorian *Reglamento de Regimen Académico* states that any university student must demonstrate his or her sufficiency in a foreign language before finishing sixty percent of the career. In addition, teachers from the Catholic University of Cuenca will find practical support due to the fact that the lesson plans could be easily applied in many contexts.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General objective

To develop ten lesson plans based on the Flipped-Classroom Method in order to develop reading comprehension skills in Low Intermediate Level students from the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To carry out bibliographical research about the Flipped Classroom Method and the importance of reading skills.

- To determine the topics to be connected to the lesson plans through to the analysis of the syllabus of the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch in order to decide with which topics to improve.

- To interview English teachers in the language department of the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch to contextualize the teaching/learning environment in which the lesson plans would be applied.

- To include the Flipped-Classroom Method in the development of twelve lesson plans aimed to improve reading comprehension.

II. THE FLIPPED-CLASSROOM METHOD AND READING COMPREHENSION

SKILL

2.1 Reading skill

Reading skills are composed of a complete process which starts with word recognition and word comprehension. It requires understanding the whole text and producing a message.

"Reading is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought; it consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text" (Bernhard, Pang, Muaka, & Kamil, 2003).

According to Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, reading is defined as:

1. "Perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading). The understanding of the result is called reading comprehension.

2. Saying a written text aloud (oral reading). This can be done with or without understanding of the content."

Another definition by Collins English Learner's Dictionary "reading is an act of looking at and understanding a point. This is very true because reading entails the use of

vision to understand several words in a sentence and make them meaningful. The same goes for each sentence in order to understand the entire text."

Besides all the definitions from the dictionary, there are also definitions made by several people. According to William (1984) "Reading is a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written." Rohani Ariffin (1992) defines "reading as a highly personal activity that is mainly done silently, alone." (p.1) the reading processes is related to the activity of gathering information either silently or aloud.

Reading is an interactive process between the reader and the writer. Brunan W.K (1989) defines reading as "a two-way interaction in which information is exchanged between the reader and the author". Hamra & Syatriana define reading as "an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver." (as cited in Smith; 1971; p.2)

One should also consider definitions of reading given by teachers. According to Stallfter, teachers (1969) define reading as: "a complicated procedure; readers read to get information from the printed pages and they should be able to pronounce and comprehend the printed words, signs, letters, and symbols by assigning meaning to them."

One can see in the definitions of reading that it is a complex process and also it involves constant practice in order to improve it.

2.1.1 Types of Reading

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Каденко (2012) says that there are some different types of reading and some types of activities to develop reading skills such as skimming, general reading or scanning. (p. 214).

Skimming is the most elementary type of reading. Skimming is slow reading, where the reader focuses on titles and the main idea rather than the details. In the reading process, the reader extracts the meaning of the text or the basic idea rather than all the aspects. "For instance, many people tend to skim a newspaper or an article just to get a quick overview to see if the article will be worthwhile reading in detail." (Каденко, 2012, p. 214).

Scanning requires a fast reading through the text´s lines, trying to identify or find specific information. To scan a reading text, the reader starts at the beginning of the page and moves quickly toward the bottom. "Generally, scanning is a technique that is helpful when the reader has a question in his/her mind, but he/she does not need to read every word. Instead, he/she may look for the key words to answer his/her questions only." (Каденко, 2012, p. 214)

2.1.3 Reading Comprehension

According to Klingner (2007) "Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that included word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency". It involves a deep understanding in the meaning of the text rather than insolated meaning of words or phrases. It is fundamental for a reader to develop the ability to interpret and comprehend the text and express his opinion of the text.

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"Reading comprehension is a complex interaction among automatic and strategic cognitive processes that enables the reader to create a mental representation of the text." (Van den Broek & Espin, 2012)

According to Moore "comprehension depends not only on characteristics of the reader, such as prior knowledge and working memory, but also on language processes, such as basic reading skills, decoding, vocabulary, sensitivity to text structure, inference and motivation Comprehension also requires the effective use of strategic processes, such as metacognition and comprehension monitoring."

2.1.4 Comprehension elements

Comprehension entails three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity (Snow, 2002). These three elements are connected; the reader´s characteristics, the value and importance of the text and the activities to engage the students with the text.

The reader

The readers have different abilities, capacities and ways to understand a text. In reading comprehension the teacher must take into consideration the students reading characteristics, these include cognitive capacities (attention, memory, critical and analytic ability, inference and visualization ability), motivation (a purpose for reading, an interest in the content being read, self-efficacy as a reader), and various types of knowledge (vocabulary, domain and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge). (Snow, 2002)

The text

The content of the text must be linked with the reading level of the student, knowledge vocabulary, and more importantly, with the context where the students belong.

Texts can be difficult or easy, depending on factors inherent in the text, on the relationship between the text and the knowledge and abilities of the reader and on the activities in which the reader is engaged.

They have to follow a logical sequence from the bottom, where students´ level is situated and move according to the development of the reading skill.

Activity

Reading is done for a purpose, to achieve some end; activity refers to this dimension of reading. When one reads, one may do it for any reason--assignment, entertainment or necessity. The activity is fundamental in the process of reading because it helps increase the knowledge of the student and shows the level of understanding.

2.1.5 Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are the different methods and efforts a reader knows and is able to use in order to comprehend (Roe, 2014, p. 84). Reading is a complicated process (word recognition and comprehension), so the readers and teachers must use strategies which help them to develop good reading proficiency.

"Expedient use of reading strategies is the ability to use different kinds of activities and reflections before, during and after reading in addition to being able to take a

metacognitive approach to one's reading and understanding before, during and after reading." (Hansen, 2016, p.14) The reading process follows sequences that one cannot skip because they are directly connected. One is not able to comprehend the end of a text if one does not know how it begins.

"These methods are often divided into three phases: pre-reading, during reading and post-reading activities." (Kulbrandstad, 2003, p.185). A summary of the stages is as follows:

Pre-reading

"Pre-reading activities are done before reading commences and draw the reader's attention to different elements of the text, the paratext, or to the text's structure, in addition to expressing a purpose for reading, and awakening the reader's prior knowledge and anticipation about the text." (Hansen, 2016, p.14) Pre-reading is used to engage the student in the text, present an overview of the text and generate expectations.

The connection between the new knowledge and the information that the reading has before is fundamental for the comprehension of readings. According to Bråten (2007), prior knowledge is the most important element of all in comprehending a text in order to build new information on knowledge one already has.

Ways of drawing pupils' attention to prior knowledge may include writing mind-maps, key words, or having conversations about the topic in question. As reading in English will most likely include encountering new vocabulary, identifying new words and phrases is an important pre-reading activity (Udir 2015, p. 4).

While reading

"The aim of this stage is to help students to understand the specific content and to perceive the rhetorical structure of the text." (Celce-Murcia, 1991) Of great importance is

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the furthering of the reader's ability to monitor his/her understanding of what is read, and, if necessary, implement means of increasing understanding where comprehension is lacking through re-reading, re-thinking, or merely asking for help--using a metacognitive ability. (Hansen, 2016) Readers, in order to understand what they are reading use different techniques such as underlining important words or phrases, looking in the dictionary for new words found in the reading. They do this because they try to understand the text.

Post-reading

Post-reading activities are all the things a reader does to gain understanding and knowledge of a topic, as writing mind-maps, key words, summaries, texts, questions to the texts or answering questions to the texts. (Hansen, 2016)

Drawing lines to other topics and adding the new knowledge to already existing knowledge or one's own experiences are further elements of importance in integrating new knowledge, as are making presentations, discussing the topic, and evaluating the text's content and structure (Udir, 2015).

2.1.6 Reading components

"The reading process is complex and multi-dimensional. Recent work completed by the NCCA identified a number of components that need to be considered in the teaching of reading towards recognizing this complexity" (Research Report, 2012).

In the process of reading, there are five components: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency.

1. Phonological awareness:

"Phonological awareness is a broad term that refers to the ability to focus on the sounds of speech as opposed to its meaning and it has a number of different levels or components." (Armbruster & Osborn, 2001)

2. Letter/sound knowledge (phonics) and word knowledge

"Phonics is the relationship between a specific letter and its sound only as it relates to the written word." (Armbruster & Osborn, 2001)

3. Vocabulary

"Vocabulary is a principal contributor to comprehension, fluency and achievement. Vocabulary development is both an outcome of comprehension and a precursor to it, with word meanings making up as much as 70–80% of comprehension." (Bromley, 2007, p.528)

4. Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read connected text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly and automatically, with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading, such as decoding. (Singleton, 2009, p.47)

5. Comprehension

"Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading. (Armbruster & Osborn, 2001) Comprehension is basic purpose of the reading process because it shows the combination of the other components. Without the management of the other four they will be not able to get a clear understanding of the reading.

2.2 The Flipped-Classroom Method

"The flipped classroom is an innovated teaching methodology that involves technology, teachers, and students. Flipped classroom approaches remove the traditional transmissivity lecture and replace it with active in-class tasks and pre-/post-class work." (Abeysekera & Phillip, 2014)

The Flipped Classroom method has many benefits such as engaging students in the learning process, giving the opportunity to the teachers to work with students who need more attention. The article "A review of flipped classroom" states that "The key feature of the flipped learning model is the opportunity to maximize student learning opportunities in the classroom" (George, Arfstrom, McKnight, & McKnight, 2014)

The notion of Flipped Classroom methodology comes from the conception of saving time through the inversion of the traditional way of teaching. This means that the lectures are not delivered in the classroom anymore, but they are sent to be reviewed as homework, allowing students to practice what they already checked at home, now, altogether with the teacher. (Cabrera & González, 2015, p. 32)

In class time, there are some students in which the English level is according to the course, but there are the students whose English level is not a good one. Using the flipped classroom method teachers may solve this problem; the class time that the teacher has for feedback is essential because he or she has the time to work face to face with students who have problems so those students have more opportunities to learn. They are not excluded in the process; they will develop the same skills as their classmates.

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Students should be able to use the language freely and in authentic situations. The readings presented must be reflected, analyzed, criticized by students--they have to move into a critical thinking or stage; asking, comparing, moving the reading text into their real context. Another important advantage of this method is that it helps to create an excellent environment for cooperative learning. Estes Michele, Ingram Rich, and Liu Juhong state that "cooperative learning includes three key parts 1) Students work in teams toward the attainment of some superordinate goal. 2) Labor is divided between team members, such as that each individual takes responsibility for a different sub-goal. 3) Individual contributions are pooled into a composite product to ensure that the goal is reached." (2014) Working alone is a good strategy to develop the language, but interaction among the students is also essential to achieve a proficiency performance. The flipped classroom supports the development of the combination between working alone and interaction. "Flipped classrooms are intended for more in-depth and collaborative learner-content interaction; knowledge construction can be an important learning outcome" (Estes, Ingram, & Liu, 2014)

2.2.1 Historic antecedent of the Flipped-Learning

The concept of flipped learning appeared in 2007, but it underlies the blended learning concept. Bath &Bourke said that "Blended learning is realized in teaching and learning environments where there is an effective integration of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning as a result of adopting a strategic and systematic approach to the use of technology combined with the best features of face to face interaction." (as cited in Krause, 2007) Michelle Schwartz stated that "the flipped or inverted classroom is a form of blended learning in which events that have traditionally

taken place inside the classroom now take place outside the classroom and vice versa." (as cited in Bishop and Verlager, 2013)

"The term of flipped classroom was polarized by Jon Bergmann and Aaron Sams, who worked at Woodland Park High School in Colorado in 2007." (Westerberg, 15) they worked with recording videos of the topics taught in classes and uploading them in virtual web sites which are easy to access through platforms such as YouTube, Google and others, so students could have access to them anywhere and anytime. The main reason why they developed this method was to help busy students who did not have time to attend to classes so that when they came to classes, they were not lost on the topic. The results that they got from the method were successful. Nowadays this method is employed by many teachers, and it provides excellent results.

2.2.2 Pedagogical foundations

The flipped classroom is founded on different instructional pedagogies in this proposal. Constructivism is important since it is the theory that can be the basis of working with technological platforms. Constructivism means that a student can construct their own knowledge based on what they have learned in former stages of learning. At the same time, there are important questions about the epistemology of knowledge itself: "Is it the shared and accepted scientific knowledge about the world as it exists in established science? ("Scientific knowledge is socially constructed"). Or is it the world itself? ("The world is socially constructed")." (Mikelskis, 2008) These questions discussed are important to determine the role of education, changing the paradigm of education, going from an education based on "giving information to students" to "letting students construct their own knowledge".

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Piaget used to think that this exposes people to gain information from their own experiences and learn how they are influenced in the way they learn. "Constructivism is based on two principles: "1) Knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject; 2) The function of cognition is adaptive and serves the organization of the experiential world, not the discovery of an ontological reality." (Glasersfeld, 1989) Students' interactions are very important since the interchange of ideas help construct the knowledge as well.

The behaviorist perspective used to give the focus of the learning/teaching process to the teacher. However, constructivism has the purpose of giving students the main role as the active centerpiece of the process. Students' beliefs, knowledge, and skills are taken into account as part of a process that must be continued during the different periods of education. (Gail Jones & Brader, 2002)

2.2.3 Four pillars of flipped learning

"Flipped learning provides a different teaching process. In order to implement the FCM teachers must incorporate four pillars into their practice: (F.L.I.P) Flexible Environment, Learning Culture, Intentional Content and Professional Educator." (George, Arfstrom, McKnight, & McKnight, 2014)

Flexible Environment

Educators create flexible spaces where students choose when, how and where they learn. The classroom can be modified according to the activity used. It shows a different view of traditional teaching where the students were sitting in lineal rows. In the FC students can move their desks in order to accomplish different assignments. In addition,

teachers can use different strategies to teach, to work alone or in pairs, and let the students master their knowledge in their own ways.

Learning Culture

In a flipped learning model, in-class time is dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth and creating rich learning opportunities. The flipped classroom completely changes students´ and teachers´ roles. The teacher is no longer the one who masters the new information. Students are exposed to the information at home, so they have the facility to check and learn by themselves. In class time, they can actively participate in the process of learning and make it meaningful; they show what they have understood and clarify any doubt. Also, teachers can work face to face with students that have problems.

Intentional Content

Flipped learning educators determine what they need to teach and what materials students should handle on their own and those which they should not. Teachers determine what strategies to use in class in order to adopt a student-centered learning process.

Professional Educator

The role of a professional educator is even more important and often more demanding in a flipped classroom than in a traditional one. In this method, the teacher does not take a passive role in the class, they must help students, monitoring, giving feedback, being a guide for them.

2.2.4 Current research studies about the flipped-classroom method

The flipped classroom is not just based on theory; the studies behind this method support the successful results from applying it to many institutions. For example, in Byron High School, the application of the method in the area of mathematics turned out to be a major change for authorities, students, teachers and parents. After the implementation of the flipped classroom method, the students had a significant increase in their math skills:

In 2011, nearly three-quarters (73.8%) of students passed the state math test, more than double the performance from just three years earlier, and the ACT composite scores improved to 24.5. Moreover, by 2012, 86.6% of Byron's seniors completed four or more credits of math (Arfstrom, McKnight, Hamdan, & McKnight, 2013, p. 45).

The University of Memphis (TN) implemented the flipped classroom in 2011. Instructors divided the preparation for general chemistry, designed to prepare students for the foundational chemistry course, into two sections: the first one that adapted the course to the flipped classroom approach and a traditional course. From these groups of students, 73.7% of the flipped classroom approach received a grade of C or better in General Chemistry, compared to 48.4% of students who took traditional courses, and 52.5% of all students taking General Chemistry. These findings suggest that implementing the flipped learning model in CHEM 1100 prepared students in a better way to take chemistry courses.

Another example, Clintondale High School, in September of 2010, implemented the flipped classroom method in freshman at-risk social studies class. The teachers videotaped

their classes and the students had to watch them at home, in classes the teachers put more attention on students with difficulties. The results were successful:

"In the freshman class in the first flipped learning semester, the pass rate increased to 67 percent in English language arts, 69 percent in math, 78 percent in science, and 81 percent in social studies, representing an increase of from 9 to 19 percentage points across the subjects. Discipline referrals declined by 66 percent." (Pearson, 2015, p. 45)

As one can see, the application of the flipped classroom in these three study cases showed us high results in increasing the academic level of the students and the institutions involved. The correct use of the method, with all the correct material and with a specific aim to achieve the benefits from the method is highly qualified. The cases of the study presented before demonstrate how the level increases during the flipped classroom period; the percentage got a high level compared with studies done before applying the flipped classroom method.

2.3 The flipped classroom method and reading skills.

Reading skills are a hard process to develop; it is not reading through lines, it requires understanding and critical thinking. Also, the reading process requires time; to engage, to read and to understand but a class hour is not enough.

The FCM works well in the three stages of reading. It is an effective way to engage students in academic reading and to begin to apply their understanding in the classroom. (Corke, Smith, & Breeze, 2014). The FCM allows teachers to use different materials to teach--videos, power point presentations, readings and activities which are interactive for

the students. The FCM helps students to engage in material anywhere, anytime and increases interaction in face-to-face sessions which appears to enhance the students' learning. Williams et. al. (2012) found that student achievement was greater if they engaged in both online learning and attended face-to-face sessions; it means that in the flipped classroom, both processes are equally important.

A good reading level requires that students read fluently and comprehend and make critiques of a text. Comprehension of a text is elemental in the reading process and it needs to establish a relationship between prior knowledge and new knowledge. Teaching reading in a flipped classroom can encourage students to connect their prior knowledge with their new knowledge. First, students watch a visual media presentation on which to scaffold information from the text. Then, as they write about what they have read, the prior knowledge provides information that may go beyond what they learn in their required reading. (Corke, Smith, & Breeze, 2014).

III METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

The focal method used in this project was the qualitative method since the development and application of interviews and the information gathering from lesson plans, syllabi and structures of the courses generated qualitative data.

In addition, it is necessary to connect this project with the features that establish research trustworthiness. According to Anney "qualitative researchers' consider dependability, credibility, transferability and conformability as the trustworthiness criteria for qualitative investigation" (as cited in Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007)

Credibility is related to the correct interpretation of the data collected from the participants. (Trochim, 2006) The purpose of the interview is to establish some problems that the teachers have to face in the process of developing reading skills. All their answers were transcribed as exactly as they had said. Also, a final review of their answers was done with the teachers interviewed. The transcribed interviews are in Annex I.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. (Trochim, 2006) This project is able to be transferred to any educational context were the flipped-classroom method could be applied and also different areas besides English and the results from the application are expected to be similar.

Conformability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. (Trochim, 2006) Conformability is evidenced is this project because the physical evidence to demonstrate the correct procedure of the research project can be provided after having the proper requirements.

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To check dependability of a qualitative study, it is necessary to avoid any mistake while conceptualizing the study, collecting the data, interpreting the findings and reporting results. (Trochim, 2006) This project has been carefully developed in order to avoid any mistake. It is important to state that this is a graduation requirement which fulfills academic criteria established by the University of Cuenca. Also, this project has been developed in a year's time under the supervision of a tutor.

3.2 Human Resources: Interview participant's description

The participants were 3 English teachers of the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch. Below, there is a brief description of the participants.

The first teacher was Lourdes Gabriela Estrella González. She is the coordinator of the EFL department of the Catholic University of Cuenca in Azogues. She holds a master's degree in EFL Applied Linguistics from the Central University del Ecuador. She has 10 years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. At the moment of the interview, her English level is B2, according to the FCE (First Certificate in English) test taken in 2016.

The second teacher is Orlando Javier Sancán Gonsález. His holds a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics, having graduated from the Central University del Ecuador. Also, he has 10 years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. At the moment of the interview, his English level is B2 according to the test of FCE (First Certificate in English) taken in 2016.

Finally, the last teacher is Antonio Lenín Argudo Garzón. He holds a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature by granted by the University of Cuenca. His

experience in teaching English is 8 years. His English level is C1 according to the test of FCE (First Certificate in English) taken in 2016.

3.3 Data gathering techniques

3.3.1 Description of the interview

For the purpose of this graduation project, an interview was applied to English teachers from the Language Center of the Catholic University in order to determine the problems they face in the process of teaching English and the level of their students.

This was a 30 minute open question interview consisting of five questions that had the objective of gathering information about five aspects: a) the current situation of the Language Center; b) the current level of students; c) their teaching methods applied in class; d) their opinion about the flipped classroom method; e) their willingness to use the same.

3.3.2 Description of application process of the interview

The first step for the application of the interview was to ask for permission from the teachers. The teachers received a brief description of the project and the purpose of the interview. The interviews were carried out on November 16th in 2016. They were interviewing at their place of work in university Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Campus.

For the interview, the researcher used a notebook to collect the answers given by the teachers. At the end of the interview, the written data was read to verify the accuracy of the transcript. Each question took about five minutes.

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This interview helped to get information about the methodology used by the teachers, and how to implement the flipped-classroom method. Moreover, the results from the interview contributed to establishing the level of the students and to choosing the correct material in order to develop the skill of reading. Finally, it should be noted that a transcription of the interview is presented in Annex 1 if a further reference is needed.

IV ANALYSIS

4. 1 Interview Analysis

To establish the specific reasons to implement an active method of teaching in a flipped classroom, reading comprehension with the Catholic University of Cuenca students from the low intermediate level and interviews with the teachers were considered necessary. Three teachers were interviewed about their opinions on different aspects of their current practice and the possibility of using the flipped classroom method in the class.

The first important communality they claimed was that their students do not have the necessary English level to pass an international exam. Another important factor they mentioned is that they do not have enough time in classes to explain everything students need and to monitor their exercises:

"Probably our students do not get the level because there are a lot of structural failures in the system that started in school and we have carried out that weight and it is difficult to conceive that our students are able to pass an international exam under these circumstances. Reading comprehension is one of the weakest skills since they do not understand what they read, they do not have enough vocabulary, they cannot look for general or specific information, they cannot infer things, etc. And this becomes worse when we do not have enough time for activities and explanation. It seems to be impossible sometimes. We just do what we can." (Interview-Teacher 1)

Another question of the interview was about the methodologies used for teaching English. The interviewees felt that any kind of methodology is welcomed if it benefits the students. They, in part, are pessimistic about using mythologies because they saw no results in the past. They adopted Communicative Based Learning (Basta, 2011) to work with their students and, in some cases, they accepted that traditional methods also be used:

"Currently we use Communicative Based Learning activities to work with our students. They are effective most of the time but it is difficult sometimes and then, subconsciously, we end up working with traditional approaches like repetition. It is frustrating sometimes. We need to change things" (Interview Teacher 2)

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In addition, teachers demand a different perspective to maximize time and get better learning outcomes from their students. In consequence, teachers were asked about their current knowledge of the flipped classroom method and the answers obtained indicate that they are aware of this method but they do no practice it because it takes a lot implementation time.

> *"I know about the flipped classroom. It is a new trend in English learning but I am not sure. It seems to me that it takes so much time of implementation and preparing the material. I am not one hundred percent sure that our students will use the material given at home to dedicate time of practice in class."* (Interview Teacher 3)

Also, that there are a number of things teachers do not know about flipped classroom. Finally, teachers were asked about the possibility of implementing flipped classroom in their classes. All three of them thought that this could be an opportunity if they were prepared and able to implement it.

> *"If we have formal training and we received the correct material, why not? We are opened to work with useful strategies and flipped classroom is a new trend that has been worked with results around the world. We need correct guidelines and a specific preparation.*

As one can see, teachers want to have a change and a flipped classroom is a possibility but every change needs pacification and lesson plans are an interesting beginning. If teachers have the lesson plans and analyze them, eventually they will find that all the myths about flipped classroom are false.

4.2 Syllabus analysis

The low intermediate syllabus is written completely in Spanish and its general objective is the development of the competence of the students in English communication using technologies of information. This last part is really important to this study since it is

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essential for the implementation of the flipped classroom for the improvement of reading comprehension skills.

Opening the syllabus to technologies allows the implementation of modern methods including one that is part of this work. However, it does not mean that technology is used in an effective way and most of the syllabus does not show how to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improve students' skills and knowledge about the language and it is named in a general way.

According to the interviews applied to the teachers, the syllabus objectives were created following the CEFR for A1-A2 level. However, this is not specified in any part of the document and it seems to be constructed according to the contents and skills that come with the book series used in class. Every unit is formed by contents and skills that match specifically with sections from the course book.

Despite being an important part of the general objective, technology is barely taken into account as a nuclear tool and the teaching methodologies are not specific for English learning and teaching. The use of power point presentations or arcades are frequently named in the activities but these are basic audio-visual tools leaving aside web pages with lots of resources. Consequently, most of the activities are based on the textbook or the workbook.

Evaluation is also part of this structure since methods and instruments do not go beyond tests, quizzes, graphic organizers or videos. The platform used by teachers is not named at all, and the syllabus does not postulate ways to use this tool effectively and according to students' needs. Finally, it is obvious that the flipped classroom method does not appeared as part of the syllabus program, but no other method to learn English is explicitly named. In conclusion, it is evident that this is a syllabus that needs to be

improved and it needs to develop a link with ICTs--specifically the University. One way of

adverting these forms is the application of the flipped classroom method.

Chart 3. Syllabus analysis

Topics	Grammar	Vocabulary
Going away	Infinitives for reasons; It's + adjective+ to…	Things to do before a trip
	Ways to give advice and make suggestions	Things to take on different kinds of trips
At home	Whose…? And possessive pronouns	Places where you keep things in your home
	Order of adjectives;	Home furnishings for different rooms
	Pronouns one and ones;	Things you keep in your room
	Location expressions after pronouns and nouns.	
Things happen	Past continuous statements	Parts of the body; injuries.
	Past continuous questions	
	Reflexive pronouns	
Communication	Comparative adjectives; More, less and fewer.	Ways of communicating
		Adjectives
		Phone expressions.
Appearances	Questions and answers to describe people	Adjectives and expressions to describe people's appearances.
	Have got Phrases with verb+-ing and prepositions to identify people	
Looking ahead	Future with will, may and might	Work, study, and life plans Occupations.
	Present continuous and going to for the future	
	Clauses with if, when, after and before and the simple present to refer to the future.	

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V LESSON PLANS

5.1 Description of content and structure of lesson plans

The lesson plans used in this graduation project are based on the flipped classroom method which has two essential elements. The first element encompasses the activities students must do at home such as watching videos and reading texts to familiarize themselves with the grammar, vocabulary and strategies used in each unit. The second element consists of the direct application of the vocabulary and readings already read. These activities are divided according to the reading stages--pre-reading and while reading are developed at home. Post-reading is developed in class; the teacher can also find the assessment for each reading

Every lesson plan has a descriptive area where the teacher can find the number of the unit, the objectives and the expected result. It also contains the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) descriptors for reading corresponding to the A1 and A2 level for low intermediate students. The Overall Reading Comprehension descriptor is included in all the lesson plans but according to the objective of each reading the descriptors, Reading Correspondence, Reading for Orientation, Reading for Information and Argument and Reading Instructions were included.

The videos and texts used in the lesson plans are freely accessible and they are cited in the final sections of the lesson plans. The teachers are able to find the readings in appendix 2. There are twelve lesson plans which correspond to 6 units and each lesson plan is based on a reading. These readings take into account the content, vocabulary, grammar and conversation strategies specific for each unit. Since it is adapted to low intermediate

students, the lesson plans start at Unit 7 of the textbook in accordance to the analysis of the

syllabus of the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch.

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SUBJECT: English		LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE	UNIT N° 7: Going Away
LESSON OBJECTIVE: Talk about holidays and activities needed for a trip.		GRAMMAR POINT: Infinitives for reasons It´s+ adjectives + to	READING: "13 things to do in the Galapagos Islands & tips for your visit"

Unit objectives: Explain the structure It's + adjective + to Formulate and give advice and *suggestions*. Respond to suggestions. Use 'I guess' to express something unsafe about something.	Unit learning results: Upon completion of the unit the student will be able to: Use infinitives to give reasons. Ask and give advice and recommendations using should and should not. Talk about the holidays and get ready for a trip. Use 'I guess' to express yourself less sure about something. Use infinitives to talk about travel and vacation plans. Give advice and suggestions on items needed for travel.

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

- Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
- Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time picking up familiar names words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

ORIENTATION

- Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables.
- Can understand everyday signs and notices in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings.

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ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT
Pre-reading Students must watch the video "Why You Should Travel" They choose a phrase from the video and describe in 2 lines why you chose that phrase.	At home	Images Projector Platform Computer Texts: 1. "13 things to do in the Galapagos Islands & tips for your visit" (JuLee, 2016) 2. Video: Why You Should Travel (Truetravelers, 2016)	Ask and give advice and suggestions for traveling.
Reading At home, students read a text about: "13 things to do in the Galapagos Islands & tips for your visit"". They make a list of items you need to have ready before you travel to any place.	At home		
Post reading. They get in pairs and talk about the phrase they chose from the video and explain. Using the list of verbal forms to gives reason, students should write a short summary of the reading. Students twit a single phrase that tries to convince the people to travel to Galapagos.	In class		
References JuLee, E. (30/01/ 2010). *local ADVENTURER*. Retrieved from http://localadventurer.com/13-things-to-do-in-the-galapagos-islands/ Truetravelers. (12/ 02/ 2016). *Why You Should Travel*. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gb3sH5acmY			

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SUBJECT: English	LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE		UNIT N° 7: Going Away
LESSON OBJECTIVE: Produce a travel information packet		GRAMMAR POINT: Present simple. Comparative adjectives	READING: "Ten of World's most unusual hotels"
Unit objectives: Identify the infinitive form of verbs to give reasons. Explain the structure It's + adjective + to Formulate and give advice and suggestions. Respond to suggestions. Use 'I guess' to express something unsafe about something.		**Unit learning results:** Upon completion of the unit the student will be able to: Use infinitives to give reasons. Ask and give advice and recommendations using should and should not. Talk about the holidays and get ready for a trip. Respond to suggestions. Use 'I guess' to express yourself less sure about something. Use infinitives to talk about travel and vacation plans. Give advice and suggestions on items needed for travel.	

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

  - ➢ Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
  - ➢ Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

  - ➢ Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.
  - ➢ Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.

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ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT
Pre-reading Students choose an interesting place where they have been for vacation: Why is it interesting? They have to write some ideas. They record their answers and send by WhatsApp to the teacher.	At home	Pictures Projector Platform Text 1: "Ten of World's most unusual hotels" (Larese, 2016)	Read and comprehend general ideas. Identify and use the new vocabulary in context. Write short composition
Reading Students read the title of the reading "Unique Hotel Experiences" with the information of the experiences in each hotel. They should use a vocabulary template and then work with unfamiliar vocabulary for several minutes in context. They must write in their own words the characteristics of each hotel.	At home		
Post-Reading For several minutes, students must have oral participation and discuss about what they found interesting from the reading. Written production: Ask the students to find an interesting hotel on the internet and then, using the template, imagine and write about a stay at the hotel. Teachers deliver the rubric for the qualification of the written activity	In class		
References Larese, S. (13/ 10/ 2016). *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC*. Retrieve from http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/top-10/worlds-most-unusual-hotels/			

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SUBJECT: English	**LEVEL:** LOW INTERMEDIATE		**UNIT N°**: 8 At home
LESSON OBJECTIVE: Describe home by using possessive pronouns and appropriate vocabulary		**GRAMMAR POINT:** Objective pronouns Whose	**READING:** "Spring cleaning"

Unit objectives: To learn the use of 'whose' to ask about ownership To acquire vocabulary related to home To use adjectives to describe objects To use conversation strategies in formal situations To understand the reading: "How is a typical day for you?" To write a paragraph using night routines	**Unit learning results:** Upon completion of the unit the student will be able to: Use Whose…? and possessive pronouns, correctly order adjectives before nouns Use one and ones Talk about home, belongings and habits Use Do you mind…? To ask for permission and Would you mind…? For requirements Give advice and suggestions on items needed for travel.

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

> - Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
> - Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

> - Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.
> - Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.

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ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT
Pre-Reading Students are asked to watch videos about things you can find at home Students read the text "Spring cleaning" and identify Sandra's belongings by using possessive pronouns, adjectives, and one and ones Ex: The bathing suit belongs to Sandra, the other clothes belong to Sandra´s sister, the jewelry belongs to Sandra´s sister, the earrings belong to Sandra. To identify in the text, the use of whose: Whose bathing suit is this? = Singular form. Whose earrings are these? = Plural form. To identify the responses: It´s mine. It´s yours. It´s hers. It´s his. It´s ours. It´s theirs. Ex: A: Whose shoes are these? B: They are my shoes. [They are her/his shoes, they are their shoes, they are our shoes]	At home	Pictures Projector Platform Text "20 Things You Should Deep Clean This Spring" (Beautiful,2017)	Read and comprehend general ideas. Identify and use the new vocabulary in context. Write a short composition

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Reading Students read about "Spring cleaning" in the text: "20 Things You Should Deep Clean This Spring" Students answer questions about the reading: What are John and Sandra doing? They are spring cleaning. They´re tidying out the closet. They´re looking at old clothes and things. What´s in their closet? They see images of what spring cleaning is. Students are asked to write a summary of the text Later they have to answer the question: "Do you have a special day to clean the house?"	At home		
Post reading Students are asked to write about their own belongings using the vocabulary and the grammar focus learned.	In class		

References

Beautiful, T. (2017). 9 Things You Should Deep Clean This Spring. [online] House Beautiful. Available at http://lcliving.ca/9-things-you-should-deep-clean-this-spring/

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SUBJECT: English	**LEVEL:** LOW INTERMEDIATE		**UNIT N°**: 8 At home	
LESSON OBJECTIVE: To describe an evening routine by using appropriate vocabulary		**GRAMMAR POINT:** Objective pronouns Sequence words		**READING:** "Unusual habits"

Unit objectives: To learn the use of 'whose' to ask about ownership. To acquire vocabulary related to home. To use adjectives to describe objects. To use conversation strategies in formal situations. To understand the reading: "What is a typical day for you?" To write a paragraph using night routine.	**Unit learning results:** Upon completion of the unit the student will be able to: Use 'Whose'…? and possessive pronouns correctly. Order adjectives before nouns. Use one and ones. Talk about home, belongings and habits. Use Do you mind…? to ask for permission and Would you mind…? For requirements.

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

 ➢ Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
 ➢ Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

 ➢ Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.
 ➢ Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.

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ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT
Pre-reading Students are asked to make a list of habits they have at home Ex: I always make my bed every morning, etc. Students select information about their reality and they make a list of unknown words Students write about their ideas Ex: My kitchen is very disorganized. I never can find anything.	At home	Pictures Projector Platform Text "How to create an effective evening routine" (Just a Girl and her blog, 2016)	Read and comprehend general ideas. Identify and use the new vocabulary in context. Write a short composition
Reading Students are asked to read the blog called: "How to create an effective evening routine" Students answer the questions: What is the website about? What do you think one of the home habits is about? [keeping cupboards tidy, making all the labels face forwards]	At home		
Post reading Students are asked to write about home habits in the text: "How to create an effective evening routine" Students are asked to write a summary Students are asked to write about their routines in the evening in a regular day.	In class		
References Just a Girl and Her Blog. (2016). How to Create an Effective Evening Routine - Just a Girl and Her Blog [online] Available at: https://justagirlandherblog.com/evening-routine/.			

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SUBJECT: English	LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE	UNIT N°: 9 Things happen

LESSON OBJECTIVE:	GRAMMAR POINT:	READING:
Use the past progressive tense to tell anecdotes, events.	Past progressive	In love

Unit objectives:	Unit learning results: at the end of the unit the student will be able to:
Acquire vocabulary related to the body and accidents Use communicative strategies to give critique and give opinions about a story.	Use the past tense and past progressive tense to express events. Use reflective pronouns such as *myself, yourself, himself*, etc., to express actions Talk about unpleasant accidents and things Use the expression '*I bet'*...

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

> Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.
> Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency every day or job-related language**.**

ORIENTATION

> Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings.
> Can recognize familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCE	ASSESSMENT
Pre reading Students take a look at the video "A Love Story" They think of a love experience and post on Facebook group. Use the past tense.	At home	Projector Platform Computer Readings "In love"	Recognize use of the past tense and past progressive. Tell and report someone else anecdotes

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While Reading At home students read the story "In love" uploaded on the platform. Print the graphic organizer uploaded on the platform and complete. They scan the text to find out as many verbs as they can and make a table of those verbs in their base and progressive form, in the same way, a table in its base form and simple past.	At home	(Lee, 2016) Video "A love story" (Mills, 2016)
Post reading They use the verbs and write sentences in the past simple tense and the past progressive. Ask students rewrite their experience posted on Facebook using the past progressive. Ask them to tell about their love experiences. Ask them to report the anecdotes of each person. For example: Dean Davis was going to work on the train Monday morning and he was talking to a woman. Students give opinions about their classmate's stories	In class	

References

Easy reading. Retrieved from Easy reading : http://www.rong-chang.com/nse/

Mills, B. (05/ 07/ 2016). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKleQ1MXMCs

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SUBJECT: English	LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE	UNIT 9: Things happen
LESSON OBJECTIVE Practice forming sentences using the past continuous and past simple tenses to indicate past.	**GRAMMAR POINT** Past simple and past progressive When and while	**READING** The past continue story.

Unit objectives: Acquire vocabulary related to the body and accidents Use communicative strategies to give critiques and opinions about a story.	Unit learning results: at the end of the unit the student will be able to: Use the past tense and past progressive tense to express events. Use reflective pronouns such as *myself, yourself, himself*, etc., to express actions Talk about unpleasant accidents and things Use the expression '*I bet'...*

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

➢ Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
➢ Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

ARGUMENT AND INFORMATION

➢ Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.
➢ Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.

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ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCE	ASSESSMENT
Pre reading Students think about the most embarrassing situation in their lives and choose a picture that represents that situation.	At home	images Projector Platform laptop Reading: "The past continue story" (Kasim, 2014) Comic maker: Pixton (Comics, 2017)	Listen and comment about daily situations Express opinions about different situations. Use the new vocabulary in context.
While reading Students read the comic "The past continue story" Students identify the time expressions in the story. For example: now.	At home		
Post reading They find sentences where the past tense and the past progressive were used. Then, connect the sentences using when and while. For example: My father was reading, when my mom was cooking. Teachers give instruction on how to use the comic maker. Students use their embarrassing situation and create a comic using the tenses already learnt. Present orally in front of the class.	In class		

References

Kasim, N. (07/ 09 / 2014). *English is fun*. Retrieved from de http://www.learnwithcomics.com/2014/09/the-past-continuous-story.html

Comics, P. (28/ 04/ 2017). *Pixton Comics*. Retrieved from https://www.pixton.com/schools/privacy

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SUBJECT: English	**LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE**	**UNIT N°**: 10 Communication
LESSON OBJECTIVE Identify types of communication use 'now' and 'before'.	**GRAMMAR POINT** Comparative objectives	**READING** Communication then and now

Unit objectives: Compare types of communication using comparative adjectives Set up telephone conversations Compare communication habits using *more, less* and *fewer*. Discontinue and establish telephonic conversations Write an article about pros y cons of social networks.	**Unit learning results**: at the end of the unit the student will be able to: Compare nouns with small and long adjectives Use *more* and *less* with adjectives to compare using verbs and nouns Talk about different ways to communicate Establish telephone conversations

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

- Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.
- Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency every day or job-related language.

ORIENTATION

- Can recognize familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.
- Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables.

ACTIVITIES	**DIDACTIC SOURCES**	**ASSESSMENT**

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

Pre reading. Students draw how they communicate and how their parents used to communicate. Then take a picture of their draw and upload to WhatsApp group with a creative phrase.	At home	pictures worksheets Platform laptops 1. Text "Communication then and now" (Roughton)	Compare and analyze the development of communication through time. Identify basic adjectives
While reading Students read the text uploaded on the platform. After that, they have to make a list about the ways of communication they found on the text. Also, they have to underline all the adjectives on the text. Students look at internet pictures about the text, print and bring them to class.	At home		
Post reading Teachers hand out the worksheet Students draw a line time about the communication using the pictures, with a brief description using the adjectives list. Student explain orally their time line	In class		

References

Roughton, K. *MrRoughton*. Retreived from http://mrkash.com/activities/communication.html

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

SUBJECT: English		LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE		UNIT N°: 10 Communication
LESSON OBJECTIVE Recognize benefits and dangers of technology.		**GRAMMAR POINT** Comparative adjectives		**READING** Is cyber communication a good thing for society?
Unit learning: Compare types of communication using comparative adjectives Set up telephone conversations Compare communication habits using *more, less* and *fewer*. Discontinue and establish telephonic conversations Write an article about pros y cons of social networks.				**Unit learning results:** at the end of the unit the student will be able to: Compare nouns with small and long adjectives Use *more* and *less* with adjectives to compare using verbs and nouns Talk about different ways to communicate Establish telephone conversations.

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

> - Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency every day or job-related language.
> - Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

ORIENTATION

> - Can recognize familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT
Pre reading Students listen to the Twitter Song by Ingrid Michaelson. After that, they Twit a post what they understood from the video.	At home	Platform Text Is cyber communication a good	Give and support opinions in a debate. Read and analyze short text.

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

Reading		thing for society? (Arianey, 2014)	
Students read the debate: Is cyber communication a good thing for society? Then analyze the answer for each side of the debate. Look for the meaning of words in bold, write a paper about the meaning in their own words and a sentences for each word. Students make a list about the social network they use the most, put in order the most used and the least used.	At home	Video Twitter Song by (Michaelson, 2010)	
Post reading. Teachers ask students about the social network they use and write on the board the most common. Teachers write debate questions on board. Virtual friends are real or not. Students one by one give their opinion. Teachers group the students according their opinions. Students have to prepare their arguments and defend their point of view.	In class		

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https://en.islcollective.com/resources/printables/worksheets_doc_docx/is_cyber_communication_a_good_thing_for_society/agreement-technology-communication/74404

Michaelson, I. (28/ 07 / 2010). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgfOk8ma4bM

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

Universidad de Cuenca

SUBJECT: English	LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE	UNIT 11: Appearances
LESSON OBJECTIVE Describe physical appearance.	**GRAMMAR POINT** Descriptive adjectives	**READING:** The Beauty Of A Woman

Unit objectives: use 'I have' and 'have got' to describe people identify people using the verb pattern Verb+-ing + preposition Talk about relatives using 'look alike'. Use expressions *You mean; Do you mean…?* in daily a situation.	**Unit learning results** at the end of the unit the student will be able to: Use adjectives to describe people Identify people by their physical appearance, actions and location Interact using strategies for speaking Write an article about fashion trendy

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

➤ Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.
➤ Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.

INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

➤ Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.
➤ Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.

ACTIVITIES	**DIDACTIC SOURCES**	**ASSESSMENT**

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

Pre reading Students have to create an account Hangouts, the link is uploaded on the platform. The instructions for the activity also is on the platform. Students must choose a famous person they like, and describe. Use come clues in order that their classmates guess who the person is.	At home	Platform Cellphones computers Text: The Beauty of a Woman (Hepburn)	Express opinions using adjectives to describe people Write short poems
While reading Students make a list of famous poets and a poet they like Students read the poem uploaded on the platform. Underline the adjectives on the poem. Write in 5 lines the main point of the poem.	At home		
Post reading Students talk about their ideal love (physical and personality) Students get in groups create and account on the app Story bird. Create a short poem using the adjectives list. Teachers present the rubric for the poem.	In class		
References Hepburn, A. *Scrapbook*. Retrieved from://www.scrapbook.com/poems/doc/9789.html.			

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

SUBJECT: English	LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE	UNIT 11: Appearances
LESSON OBJECTIVE Describe people using personality adjectives.	**GRAMMAR POINT** Descriptive adjectives	**READING** Zodiac Personality

Unit objectives: Use 'I have' and 'have got' to describe people. Identify people using the verb pattern Verb+-ing + preposition Talk about relatives using look alike. Use expressions *You mean; Do you mean…?* in daily situations.	**Unit learning results-**at the end of the unit the student will be able to: Use adjectives to describe people. Identify people by their physical appearance, actions and location. Interact using strategies for speaking. Write an article about fashion trendy.

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

- Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.
- Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.

INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

- Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to find a service or tradesman).
- Can recognize familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

ACTIVITIES	DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

Pre reading Students describe themselves: write a positive comment and a negative comment. Also, write their zodiacal signs. Post it on Facebook Students comment on two posts of their classmates.	At home	Platform Projector Text: Zodiac Personality (Beare, 2017)	Express opinions using adjectives to describe people Use new vocabulary in context
While reading Students read the text on the platform. Students look for their zodiacal sign and read again.	At home		
Post reading Students compare their post on Facebook with the information of the text Students check their post: express if it is similar to the information of the text or not. Students get in groups, using the information of the text create their own zodiac predictions for their classmates. Students do a role play characterizing famous astrologists and presenting their predictions.	In class		
References Beare, K. (13/ 01/ 2017). *Thoughtco*. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/zodiac-personality-4122956			

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Karina Yunga

SUBJECT: English	LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE	UNIT 12: Looking ahead
LESSON OBJECTIVE Describe the future	**GRAMMAR POINT** Future tense	**READING:** Future Jobs

Unit objectives: To make predictions: will, may¸ and might. To talk about jobs. Discuss future plans.	**Unit learning results** at the end of the unit the student will be able to: Predict and discuss about the future by using will, may and might. Talk about different jobs. Use 'if' in clauses for the future.

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

  ➢ Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.
  ➢ Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.

INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

  ➢ Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to find a service or tradesman).
  ➢ Can recognize familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

ACTIVITIES	DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT

Yanel Avilés
 Karina Yunga

		Platform	Talk about
Pre reading Students read sentences in part A, Page. 120. Students must write 5 sentences with their relatives' jobs Ex: My dad is a doctor. He works in a hospital in Cuenca. He gives prescriptions to the patients. Students write about what they'd like to be Ex: I´d like to be a paramedic. They help people who have suffered an accident on the road until they get to the hospital. I would like to be an electrician. They earn good money. I would like to be a journalist. I like to write.	At home	Projector Text: "21 Best Jobs of the Future" ((Business Insider, 2015)	Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
While reading Students must read the text "Future Jobs" Students use scanning and skimming Students answer preliminary questions about the text Students write about their parents' professions and what they want to be in the future.	At home		
Post reading Students are asked to write a summary of the reading Students film themselves explaining what they want to be in the future.	In class		
References Business Insider. (2015). *The 21 best jobs of the future*. [online] Available at: http://www.businessinsider.com/the-21-best-jobs-of-the-future-2015-12/#21-elementary-school-teachers-except-special-education-1.			

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Karina Yunga

SUBJECT: English	LEVEL: LOW INTERMEDIATE	UNIT 12: Looking ahead
LESSON OBJECTIVE Describe the future	**GRAMMAR POINT** Future tense	**READING** Future Inventions

Unit objectives: To make predictions: will, may¸ and might. To talk about jobs Discuss future plans	**Unit learning results** at the end of the unit the student will be able to: Predict and discuss about the future by using will, may and might. Talk about different jobs Use 'if' in clauses for the future

CEFR Descriptor:

OVERALL

- Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.
- Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.

INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

- Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to find a service or tradesman).
- Can recognize familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

ACTIVITIES		DIDACTIC SOURCES	ASSESSMENT
Pre reading Students must read the instructions of the reading proposed in the book. Students must look at the picture Students answer the question: What invention do you think the picture is showing? Students write their opinions.	*At home*	Platform Projector Text:	Give a detailed comment about the internet and

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Karina Yunga

		"Future Inventions"	it's influence for
While reading Students read the text by using scanning and skimming Students answer the question: What topics does the article talk about? Make a list. Which picture does each topic go with? Ex: virtual goggles: entertainment, sightseeing; space elevator: transportation; smart mirror: health, style. Which inventions did you already know about? Which were new? Students read the text again and underline new vocabulary and words Students do exercises in the platform.	*At home*	(Inventor-Strategies.com, 2017)	the future.
Post reading Students must write a summary of the reading Students write an article about "Future Inventions"	*In class*		

References:
Inventor-Strategies.com. (2017). FUTURE INVENTIONS. [online] Available at: http://www.inventor-strategies.com/future-inventions.html.

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Karina Yunga

VI CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

The bibliographical research, which has been carried out to develop this project, highlights the importance of the skill of reading for learning English as a foreign language. Some aspects of its importance are that this skill helps to acquire vocabulary and it is a good model for writing. In addition, the reading skill is not essential just in the ESL context. Most of the academic articles that are necessary in other educational areas such as medicine, engineer, and so on, are written in the English language. It is important that students comprehend its vocabulary and message.

Besides, the bibliographical research emphasizes the Flipped Classroom Method and how it can help develop reading skills. The FCM has a flexible learning environment where teachers can modify their classroom, their class objectives, create new spaces for learning according to the students´ needs. Students learn according to their own learning style, teachers can use different didactic sources and techniques in order to help students to develop their English skills.

In addition, through the analysis of the interview; this project has established some problems that students and teachers at the Catholic University of Cuenca - Azogues Branch have to face when developing this skill such as low English level, poor vocabulary and tedious texts, time to practice and clarify doubts. For instance, is important to mention that these problems stated in the interview are similar in other educational contexts. Calle et al

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stated that "It is generally believed that the major reason for the limited knowledge and poor performance in English of the students graduating from high school is related to the absence and the lack of use of effective strategies of the English language teachers and this in most of the public schools in Cuenca city". (2012, p 1)

Furthermore, one of the purposes of this research was to develop a series of lesson plans in order to help teachers and students to develop Reading Skills through the FCM. Through the analysis of the syllabus of the low intermediate level of the Catholic University of Cuenca- Azogues Branch it was possible to establish the topic of each unit, the grammar structure and the vocabulary. Once the analysis was made, the researchers could choose the readings, activities and objectives for each reading for the twelve lesson plans.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should be aware of the advantages of using technology inside the class such as platforms, cellphones and social apps (Facebook, twitter, whatsApp). As a matter of fact, students learn more if there are interactive tools to complement their learning. For example, they will be in contact with the teacher, ask questions and practice in their homes. Students are active rather than passive producing knowledge and presenting that knowledge in a variety of formats. (Schrum, 2005)

- The researchers recommend the application of these lesson plans, since they have different activities according to the topic by using visual aids, educational and social apps in order to make the classes more interactive and meaningful for the students.

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- Furthermore, the lesson plans are not prescribed recipes; it means that the teachers are able to adapt them according to their needs; use another reading, videos, apps, add more activities or take them away. Further, the lesson plans can be implemented with other skills (writing, listening and speaking).

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Yanel Avilés
 Karina Yunga

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview transcription

UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewers: Yanel Avilés; Karina Yunga

Participant: Lourdes Gabriela Estrella González

Function: Language Center Coordinator in the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues Branch

Degree: Master's Degree in EFL Applied Linguistics graduate of the Central University del Ecuador.

Years of experience: 10 years

English Level: B2

Objective: To determine the problems they face in the process of teaching English and the level of their students.

This is a 30 minute open-question interview, consisting of five questions that has the objective of gathering information about five aspects: a) the current situation of the language center; b) the current level of students; c) the teaching methods applied in class; d) their opinion about the flipped classroom method; e) their willingness to use the flipped classroom method.

What is the current situation of the language center?

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

"We are experimenting with some changes to be made at the level of the national standards so it is very difficult to talk about a current situation since there is much upon which to improve. I would say that we are in a process of changing."

What is the current level of your students?

"Probably our students do not get the level because there are a lot of structural failures in the system that started in school and we have carried out that weight and it is difficult to conceive that our students are able to pass an international exam under these circumstances. Reading comprehension is one of the weakest skills since they do not understand what they read, they do not have enough vocabulary, they cannot look for general of specific information, they cannot infer things, etc. And this becomes worse when we do not have enough time for activities and explanation. It seems to be impossible sometimes. We just do what we can."

What teaching methods do you apply in class?

"In my class I use different methods but they are CLT basically."

Do you know the Flipped Classroom Method? What do you think of it?

"Yes, but it is not easy to use it because our students don't have the context to practice effectively yet."

Would you use the flipped classroom method? Why? Why not?

"Of course, but right now we don't have the elemental conditions. However, we practice it sometimes under determined circumstances with the platform we work with"

Thank you for your time

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewers: Yanel Avilés; Karina Yunga

Participant: Orlando Javier Sancán Gonsález

Function: Language Center Teacher in the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues

Branch

Degree: Master's Degree in EFL Applied Linguistics, graduate of the Central

University of Ecuador.

Years of experience: 10 years

English Level: B2

Objective: To determine the problems they face in the process of teaching English

and the level of their students.

This is a 30 minute open-question interview, consisting of five questions that has the objective of gathering information about five aspects: a) the current situation of the language center; b) the current level of students; c) their teaching methods applied in class; d) their opinion about flipped classroom method; e) their willingness to use the flipped classroom method.

What is the current situation of the language center?

"You know. It's the university is improving a lot and the language center, too. We are trying to have a laboratory like we have in Cuenca and teaching English in context. We have done some research because of our thesis but we know we need to do a lot of thing to help students to get the level required."

Yanel Avilés
 Karina Yunga

What is the current level of your students?

"Our students have improved a lot and they take English more seriously than they used to. However, there just four hours a week to spend time practicing and the platform is not helpful without a laboratory. We have problems to listen and read comprehensively."

What teaching methods do you apply in class?

"Currently we used Communicative Based Learning activities to work with our students. They are effective most of the time but it is difficult sometimes and then, subconsciously, we end up working with traditional approaches like repetition. It is frustrating sometimes. We need to change things"

Do you know the flipped classroom method? What do you think of it?

"Yes, an excellent method and a lot of teachers around the world are using it. Sometimes I use it in class but the preparation with the videos and material is too much and sometimes students don't come to classes prepared. And I have to spend time repeating a class they have online."

Would you use the flipped classroom method? Why? Why not?

"As I said, I regularly use it but not as I should. I think that if we had a context prepared to apply this methodology, it would be an enormous improvement for us."

Thank you for your time

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

UNIVERSITY OF CUENCA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewers: Yanel Avilés; Karina Yunga

Participant: Antonio Lenín Argudo Garzón

Function: Language Center Teacher in the Catholic University of Cuenca-Azogues

Branch

Degree: Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature granted by the

University of Cuenca

Years of experience: 8 years

English Level: C1

Objective: To determine the problems they face in the process of teaching English

and the level of their students.

This is a 30 minute open-question interview, consisting in five questions that has the objective of gathering information about five aspects: a) the current situation of the language center; b) the current level of students; c) their teaching methods applied in class; d) their opinion about the flipped classroom method; e) their willingness to use the flipped classroom method.

What is the current situation of the language center?

"We are a good language center with all the conditions to offer excellent English preparation. Our teachers hold master degrees and they have ten years of experience at least. We are trying to be at the level demanded by the government but the historic problems of the English teaching is a big obstacle."

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

What is the current level of your students?

"Despite of their improvement, it would naïve to say that they have the level they should have. They have problems in every skill, specially, in reading and listening. So I have to say that our students have a low English level."

What teaching methods do you apply in class?

"We combine the pedagogical focus of the University so we use contrives and learning based in problem solving. In English teaching, we apply CBL. However, we realize that we must find contemporary methods."

Do you know the flipped classroom method? What do you think of it?

"I know flipped classroom. It is a new trend in English learning but I am not sure. It seems to me that it takes so much time of implementation and preparing the material. I am not one hundred percent sure that our students will use the material given at home to dedicate time of practice in class."

Would you use the flipped classroom method? Why? Why not?

"If we have a formal training and we received the correct material, why not? We are opened to work with useful strategies and flipped classroom is a new trend that has been worked with results around the world. We need correct guidelines and a specific preparation.

Thank you for your time

Yanel Avilés
Karina Yunga

Appendix 2: Reading of the Lesson Plans

UNIT 7

13 THINGS TO DO IN THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS & TIPS FOR YOUR VISIT

We are currently in the Philippines (learn of our Philippines trip here and here). Meanwhile, I wanted to give you an overview of our trip to the Galapagos Islands. There are 18 islands, with 4 inhabited by people: Santa Cruz, Floreana, Isabela, and San Cristobal. We were able to visit 2 of them during our 4-day stay: Santa Cruz Island and Isabela Island. These were the highlights of our trip in the order that we visited them. I will be blogging individual posts and will let you know which were our favorites.

13 THINGS TO DO IN THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (Santa Cruz and Isabela Island):

1. Los Gemelos (Santa Cruz)
Twin Craters formed by the collapse of the volcanic roof.
2. Lava Tunnel (Santa Cruz)
Some crawling required
3.Rancho Primicias (Santa Cruz) Galapagos Tortoise Ranch
4. Fish Market of Puerto Ayora (Santa Cruz): will find shore birds picking up fish scraps and also crabs and iguanas.
5. Snorkel with Sea lions in Loberia / Punta Estrada (Santa Cruz)
6. Marine Iguanas & Shark Canals at Playa de Los Perros (Santa Cruz)
7. Cliff Jumping at Las Grietas (Santa Cruz)
8. Hike to Tortuga Beach and Tortuga Bay (Santa Cruz)
9. Hang out with Sea Lions at the Bay on Isabela Island
10. Las Tintoreras (Isabela Island)
11. Hike to Volcano Sierra Negra (Isabela Island): the world's second largest volcanic crater.
12. Campo Duro (Isabela Island): a Galapagos safari camp and quaint highlands farm with roaming giant tortoises.
13. Bike around the Wetlands (Isabela Island): exploring along the coastline by bike. Found tortoises and blue-footed boobies!
Tips for your visit to the Galapagos Islands (Each individual post will have specific tips for the excursion):

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- ➢ You must book a cruise 1 year in advance. We booked 3 months in advance and only had the option of land tours.

- ➢ Cruises are pricier, but I would recommend the cruise if your priority is to see a lot of different animals and landscapes, since it transports you to each island while you are sleeping rather than taking up part of your day.

- ➢ The land tour was through Galapagos Alternative who booked all our activities and hotels.

- ➢ Our priority was seeing animals. If it is yours also, you can search by animal here and see which islands to visit.

- ➢ Bring mostly small change in US dollars, which is their currency.

- ➢ Learn some Spanish! The majority of the people there do not speak English, so it helps to know the basics.

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UNIT 7

10 of the World's Most Unusual Hotels
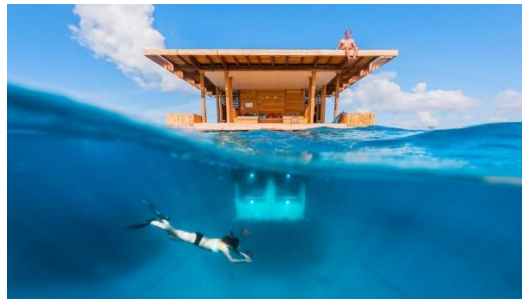
A snorkeler dives into the cobalt waters surrounding Manta Resort in Zanzibar.

Pack excitement and whimsy into your travels the moment you check in. At these 10 unique destinations, your hotel is the adventure. Sleep under the magical glow of the northern lights, cozy up in a traditional Kyrgyz village or live out your childhood dreams in a rain forest tree house.

MANTA RESORT, PEMBA ISLAND, ZANZIBAR

The Manta Resort would be a unique stay anyway, with its beach villas on a remote island surrounded by pristine waters. But book the Underwater Room and sleep below the surface as colorful reef fish glide past large windows surrounding your double bed. At night, spotlights under the windows can be turned on to attract fish and octopuses. The sea-level floor above has a simple living area and bathroom, and the rooftop patio is perfect for sunbathing or taking in the Milky Way at night. When not enjoying your room, get a spa treatment, go scuba diving, or explore the interior of this island teeming with wildlife and culture.

GOLDEN CROWN LEVIN IGLUT, LEVI, FINLAND VI

A glass-ceilinged igloo offers a panoramic view of Levi, Finland.
Photograph by Chris Parker, Axiom/Alamy stock photo

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Marvel at the northern lights in one of 18 glass igloos that accommodate couples or families. Located six miles from the resort town of Levi, each igloo has a kitchenette stocked with breakfast sets, a full bath, and a double bed with adjustable headrests for optimal aurora viewing. Windows are insulated and heated to keep them from frosting, and curtains provide privacy. Enjoy the fireplace in the small, rustic lodge, and brave freezing temperatures to take in the stars from the outdoor hot tub. A new restaurant and reception building is scheduled to open in December 2016.

KOKOPELLI'S CAVE, FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO

Named for a flute-playing figure carved into rocks centuries ago by Native Americans throughout the Southwest, Kokopelli's Cave is a remote, multiroom bed-and-breakfast 300 feet above the La Plata River Valley. Guests descend stairs to the entrance 70 feet below the mesa top, where they find a 1,700-square-foot circular cavern that was blasted out of the rock by geologist Bruce Black, who originally thought the space would be his office. Instead, he turned it into a B&B complete with a Jacuzzi and waterfall shower, a full kitchen, living room with a fireplace, and bedroom and balcony with views of the vast desert landscape below. From here, guests can day-trip to Four Corners destinations such as Chaco Canyon or Mesa Verde national parks or explore the Navajo Nation.

BOOK AND BED TOKYO, TOKYO, JAPAN

Book and Bed Tokyo is a hostel designed for bibliophiles.
Photograph by Whitehotpix/Zuma press

A haven for bibliophiles, Book and Bed Tokyo looks like a used bookstore until guests slide open a bookshelf and reveal a cozy nook with a simple bed, reading light and electrical outlet. Unabashedly bare-bones and not for the claustrophobic, 30 stacked cubbies, each big enough for one person, are available behind the shelves filled with

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3,000 titles in Japanese and English. Bathrooms are shared, and couches in the area outside of the bookshelves provide a communal reading and gathering area. It's more hostel than hotel, and at 3,500 yen (U.S. $35) guests will have plenty of cash left over for new books and exploring Tokyo.

DROMEN AAN ZEE, HARLINGEN, NETHERLANDS

Dromen Aan Zee (Dreaming by the Sea) offers three unique stays that celebrate Harlingen's seafaring culture. The Havenkraan has guests staying 56 feet above the ground in a harbor crane that, until 1996, was used to off-load ships. The machine and control rooms have been turned into a stylish apartment with panoramic views of the Wadden Sea. Bright colors, a full entertainment system, kitchen area, full bath, and rooftop patio feel more like a tony yacht than the industrial machinery known locally as "the spider." The nearby Vuurtoren is a decommissioned lighthouse built in 1920 that now has three spiraling rooms at its top, complete with full amenities and 360-degree sea and city views from its 72-foot-high patio. For something closer to the ground—or water—the Reddingsboot is a lifeboat turned modern room that can be taken out for a two-hour cruise. The former *Lilla Marras*, which saved 45 lives over her career, now has a full bath with wooden double tub, kitchenette, double bed, and living area with an entertainment system. Enjoy meals topside and watch the daily routine of the harbor.

HOTEL COSTA VERDE, PROVINCIA DE PUNTARENAS, COSTA RICA

Guests of the Hotel Costa Verde can sleep in an upcycled 1965 Boeing 727.
Photograph by John Coletti, Getty images

Costa Rica's Hotel Costa Verde's slogan is "Still More Monkeys Than People …," but its other claim to fame is that guests can spend the night in an upcycled 1965 Boeing 727 that's been turned into a two-bedroom luxury guesthouse. While the distinctive fuselage shape is intact, the interior is completely paneled with local teak.

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Windows offer jungle and ocean views throughout the plane, which rests on 50-foot-tall supports, and covered patios extend over the wings. The bedrooms have air-conditioning, and each has its own bathroom. Have dinner in the kitchenette, or enjoy local fare and drinks at El Avión, Hotel Costa Verde's restaurant and pub housed in a C-123 Fairchild cargo plane that played a part in the Iran-Contra Affair of the 1980s.

HAPPY NOMADS VILLAGE, KARAKOL, KYRGYZSTAN

Experience traditional Kyrgyz life in one of three large *bozuis* (Kyrgyz for "yurt") in Happy Nomads Village. Surrounded by flower gardens in warm weather, each traditionally constructed bozui has heated floors and twin beds around a circular perimeter that can accommodate five people. The simple interiors have colorful rugs and wall designs, Wi-Fi, and electrical outlets. A large bathroom with multiple showers is shared, and a breakfast of homemade breads and jams is served in a communal yurt. During the day, horseback ride into the mountainous countryside with the owners who speak English, German, and Russian, or in the winter go skiing at Karakol Ski Area 20 minutes away.

PALACIO DE SAL, SALAR DE UYUNI, BOLIVIA

The Palacio de Sal in Bolivia is constructed almost entirely of salt.
Photograph by John Elk, Getty images

You've perhaps heard of ice hotels, but Bolivia's Palacio de Sal has taken the concept one step further by using salt from the famous Salar de Uyuni salt flats to create a luxury hotel in the middle of the Bolivian desert. Nearly everything in the 48,500-square-foot hotel is made out of salt, including the building and furniture. Each of the 30 simple but stylish rooms with wooden flooring has a private tiled bath and is climate controlled. Bed platforms and armchairs in the common area are salt, but plush blankets and pillows make for a comfortable stay. The dining room's windows frame a panoramic

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view of the salt flats, and meals include locally sourced llama and lamb and the house specialty, salt chicken. Beyond the uniqueness of this remote hotel, the draw for the area is the Zen-like expanse of the largest salt flats in the world and its star-filled sky at night.

SANTOS EXPRESS, MOSSEL BAY, SOUTH AFRICA

The Santos Express is a 1920s passenger train permanently parked just a hundred feet from Santos Beach, and a 10-minute walk to the Dias Museum complex and Mossel Bay's downtown and harbor. Four passenger cars have five berths with double beds, ocean views, and shared baths. A fifth car has 16 bunk beds for large groups and budget travelers, and the Honeymoon Caboose has its own bathroom and private porch facing the ocean. Two Royal Suite cars each have their own private baths and are perfect for families or couples who want a whole car to themselves. Santos Beach is one of South Africa's premiere Blue Flagbeaches, known for its swimming, whale-watching, boardwalk shopping, and activities such as scuba diving and surfing.

TREEHOUSE LODGE RESORT, IQUITOS, PERU

Sleep to the sounds of the Peruvian Amazon rain forest at the headwater of the Amazon. Guests can only reach Treehouse Lodge Resort via an hour-long boat ride from Iquitos, after which they'll climb 34 to 67 feet to one of eight circular tree houses above the forest canopy. The thatch-roof structures average 18 feet in diameter, and a railing, curtains, and optional mosquito netting are the only things separating you from the rain forest. A bathroom with a cold-water shower is located below the main floor. Suspended walkways from each tree house lead to a central commons tree house, where included Peruvian-inspired gourmet meals are served. Squirrel monkeys, macaws, sloths, and other rain forest denizens frequent the 345-acre eco-resort. Guests have a personal guide, and daily excursions include river dolphin-watching and visiting indigenous villages.

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UNIT 8

9 THINGS YOU SHOULD DEEP CLEAN THIS SPRING

It's time to get your spring cleaning done. The days are getting longer and fresh air is a plenty. Tackle your cleaning like a pro and you'll be done before you know it! *Plus,* you won't have to think about it again until next year.

1) Light Fixtures

Ceiling mounted light fixtures and lamps can accumulate an astonishing amount of dust. Get your light fixtures gleaming again by wiping them down with Fresco Microfiber All Purposed Cleaning Cloths. You'll be amazed how that one chore will brighten up the place.

2) Doors

In truth, these surfaces should get more than a yearly cleaning. But, better late than never. Use a lightly dampened microfiber cloth to wipe knob and handles. For an extra shine, give your doors a good wipe down with soap and water.

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3) Windows, Frames & Artwork

Our microfiber 2 in 1 cleaning mitt will make quick work of removing the dust and dirt from these hard to see surfaces. The mitt's large, soft looped microfibers are perfect for dusting and dirt removal.

4) Rugs

If you have area rugs, it's time to clean the floor underneath them. You'll be amazed with the amount of dirt that works its way underneath the rug. If you have hardwood or laminate flooring underneath, our Hard Floor Expert Stick Vacuum was made for the job.

5) Upholstered Furniture

Remove the cushions and vacuum under and between the cushions. Run the hose attachments across the entire surface of the furniture. A powerful vacuum like our Rowenta Multi-Cyclonic Vacuum will remove dust and allergens from the surface of the furniture.

6) Blinds and Draperies

Give blinds a wipe down with our Fresco Microfiber slatted blind cleaner. This tool has

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flexible prongs designed to clamp tightly to blinds, cleaning both sides without any effort. Drapes can be freshened up with a steam. The Salton Professional Steamer will have your drapes looking new again.

7) Oven and Range Hood

If your oven has a self cleaner option, turn it on while you clean the rest of the house. Wipe the accumulated grease and dust from your range hood with a little help from the Fresco Microfiber Pot & Pan Sponge.

8) Kitchen Cabinets and Appliances

Give your kitchen cabinets a good wipe down and brighten up stainless steel appliances with a specially formulated stainless steel cleaner. Don't forget the top of the refrigerator!

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9) Underneath Beds and Behind Furniture
Let the iRobot Roomba help you get the dirt from those hard to reach spots.

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HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE EVENING ROUTINE

Oh yes, you read that right. I'm talking about productivity and routines. On the last day of November. When everyone is thinking about Christmas and holidays and craziness. BUT since this time of year always seems to feel so chaotic, I thought it would be the perfect time to remind ourselves of those habits and routines that help us stay sane in the midst of it all.

Last week I talked all about my new morning routine and how it has been a total game-changer for me. Starting my day with purpose rather than messing around on my phone for a while before dragging myself out of bed has really helped me to be more productive throughout the entire day.

Along with changing up my morning routine, one of my other goals during this series was to put an improved evening routine in place.

MY EVENING ROUTINE.

My evening routine has gone through a lot of changes in the past few years. When I first started blogging the period after we put the boys to bed was my primary work time, so I used to hop on my computer and work until the wee hours of the morning.

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I was getting very little sleep, which made me cranky, lethargic and unproductive the next day. It wasn't a good situation. So after Donnie started working on the blog with me full time, I told myself that I needed to abandon my late night working hours. With him home to help with the kids, I had more time during the day to work; there was no reason to keep up my sleep deprived ways.

With my newfound free time at night, I would crawl into my bed as soon as I put the boys to sleep with every intention of watching ONE episode of a show on Netflix and going to sleep…

We all know how that usually turns out.

Again, I would end up staying up way too late, so I wouldn't feel like getting out of bed the next morning and I found myself in the same vicious cycle of too little sleep leading to lack of productivity (and earning myself the nickname "Crabby Abby" …?).

It was time for a new evening routine. Instead of my late nights derailing my next day, my goal was to get everything in place so that our family could begin the following day on the right foot.

I decided to keep it simple and create a must-do list of just the 3 most important things that I wanted to get done each evening. These 3 things will be different for each person, and they will probably change as our phases of life change, but here's what I decided on for right now…

1. After dinner, everyone in the family works together to clean up our main living area– the living room, sunroom, and kitchen. Donnie is a gem and does the dishes most nights, so I round up the Cs and together we straighten up the other areas. (*And they never complain at all… in my dream world*.)

With any time left between cleaning up and the Cs' bedtime, we usually relax in the living room and watch a show, read a book, or play a game. At 8 we head upstairs, help the boys get ready for bed, and tuck them in for the night.

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2. After I put the Cs to bed, I get ready for bed too– put on pajamas, brush my teeth, take off my makeup, etc. Knowing my personality, I know I will try to squeeze in as much as possible before the goal "bedtime" I set for myself, so I try to get this stuff out of the way so I don't end up staying up even later to do it.

3. I then make my to-do list for the next day. Sometimes I do this by grabbing my "Planning My Day" printable and time blocking out my schedule. {You can snag this printable and learn more about my time blocking process in this post.} Other times I just make a quick list in the Notes app on my phone– nothing fancy!

This is another nighttime thing that helps set the stage for tomorrow– since I have a plan of what I want to accomplish, it's less tempting to sleep in or waste time in the morning because I have a list of everything I need to get done.

Then I usually flip on a show and do some sort of mindless household task, with a goal of being in bed by 10 pm. Sometimes this involves folding laundry, a task that I actually don't mind doing because I can watch a show at the same time and still feel productive. At this time of year, it may also involve wrapping gifts (which always seems to take longer than I think it will…). Other times, Donnie and I just hang out and catch up. But however I decide to use this last hour-ish of my day, I try to make it something that helps me wind down and won't keep me up feeling restless or worrying. (Not that I would ever worry about anything ever…) Then at 10 I plug in my phone *on the other side of the room* so I'm not tempted to waste time scrolling and crawl in bed!

Now what I just described above happens to a "T" when all of the stars align exactly and I'm completely on my game. Sometimes life happens. Schedules get in the way, I'm feeling more tired than usual, I have a deadline that needs to be met, etc.

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It is a work in progress, and that's okay. We're not working toward perfection here, people– just better habits. And as important as I think it is to have healthy routines in place in our lives, I think it's just as important to give ourselves grace. Life is busy. Life is hard. And if we're making progress and getting a little closer to our goals each day, I'd say we're doing a pretty good job.

How does your evening routine set you up for success the next day? I'd love to hear about it in the comments!

Reference

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UNIT 9

In love

Donna loved her husband. Her husband loved Donna. They were in love with each other. She wanted to give him a birthday present. He was going to be 40 years old next week. She wondered what to give him. Should she give him a watch? Should she give him a sweater? Should she give him a new guitar? What should she give him? She asked him what he wanted for his birthday. He said he didn't want anything for his birthday. "Oh, you must want something!" she said. "You're right," he said. "I want your love forever."

Reference
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UNIT 9

Reference

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Is cyber communication a good thing for society?

Yes, it's a good thing	No, it's a bad thing
It's easier to stay in touch with friends and family. You can communicate across the miles. If you want learn about a new culture or to practice a new language you can contact people abroad. Cyber communication saves time. You don't need to go door to door or put pen to paper to communicate with people any more. You can send messages to large groups of people in a few seconds. Cyber communication is as cheap as chips. It's free to use Facebook, make Skype calls and send WhatsApp messages as long as you have a suitable device and a Wi-Fi connection. Advances in technology mean that computers and smartphones are cheaper too. Cyber communication has led to increased knowledge sharing. If you have a question you can look up the answer on the internet. Free online courses are two a penny on the internet. It's easier to communicate electronically now. Advances in technology make surfing the internet and sending messages a piece of cake. Cyber communications help to publicize	We're losing the art of real communication. The increasing use of electronic devices means we're drifting away from face to face communication. Text speak has also led to a deterioration in written communication. It's easier to get you wires crossed. You can't see someone's body language or listen to someone's intonation when you receive an electronic message. This can lead to confusion and misunderstanding. There are lots of dodgy people in the world and it's easy for someone to lie on the internet. You have to be careful about what data you trust and who you share things with. Stuff you post online can come back to haunt you. It's difficult to delete things you post online so all the daft things you do will be there for all the world to see. Cyber communication presents new privacy concerns. There are a lot of stories in the media about press and government snooping. Your information is also vulnerable to hackers. Cyber communications have resulted in new social divides. Not all people can afford a computer, Smartphone or broadband connection. There are some

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human rights abuses, animal abuse, corruption and other criminal acts. This should help to curb this behavior.	silver surfers but the majority of elderly people don't know how to use a computer or the internet.
Cyber communication gives vulnerable people a voice. Anonymous posting increases freedom of expression and protects whistleblowers.	Cyber communication isn't healthy. Increasing use of electronic devices is turning us all into couch potatoes. Staring at screens can also damage your eyes.
Cyber communication breaks down barriers. People with different political views and people from different social classes and countries regularly communicate on the internet. Many stars communicate directly with their fans.	If you're out in the sticks you probably won't have internet connection or coverage to use mobile phones.
Cyber communication can help people feel safer. For example, children can call their parents to let them know where they are. If your car breaks down, you can call for assistance without leaving your vehicle. Hikers can call mountain rescue if they get lost.	Cyber communications can be used for antisocial purposes. Online gambling sites cause misery. It makes it easier for criminals to steal your information and for terrorists to hatch their plans.

Internet addiction is a growing problem. Many people are hooked on social networking sites and glued to a screen for most of the day. |

Reference
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UNIT 10

Communication Then and Now

Just as travel has become easier and faster, communication has also improved. At the time of the Roman Empire, messages could only be carried by hand. Messengers went back and forth across the empire carrying letters on the great Roman roads.

Communication was only as fast as the messengers could go. Transportation was as important then as it is now. A messenger who had to walk or run could only go about 25 miles a day. A messenger, who used a horse, could cover about 100 miles a day. A letter sent from Rome to Britain had to cross both land and sea. That letter might take up to 30 days to get to its final destination.

Today we can contact people in other parts of the world without having to make a journey, by foot, horse, or ship. All we have to do is turn on our computers or turn on our cell phones.


Electronic communication, which includes such inventions as radio, television, computers, and the telephone, has revolutionized the way we communicate.

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Communication satellites orbit the earth transmitting telephone, television, and Internet signals. In less than a second, they can relay signals and messages to almost anywhere on earth.
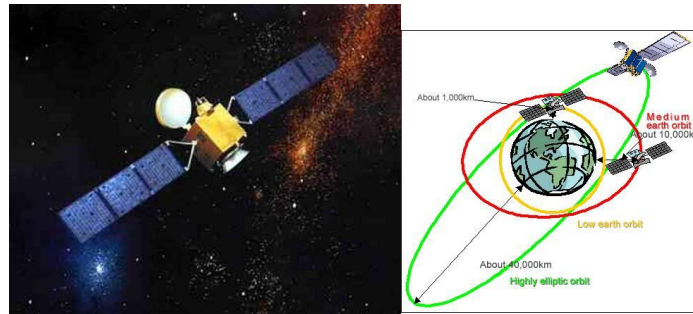
Through these many scientific inventions, our world-view has expanded. At the same time, the earth seems smaller than it did to the Romans. Today, we learn about events all over the world in a blink of the eye. Are we better off than the Romans? We certainly have an easier time communicating than the Romans did. However, maybe we are exposed to too much information. It will be up to us to figure it out.

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UNIT 11

The Beauty of a Woman

The beauty of a woman Is not in the clothes she wears,

The figure that she carries, Or the way she combs her hair.

The beauty of a woman must be seen from in her eyes,

Because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides.

The beauty of a woman is not in a facial mole,

But true beauty in a woman Is reflected in her soul.

It is the caring that she lovingly gives,

The passion that she shows,

And the beauty of a woman

With passing years only grows.

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UNIT 11

Zodiac Personality - Learn Personality Adjectives through the Zodiac

ARIES / MARCH 21 - APRIL 20

Aries is the first sign of the Zodiac and associated with fresh vigor and new beginnings. Individuals born under this sign are said to have an enthusiastic, adventurous, aggressive, humorous, passionate, and pioneering character but one which is also prone to selfishness, boastfulness, intolerance, impulsiveness, and impatience.

Positive   *Negative*
Adventurous and energetic   Selfish and quick-tempered
Pioneering and courageous   Impulsive and impatient
Enthusiastic and confident   Foolhardy and daredevil
Dynamic and quick-witted

TAURUS / APRIL 21 - MAY 20

Taurus is the second sign of the Zodiac and associated with material pleasure. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a calm, patient, reliable, loyal, affectionate, sensuous, ambitious, and determined character, but one which is also prone to hedonism, laziness, inflexibility, jealousy, and antipathy.

Positive   *Negative*
Patient and reliable   Jealous and possessive
Warmhearted and loving   Resentful and inflexible
Persistent and determined   Self-indulgent and greed
Placid and security loving

GEMINI / MAY 21 - JUNE 21

Gemini is the third sign of the Zodiac and associated with youth and versatility. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a sociable, fun-loving, versatile, lively, communicative, liberal, intelligent, mentally
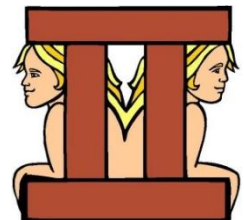
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active and friendly character but one which is also prone to moodiness, inconsistency, superficiality, restlessness and laziness.
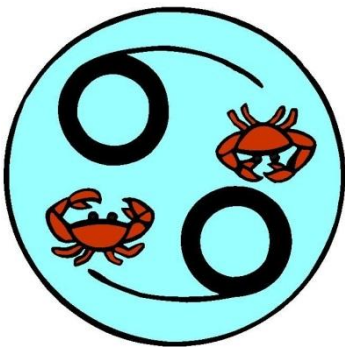
Positive

Adaptable and versatile

Communicative and witty

Intellectual and eloquent

Youthful and lively

Negative

Nervous and tense

Superficial and inconsistent

Cunning and inquisitive

CANCER / JUNE 22 - JULY 22

Cancer is the fourth sign of the Zodiac and associated with family and domesticity. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a kind, emotional, romantic, imaginative, sympathetic, nurturing, and intuitive character, but one which is also prone to changeability, moodiness, hypersensitivity, depression, and clinginess.

Positive

Emotional and loving

Intuitive and imaginative

Shrewd and cautious

Protective and sympathetic

Negative

Changeable and moody

Overemotional and touchy

Clinging and unable to let go

LEO / JULY 23 - AUGUST 22

Leo is the fifth sign of the Zodiac and is associated with the keywords magnanimous, generous, hospitable, caring, warm, authoritative, active and open. Leos are typically pictured as very dignified and regal. They are hard-working, ambitious and enthusiastic, however they are prone to laziness and can often take "the easy way out." They are known to be exuberant, extroverted, generous with a natural dramatic flair and very creative. They are typically very self-assured, and love taking center-stage in whatever arena they are in.

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Positive	*Negative*
Generous and warmhearted	Pompous and patronizing
Creative and enthusiastic	Bossy and interfering
Broad-minded and expansive	Dogmatic and intolerant
Faithful and loving	

VIRGO / AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22

Virgo is the sixth sign of the Zodiac, a set of astrological signs, and associated with purity and service. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a diligent, analytical, self-sufficient, controlled, orderly, and modest character but one which is also prone to fussiness, perfectionism, harsh criticism, coldness, and hypochondria.

Positive	*Negative*
Modest and shy	Fussy and a worrier
Meticulous and reliable	Overcritical and harsh
Practical and diligent	Perfectionist and conservative
Intelligent and analytical	

LIBRA / SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

Libra is the seventh sign of the Zodiac and associated with justice. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a pleasant, articulate, charming, charismatic, fair, artistic, social, refined, diplomatic, even-tempered and self-sufficient character, but on the negative side, are also thought to be indecisive, flirtatious, extravagant, lazy, analytical, frivolous, impatient, envious, shallow, aloof, and quarrelsome.

Positive	*Negative*
Diplomatic and urbane	Indecisive and changeable
Romantic and charming	Gullible and easily influenced
Easygoing and sociable	Flirtatious and self-indulgent
Idealistic and peaceable	

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SCORPIO / OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 21

Scorpio is the eighth sign of the Zodiac and associated with intensity, passion, and power. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a complex, analytical, patient, keenly perceptive, inquisitive, focused, determined, hypnotic, and self-contained character, but one which is also prone to extremity, jealousy, envy, secretiveness, possessiveness, cruelty and cunning. In terms of anatomy,

Positive	*Negative*
Determined and forceful	Jealous and resentful
Emotional and intuitive	Compulsive and obsessive
Powerful and passionate	Secretive and obstinate
Exciting and magnetic	

SAGITTARIUS / NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 21

Sagittarius is the ninth sign of the Zodiac and associated with travel and expansion. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a straight-forward, dynamic, highly intelligent, extremely clever, ethical, humorous, generous, open-hearted, compassionate, and energetic character, but one which is also prone to restlessness, impulsiveness, impatience, recklessness, and kiddishness.

Positive	
Optimistic and freedom-loving	*Negative*
Jovial and good-humored	Blindly optimistic and careless
Honest and straightforward	Irresponsible and superficial
Intellectual and philosophical	Tactless and restless

CAPRICORN / DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 19

Capricorn is the tenth sign of the Zodiac and associated with hard work and business affairs. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have an ambitious, modest, patient, responsible, stable, trustworthy, powerful, intellectual, perspicacious and persistent character but one which is also prone to coldness, conservatism, rigidity, materialism, and dullness.

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Positive	*Negative*
Practical and prudent	Pessimistic and fatalistic
Ambitious and disciplined	Miserly and grudging
Patient and careful	
Humorous and reserved	

AQUARIUS / JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18

Aquarius is the eleventh sign of the Zodiac and associated with future ideas and the unusual. Individuals born under this sign are thought to have a modest, creative, challenging, inquisitive, entertaining, progressive, stimulating, nocturnal, and independent character, but one, which is also prone to rebelliousness, coldness, erraticism, indecisive, and impracticality
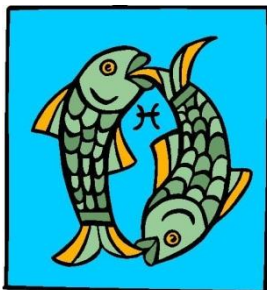
Positive	*Negative*
Friendly and humanitarian	Intractable and contrary
Honest and loyal	Perverse and unpredictable
Original and inventive	Unemotional and detached
Independent and intellectual	

PISCES / FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20

Pisces is the twelfth and last sign of the Zodiac and associated with human emotions. Individuals born under this sign are thought to be tolerant, modest, dreamy, romantic, humorous, generous, emotional, receptive, affectionate, and have an honest character, but are also prone to exaggeration, fickleness, passiveness, hypersensitivity, and paranoia.

Positive	*Negative*
	Escapist and idealistic
Imaginative and sensitive	Secretive and vague
Compassionate and kind	Weak-willed and easily led
Selfless and unworldly	
Intuitive and sympathetic	

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UNIT 12

The 21 best jobs of the future

Software applications developers come in at No. 3.Flickr/TechCrunch

Healthcare and tech are among the fastest-growing sectors of the US economy, and several well-paying jobs in those industries are primed to expand dramatically in the next decade.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released its biennial projections for job growth across hundreds of occupations between 2014 and 2024.

We took those projections and combined them with BLS estimates of the 2014 median annual earnings of those jobs — using the geometric mean of the two numbers — to come up with a ranking of the best jobs of the next decade. To focus on good, high-paying jobs, we restricted our list to those with salaries higher than the 2014 median annual wage of $35,540.

Read on to learn about the best jobs of the future, including the typical level of education required and what people do on a daily basis, according to O*NET descriptions of the jobs.

View As: One Page Slides

21 Elementary school teachers, except special education

Projected new positions by 2024: 78,300
Median annual earnings in 2014: $54,120
What they do: Teach young children basic skills in schools
Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

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20. Nurse practitioners

Projected new positions by 2024: 44,700
Median annual earnings in 2014: $95,350
What they do: Treat and diagnose patients' illnesses
Typical educational requirements: Master's degree

19. Financial managers

Projected new positions by 2024: 37,700
Median annual earnings in 2014: $115,320
What they do: Direct financial activities at
organizations
Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

18. Electricians

Projected new positions by 2024: 85,900
Median annual earnings in 2014: $51,110
What they do: Install, maintain, and repair electrical
equipment
Typical educational requirements: High-school
diploma

17. Licensed practical and vocational nurses

Projected new positions by 2024: 117,300
Median annual earnings in 2014: $42,490
What they do: Care for patients in hospitals, clinics, nursing
homes, and similar institutions
Typical educational requirements: Postsecondary non-degree
award

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16. Lawyers

Wikimedia Commons
Projected new positions by 2024: 43,800
Median annual earnings in 2014: $114,970
What they do: Represent clients in legal situations
Typical educational requirements: Professional degree

15. Wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives

Projected new positions by 2024: 93,400
Median annual earnings in 2014: $55,020
What they do: Sell goods for wholesalers or manufacturers
Typical educational requirements: High school diploma

14. Medical and health services managers

Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos
Projected new positions by 2024: 56,300
Median annual earnings in 2014: $92,810
What they do: Plan, direct, or coordinate health services
Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

13. Software systems developers

Projected new positions by 2024: 51,300
Median annual earnings in 2014: $102,880
What they do: Develop operating systems, compilers, and network software
Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

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12. Market research analysts and marketing specialists

Projected new positions by 2024: 92,300
Median annual earnings in 2014: $61,290
What they do: Research market conditions and create marketing campaigns
Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

11. Physical therapists

Projected new positions by 2024: 71,800
Median annual earnings in 2014: $82,390
What they do: Help patients recover from illnesses and injuries
Typical educational requirements: Doctoral or professional degree

10. Personal financial advisers

Projected new positions by 2024: 73,900
Median annual earnings in 2014: $81,060
What they do: Advise clients on their finances
Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

9. First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers

Projected new positions by 2024: 121,200

Median annual earnings in 2014: $50,780

What they do: Supervise and coordinate the activities of clerical and administrative-support workers

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Typical educational requirements: High-school diploma

8. Computer and information systems managers

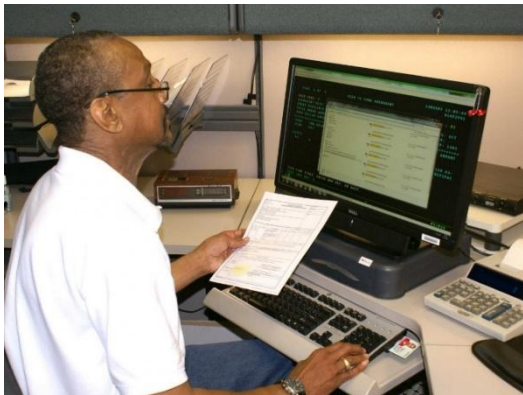**Projected new positions by 2024**: 53,700

Median annual earnings in 2014: $127,640

What they do: Plan, direct, and coordinate computer systems

Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

7. Management analysts

Projected new positions by 2024: 103,400

Median annual earnings in 2014: $80,880

What they do: Conduct research and develop procedures to allow organizations to run more efficiently

Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

6. Accountants and auditors

AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh

Projected new positions by 2024: 142,400

Median annual earnings in 2014: $65,940

What they do: Examine, analyze, and interpret accounting records

Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

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5. Physicians and surgeons, all other

Projected new positions by 2024: 51,700

Median annual earnings in 2014: At least $187,200*

What they do: Treat patients in a variety of specialized fields

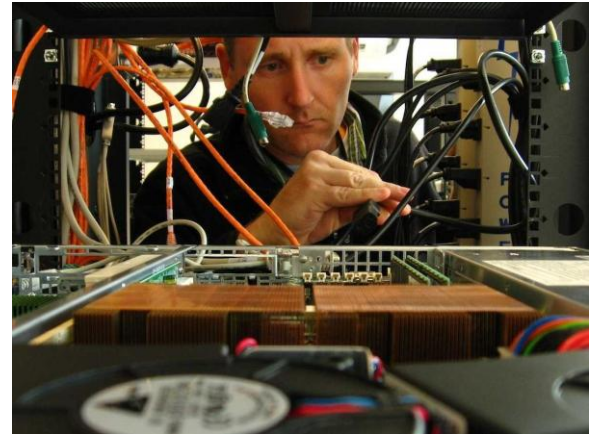**Typical educational requirements**: Doctoral or professional degree

4. Computer systems analysts

Projected new positions by 2024: 118,600

Median annual earnings in 2014: $82,710

What they do: Analyze data processing problems to develop and improve computer systems

Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

3. Software applications developers

Projected new positions by 2024: 135,300

Median annual earnings in 2014: $95,510

What they do: Develop front-end user-oriented computer applications and programs

Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

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2. General and operations managers

Projected new positions by 2024: 151,100

Median annual earnings in 2014: $97,270

What they do: Plan, direct, or coordinate the operations of organizations

Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

1. Registered nurses

Projected new positions by 2024: 439,300

Median annual earnings in 2014: $66,640

What they do: Assess patient health needs and care for patients

Typical educational requirements: Bachelor's degree

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UNIT 12

Future Inventions

Science fiction often features technology that inspires future inventions.

Cell phone inventor Martin Cooper claims the communication devices used on Star Trek motivated him to invent cellular phones.

Harry Potter has an invisibility cloak and the Romulans in Star Trek make their starships disappear using cloaking devices.

This fictional technology has inspired scientists to try and make invisibility a possibility. In fact, recent developments in nanotechnology could make invisible cloaking a reality in the near future.

We see things because light reflects off objects. Black objects absorb light and this absence of light is seen as darkness which also helps us to detect objects.

For an object to become invisible it cannot reflect or absorb light. If light could be bent around an object without any reflection or casting of shadows, then we would not see it.

Ideally, we would only see what is directly behind the object. It sounds strange but scientists have created a new class of matter that can do this.

Metamaterials are nanostructures that have a negative refractive index, which means they can control how light waves are bent, reflected and absorbed.

But these meta-materials were limited in size. They couldn't be made larger than a few microns and only manipulated certain frequencies of light. So they could only make invisible what you couldn't see anyway.

However, a team of scientists at the University of Central Florida have discovered a method for creating "large-area fabrication" of these meta-materials for the full spectrum of light.

As described in their research published in the journal of Advanced Optical Materials, this means that any object covered in this fabric would become invisible.

Cyborg Beetle

Advances in microelectronics is making yesterday's science fiction into tomorrow's future inventions.

Scientists at the University of California have implanted beetles with miniaturized electronics that allows the insects to be controlled.

Research presented at a conference in Italy demonstrated a new technology for creating "cyborg insects".

The flying beetles receive wireless signals from a mobile transmitter that controls the insect. Varying impulses trigger an appropriate response from the beetle so that it flies according to its handler.

The insect can be made to take-off, land, hover, or follow a given flight path.

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Previous research concentrated on moths but giant flower beetles were easier to operate and could carry larger payloads because of their size.

Further advances with nanobots and miniaturization will allow heat sensors and cameras to be embedded into the bugs. The insect could then be used for surveillance or search and rescue missions.

Undersea Resort

L Bruce Jones is a submarine inventor who designs and sells private luxury submarines. Following in the footsteps of his rocket scientist father, and his grandfather who invented self-elevating jack-up rigs and created the world's first containerized shipping company; Bruce has invented the world's first undersea resort.

Accessible by two elevators from the surface, the resort is being built on the seabed surrounding a private Fiji island in the South Pacific.

The underwater facilities will include 24 luxury state rooms, a restaurant and bar, library, conference room, wedding chapel, underwater spa, and the ultra-luxury Nautilus Suite with stunning undersea views.

Electrical Clothing

One of the future inventions that could greatly impact our lives are nanoribbons. Rubber films developed by engineers at Princeton University could power mobile devices and other electronic devices.

The silicone sheets are embedded with ceramic nanoribbons (piezoelectric ribbons) that generate electricity when flexed, converting mechanical energy to electrical energy.

Materials made of this material, such as shoes, would harvest electrical energy created from walking and power everything from an ipod to a pacemaker.

The nanoribbon strips are so narrow that 100 strips fit side-by-side in a space of a millimeter. The strips are then embedded into clear sheets of silicone rubber to create a chip.

These sheets could be woven into fabric and placed against any moving area on the body to create electricity.

For example, a vest made from this material could take advantage of breathing motions to generate energy.

Nanoribbons are highly efficient in converting about 80% of mechanical power into electricity.

Needle-less Injection

This future invention is a device for delivering medication and vaccinations through the skin.

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As an alternative to injecting a needle, micro-poration is a painless method of transferring medication (intraepidermal) into the body using laser technology.

A handheld laser creates micro pores in the epidermis of the skin for the transfer of molecules. It has a familiar comparison to the "needle-less" device used by Dr. "Bones" McCoy on Star Trek. The popular sci-fi series has inspired more than a few new inventions including the "laser" and the cell phone.

This new micro-poration technology is painless to use and requires no supervision to administer. The interfaced controls regulate the dosage.

T-Shirt Gadgets

Scientists at Standford University are developing future inventions using e-Texiles.

This new class of flexible, stretchable and lightweight clothing would function as rechargeable batteries.

Cotton and polyester fabrics are dyed with an ink made from carbon nanotubes, which are electrically conductive carbon fibers that are 1/50,000th the width of a human hair.

The electronic properties of the fabric are maintained even when the clothing is washed. Researchers believe that the e-Textiles will eventually allow us to use our clothing as gadgets - talking to a friend through our shirt sleeve or surfing the web on a pant leg.

Tissue Regeneration

One of the future inventions in health care may be the development of a spray gun for regenerating skin tissue.The Armed Forces Institute of Regenerative Medicine (AFIRM), recently established by the U.S. Department of Defense, is funding research into the regrowth of bones, muscles, tendons, nerves and blood vessels.

The University of Pittsburgh's McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine will join a consortium of 30 institutes in regenerative research.

Last year, a pathologist at the McGowan Institute regrew the severed fingertips of two patients in their mid-sixties. Existing scar tissue was removed by an enzyme. Scarring inhibits regrowth, however cells derived from pig bladders can override the scarring process and attract cells and proteins needed for growth.

Another researcher with Wayne Forest University, is developing an inkjet device with cartridges containing tissue cells with growth factors. The device would dispense layers of tissue onto deep flesh wounds for healing and regrowth.

For surface wounds, a hand-held sprayer is in development, which sprays immature skin cells (called keratinocytes) onto the skin. Clinical trials with burn victims have been promising. The advantages of this technology compared to "grafting" is that it eliminates patchwork scarring and uses less skin.

"Conventional methods cannot return people to the way they were before" says biochemist Alan Russell, but it's within the grasp of science.

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E-Paper

Among the future inventions in e-readers is this paper thin, flexible film that reads like a magazine or newspaper.
LG Display, a manufacturer of thin-film transistor liquid crystal display panels has developed an 11.5-inch flexible e-paper display.

The 0.3 mm thick metal foil substrate resembles a traditional newspaper but operates as an e-reader.

The GIP (Gate-in-Panel) technology promises to be the next generation in digital display technology competing in the e-book market.

E-paper's ultra-thin, flexible and lightweight form reduces maintenance and power consumption costs but its scalable size encourages additional applications such as mounting to flat and curved surfaces like walls and pillars.

Reference
Inventor-Strategies.com. (2017). FUTURE INVENTIONS. [online] Available at: http://www.inventor-strategies.com/future-inventions.html.

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