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Theme: "Assessment of English proficiency of students in the senior year of '*Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción*' based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEF)"

Student: María Inés Acosta Urigüen

Director: Especialista Lourdes Crespo Vintimilla

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis is to determine the level of English proficiency of students in the senior year of *La Asunción High School* according to the regulations established by the Common European framework. The main research question tries to discover if the senior year students are ready to approve the 1st English level at *Universidad del Azuay* according to the CEF which is claimed to be the reference in both institutions. Several methodological tools were applied in order to collect relevant information for this work such as surveys to students and teachers, database analysis, exams given to the students, and descriptive statistics. The most relevant results are the average level of senior year students which shows to be lower than the expected one, and the performance of *La Asunción* students at *Universidad del Azuay* when they take their English program or proficiency exam there. The conclusions of the present work intend to contribute with a proposal of recommendations to *La Asunción*.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de la tesis es determinar el nivel de conocimiento del idioma inglés de los estudiantes de sexto curso del colegio La Asunción de acuerdo a lo que establece el Marco Común Europeo. La principal interrogante de investigación intenta descubrir si los estudiantes de sexto curso son capaces de aprobar el primer nivel de Inglés en la Universidad del Azuay en base al marco común europeo que sirve de referencia en ambas instituciones. Diversas herramientas metodológicas fueron aplicadas para recolectar información relevante para este trabajo tales como encuestas a profesores y estudiantes, análisis de base de datos, exámenes tomados a los estudiantes y estadísticas descriptivas. Los resultados más significativos muestran el promedio de los estudiantes de sexto curso que tiende a ser menor al esperado y el rendimiento de estos estudiantes en la Universidad del Azuay cuando cursan programas de inglés o toman el examen de suficiencia. La conclusión de la presente tesis pretende contribuir con una propuesta de recomendaciones para el colegio La Asunción.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of teaching English is a challenging one. It demands commitment, patience, and high professional skills. Three aspects have to be taken into account when thinking about teaching English: the teacher, the learner, and the textbook to be used. The role of the teacher as an active facilitator is extremely important. The level of engagement and responsibility is essential for a learner, and the interaction of both along with the textbook is the key component for a successful teaching-learning process. High exposition to the target language is also indispensable in order to achieve a desirable level of proficiency. Therefore, the number of hours that schools assign to teaching English is particularly important. To meet these requirements might be the cornerstone of the whole teaching English method.

In my experience as a teacher at the Language Department of the University of Azuay, I could realize that a large number of students had not acquired the necessary knowledge to approve the proficiency test of English once they start college; thus revealing that the level of English language skills obtained at school is not adequate to meet the mandatory requirement demanded by CONESUP (*Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior*) at the moment of obtaining a Bachelors' degree at any Ecuadorian University.

After having made several observations based on the performance of students at *Universidad del Azuay* related to the level of English through the analysis of the existing database of students at the university, the need to measure the real and current level of English of the students in the senior year of '*Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción*', was identified since a large number of them enter *Universidad del Azuay*, and also because at the same time, this institution is closely linked to the university.

Various factors need to be analyzed in the present work, as mentioned above, which are involved in the teaching-learning process. Some of them are main language teaching materials and resources, the academic preparation of teachers, and the number of hours per level which will be analyzed under the European

framework and will be evaluated through a diagnostic test applied to students with the objective of placing the level of acquired knowledge by the students who finish their studies at this institution according to the standards set by the mentioned framework of reference.

Nowadays, it is the responsibility of educational institutions to provide their High School graduates with skills and capabilities that will be useful when they start their university studies; one of these is English language proficiency as a fundamental tool to read and understand written material. The focus of Universidad del Azuay is to allow learners to acquire bibliographic knowledge based on reading-comprehension skills, as means of communication to interact with others and the world, and as a basic tool to study a university career or a post-graduate program in Ecuador and/or abroad.

The research will aim to measure the level of English proficiency based on the European framework as this identifies the average level at which students are, determines the acquired knowledge, and at the same time assesses whether the targets set by the institution have been met or not. Also, statistical data based on variables such as type of school or if they have taken additional classes in English outside the school will be gathered and analyzed.

Finally, it is necessary to evaluate the number of students from '*Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción*' who have entered University of Azuay in the last five years and the percentile of students who have either passed or failed the proficiency English test.

Direct beneficiaries of the present research would be the directors of the institution. The results obtained by this investigation could serve as a starting point for improvements, if necessary, or to ratify the work already done.

The first chapter describes the approach of the Common European Framework for language learning and the analysis of the theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner as well as the theory of Communicative and Innatist Perspective by Noam Chomsky.

The second chapter presents the history, mission, and vision of La Asunción. It also analyzes the chosen material used by this institution and Universidad del Azuay and their relationship with the CEF, the number of hours taught per week, and the methodology used to prepare classes.

The third and last chapter describes the application of surveys to teachers and students of *La Asunción* in order to get information related to their studies in English, as well as a diagnostic test to measure the students' level of knowledge. These data were tabulated and analyzed; then the results were described. The last step was to measure the performance of *La Asunción* students at the University of Azuay in the English area for a period of 5 years, and demonstrate the possible correlation between this study and the performance recorded.

CHAPTER #1 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter analyses the main principles given by the Common European Framework to teach/learn foreign languages. Specific aspects related to the common reference levels, the competences students must acquire in a period, and the language used have been taken into consideration.

The theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner and the theory of Communicative and Innatist Perspective by Noam Chomsky have been also studied with the purpose of identifying the requirements that English teachers and materials should have, the process of teaching/learning, and the unique personalities that every class have.

1.1 The Theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner

Howard Gardner is the creator of the theory of multiple intelligences and is who defines language proficiency as the ability of a human being to process information from a system of symbols to recognize the validity of phonological, syntactic or semantic meaning in an act of a language (Ander-Egg 23-26).

The application of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences has been carried out in schools sustained on a personalized educational system, such as Asunción High School, where the principles of individuality, autonomy, and sociability are essential. It is considered important for this research to analyze this theory since the aim is to measure the level of English proficiency based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which contains tables of assessment in the four language competences that include the areas of listening comprehension, reading comprehension, oral language (speaking) and writing, all of which are areas considered in the multiple intelligence theory.

According to Gardner, intelligence is "a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed* 33-34). He

continues to say “intelligences are potentials that will or will not be activated, depending upon the values of a particular culture, the opportunities available in that culture, and the personal decisions made by individuals and/or their families, school teachers, and others” (Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed* 35). For Howard Gardner, we cannot talk about intelligence in singular, as he considers the existence of different intelligences. At first, in 1983, he stated the existence of seven intelligences and later he considered three more: the naturalist, the spiritual and the existentialist intelligence. However, these intelligences do not operate independently, they complement each other. (Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed* 48-52)

Summarizing, Howard Gardner talks about eight different intelligences: verbal or linguistic, logical- mathematical, kinesthetic, spatial, musical, intrapersonal, interpersonal and naturalist.

- Linguistic Intelligence: This intelligence is the ability to use language effectively and includes written and spoken language. This intelligence is closely related with logical-mathematical and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences (Gardner, *Inteligencias Múltiples: La teoría en la práctica* 38).
- Logical Mathematical Intelligence includes the ability to solve problems. In Howard Gardner's words: “it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically” (Gardner qtd in Antunes 26.) It develops through the interaction of the subject with the world. A child learns concepts like object permanence, quantity, object classification and order by touching and exploring the world. The ability to detect patterns can be useful for second or foreign language learning, especially when it comes to learning grammar patterns.
- Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is the ability to use and control body movements with a purpose; it is using the whole body or a part of the body to solve problems. Language learning is also related to this intelligence since communication involves not only verbal but also non verbal expressions. (Gardner, *Inteligencias Múltiples: La teoría en la práctica* 38)

- Spatial Intelligence includes the ability to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas, the ability to solve special problems and to differentiate shapes and object from different angles, the capacity to identify and solve mental maps, among other things. People who can decode or interpret a graphic uses the aptitude to compare, analyze and synthesize. They can make deductions and generalizations, which is also necessary in language learning when it comes to applying grammar rules in different situations, for example (Antunes 30-31).

- Musical Intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner, musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence (Antunes 46).

- Interpersonal Intelligence is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others (Gardner, *Inteligencias Múltiples: La teoría en la práctica* 40).

- Intrapersonal Intelligence entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears, and motivations. In Howard Gardner's view it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives (Gardner, *Inteligencias Múltiples: La teoría en la práctica* 41).

- Naturalist Intelligence is manifested in people who are attracted by the natural world. They are very sensitive and identify with nature. Stimulation of this intelligence is related with bodily-kinesthetic movement. (Ander-Egg 108)

Gardner's theory, although controversial and not enthusiastically accepted within academic psychology, provides a new definition of "intelligence". Howard Gardner says that "people have a unique blend of intelligences" and that "the big challenge

facing the deployment of human resources 'is how to best take advantage of the uniqueness conferred on us as a species exhibiting several intelligences" (Gardner, *Inteligencias Múltiples: La teoría en la práctica* 44).

Modern learning environments acknowledge the fact that there is no average student model with predetermined behavior and which can be adapted to students' diverse education. Moreover, in personalized learning and assessment, emphasis is given to students' different learning needs and abilities as well as in their diverse interests.

In terms of foreign language assessment (FLA), it is considered that individuals process language differently according to their overall intelligence (Council of Europe 19). As stated previously, there are mixed-intelligence students, meaning that learners can attain new knowledge using different learning strategies and paths, suited to their individual intelligence. Consequently, the Council of Europe stated in 2011 that:

"The Common European Framework is based on the communicative, action-oriented and skill-based approach to language learning which is the essence of linguistic competency. Language is a tool for communication, and mental reasoning in a social context; foreign language awareness is the ability of the individual to use different communicative and reasoning "tools" to achieve a goal. Each individual is a different social agent with divergent cognitive skills, empirical or academic knowledge, and social variations." (Council of Europe 1-2)

Therefore, European education and assessment is aimed at mixed ability students and takes into consideration the existence of multiple intelligences.

Gardner's theory supports the idea that students think and learn in many different ways, leading educators to develop new approaches that might better meet the needs of the range of learners in their classrooms. Therefore, second and foreign language teaching should take into consideration how students process what they learn. Teachers need to have a constructivist perspective and view their role as

collaborators in the teaching-learning process in order to stimulate their students different intelligences that will lead them to construct experiences to develop the communicative competence that can help them solve problems through the appropriate use of the language.

1.2 The Communicative and the Innatist Perspective Theories by Noam Chomsky

Noam Chomsky is one of the most challenging theorists in the field of linguistic concepts. He deeply explored language acquisition from a new innovative innatist perspective. His ideas led to a revolution in many aspects of linguistics and psychology. His main contribution is the one that says that all human languages are basically innate and that the same universal principles are shared by all of them. (Lightbrown and Spoda 1-7)

Chomsky's naturalistic approach to the study of language has not only influenced linguistics but also the theory of language acquisition. However, the basic idea of universal grammar, that there are foundational rules in common among all humans, has been around since the 13th century. In the following centuries this idea led many philosophers to try to design a perfect language from the ground up, taking into account what they believed were the core principles of all languages. (Lightbrown and Spoda 1-7)

The most prominent theory of the idea of a Universal Grammar (UG) was put forth by Chomsky in the 1950s by which he stated that there was a universal grammar device anchored to the brain of all humans, and that all human languages had evolved on top of that universal grammar, and also that children learned their native languages by using it as a support structure. (Lightbrown and Spoda 8-10)

Patsy M. Lightbrown and Nina Spada in their book "How languages are learned" explain Chomsky's theory in these words:

"He argued that children are biologically programmed for language and that language develops in the child just the same way that other biological functions develop. For example, every child will learn to walk as long as

adequate nourishment and reasonable freedom of movement are provided. The child does not have to be taught. Most children learn to walk at about the same age, and walking is essentially the same in all normal human beings. For Chomsky, language acquisition is very similar. The environment makes only a basic contribution - in this case the availability of people who speak to the child. The child, or rather, the child's biological endowment, will do the rest" (Lightbrown and Spoda 15)

Noam Chomsky launched his theory of "Generative Grammar" as well. He stated that all human beings share a set of common principles which are somehow innate to all without having to learn them. This idea was later developed as the above mentioned principle of Universal Grammar. Chomsky argues that there is an innate predisposition to Language Acquisition which makes it possible to learn a language at a young age with the help of limited input. He called this a "Language Acquisition Device" (LAD). This device contains principles common to all languages in the world. The device helps the child to choose rules and parameters relevant to the language. (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

Chomsky coined the term "Transformational Grammar" to refer to the cognitive use that humans do to map structural associations between sentence referents understood in the linguistic regions of the brain and the actual content of a sentence that is seen or heard. Noam Chomsky published the first information on transformational grammar in his 1957 book Syntactic Structures. Many changes in theory and terminology have occurred since then. (Universität Duisburg-Essen)

Competence versus performance

In addition Chomsky opened a debate related to the main focus of interest of linguists. Should linguists focus on analysis and samples of language per se or should they prioritize the behavior of language in its varied ways? According to Mitchel and Myles in their book "Second Language Learning Theories", Chomsky explained this situation like follows:

The linguist, Noam Chomsky, famously argued that it is the business of theoretical linguists to study and model underlying language competence, rather than the performance data of actual utterances that people have produced. By competence, Chomsky is referring to the abstract and hidden representations of language knowledge held inside our minds, with its potential to create and understand original utterances in a given language. As we shall see, this view has been influential in much SLL research." (Mitchel and Myles 10)

However, many researchers of language competence think it can be reached only in a direct way, under controlled conditions and with the use of grammatically judgment tests. Moreover, the split between performance and competences has never been accepted by all linguists and there is still controversy over this issue.

1.3 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF).

Since the aim of this research is to measure the level of English proficiency based on the European framework (CEF), it is considered of importance to give a brief explanation of CEF and its implications in order to identify the knowledge acquired by the students, and at the same time check whether the targets set by the institution have been met.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching and evaluation is a chapter of the European Council project for Linguistic that the Council of Europe has been working on since 1971 to develop descriptive scales, reports, and guidance work to improve the language proficiency of a student placed in one of the three possible user levels: basic, independent and competent, all based on the degree of knowledge and use of the language; and an additional assessment that describes the global and specific degree of knowledge.

According to the document of the Common European Framework and its political and educational context, the uses of the Framework include:

“The planning of language learning programs in terms of:

- Their assumptions regarding prior knowledge, and their articulation with earlier learning, particularly at interfaces between primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher/further education;
- Their objectives;
- Their content.

The planning of language certification in terms of:

- The content syllabus of examinations;
- Assessment criteria, in terms of positive achievement rather than negative deficiencies.

The planning of self-directed learning, including:

- raising the learner's awareness of his or her present state of knowledge;
- self-setting of feasible and worthwhile objectives;
- Selection of materials;
- Self-assessment” (Council of Europe 1-9)

1.4 CEF Focus

The Common European Framework's approach is action based and takes into account the cognitive and emotional aspects, as well as each individual's abilities. It views the learner as a social agent that interacts in a society under certain circumstances. More specifically the CEF document states that “While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context” and therefore language is used for communication and to achieve a certain goal (Council of Europe 9). Additionally, language use and learning is described as:

“Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general and in particular communicative language competences. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various

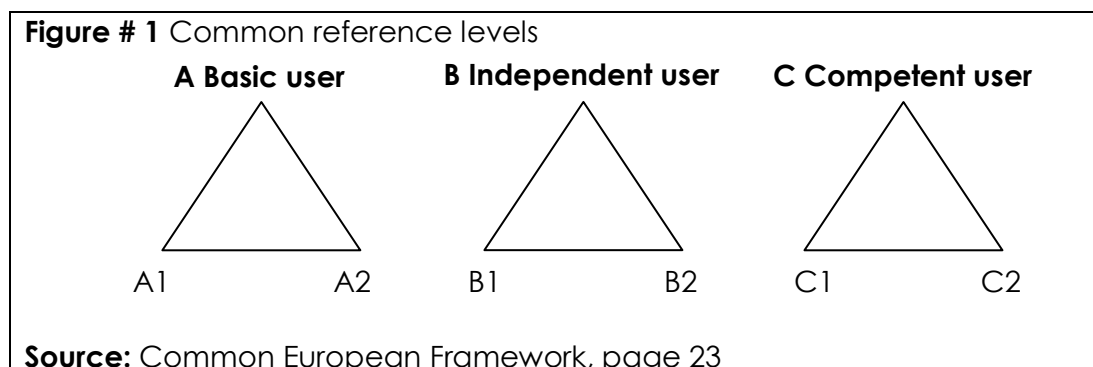
conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences." (Council of Europe 9)

Consequently, language learning and teaching needs to be concerned with the general competences, communicative language competence, language activities, language processes, contexts and domains, which is the main focus of the CEF.

1.5 The common Reference Levels

The Common European Framework places learners into three different levels which are divided as follows:

- A Basic Speaker
 - A1 Breakthrough or beginner
 - A2 Waystage or elementary
- B Independent Speaker
 - B1 Threshold or intermediate
 - B2 Vantage or upper intermediate
- C Proficient Speaker
 - C1 Effective Operational Proficiency or advanced
 - C2 Mastery or proficiency



The following table provides a brief description of each level's requirements, from bottom to top:

Figure # 2 Common Reference Levels: global scale

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: European Language Portfolio, Levels -

www.coe.int/t/DG4/portfolio/?M=/main_pages/levels.html

The next table, which shows the categories of language use, is designed to help learners and teachers. It provides self-assessment orientation related to the proficiency use of language at each level.

Figure # 3 Common reference levels: self-assessment table

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Understanding	Listening	I can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programs on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programs. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly. I can understand television programs and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided. I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Speaking	Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure

		very familiar topics.	conversation going myself.	current events).		skilfully to those of other speakers.	around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it
	Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating subthemes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, wellstructured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Source: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment, <http://www.linguanet-europa.org/pdfs/self-assessment-grid-en.pdf>

The third table shows the indicators to evaluate spoken language proficiency according to “can do” descriptors which provide a clear description for the reception, interaction, and production of language. Some of these descriptors are seen as a pivot between the learner’s resources (competences) and what he/she can do with them (communicative activities). (Council of Europe 25)

Figure # 4 Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turn taking, referencing, allusion making, etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organizational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
C1	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skillfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2+					
B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution.
B1+					
B1	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.

	current events.	predictable situations.	evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	
A2+					
A2	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
A1	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorized repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.
Source: Common European Framework, page 28					

These tables are not enough to describe all the descriptors used to measure communicate activities and strategies in the use of language. There is a set of tables that presents the requirements to evaluate productive, receptive, interactive, and mediating activities and strategies. The productive activities and strategies include the proficiency in oral and written production; the receptive activities and strategies cover the proficiency in aural reception or listening, visual reception (reading), and audio-visual reception; the interactive activities and strategies describe the proficiency in spoken, written, and face-to-face interaction; and the mediating activities measure the proficiency in oral and written mediation.

1. Productive activities and strategies

The productive activities include speaking and writing activities and strategies to plan, compensate, monitor and repair. There are two tables to evaluate the overall production activities and a group of illustrative scales to measure different categories such as monologues, public announcements, and public audiences in oral production; creative writing, reports, and essays in writing production.

The strategies include mobilizing resources and balancing between different competences (strengths vs. weaknesses) in order to match the available potential to the nature of the task. (Council of Europe 63-64) The tasks included in this section are related to rehearsing, locating resources, considering audience, self-correction, monitoring success, among others.

Figure # 5 Overall oral production	
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
A1	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.
Source: Common European Framework, page 58	

Figure # 6 Overall written production	
C2	Can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points
C1	Can write clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion
B2	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources
B1	Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence
A2	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'
A1	Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences
Source: Common European Framework, page 61	

2. Receptive activities and strategies

The receptive activities include listening and reading activities, and audio-visual reception.

There are two tables to evaluate the overall listening-comprehension and reading-comprehension and a group of illustrative scales to measure different subcategories of these groups. There is also a table that shows an illustrative scale to measure the audio-visual reception of TV and films.

Understanding conversation between two speakers, listening as a member of a live audience, listening to announcements and instructions, and listening to audio media and recordings are included inside the subgroup of listening-comprehension.

Reading correspondence, reading for orientation, reading for information and argument, and reading instructions are described inside the subgroup of reading-comprehension.

Following a text as it is read aloud, watching TV, video, or a film with subtitles, and using new technologies (multi-media, CD ROM, etc.) are part of the subcategory of audio-visual perception.

Figure # 7 Overall listening-comprehension	
C2	Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar
C1	Can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts Can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly
B2	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand
	Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers
B1	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent
	Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives
A2	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated
	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated
A1	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning
Source: Common European Framework, page 66	

Figure # 8 Overall reading-comprehension	
C2	Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning
C1	Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of specialty, provided he/she can reread difficult sections
B2	Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms
B1	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension
A2	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language
	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items
A1	Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required
Source: Common European Framework, page 69	

Figure # 9 Watching TV and Film	
C2	As C1
C1	Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage
B2	Can understand most TV news and current affairs programs Can understand documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays and the majority of films in standard dialect
B1	Can understand a large part of many TV programs on topics of personal interest such as interviews, short lectures, and news reports when the delivery is relatively slow and clear
	Can follow many films in which visuals and action carry much of the storyline, and which are delivered clearly in straightforward language. Can catch the main points in TV programs on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear
A2	Can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents etc. where the visual supports the commentary
	Can follow changes of topic of factual TV news items, and form an idea of the main content
A1	No descriptor available
Source: Common European Framework, page 71	

The strategies present how to identify the context and knowledge of the world relevant to it, and how to activate this in the process of producing language. The tasks included in this section are related to Planning: framing (selecting mental set, activating schemata, setting up expectations), execution: Identifying cues and inferring from them, evaluation: hypothesis testing: matching cues to schemata, and repair: revising hypotheses. (Council of Europe 72)

3. Interactive activities and strategies

The interactive activities describe the spoken and written interaction where the language user interacts speaking and/or listening with other interlocutors to construct the language.

There are two tables to evaluate the overall written and spoken interaction and a set of illustrative scales to measure different subcategories of these groups.

The subgroup of spoken interaction shows scales to measure activities related to understanding a native speaker interlocutor, conversation, informal discussion, formal discussion and meetings, goal-oriented co-operation

(repairing a car, discussing a document, organizing an event), transactions to obtain goods and services, information exchange, and interviewing and being interviewed.

The subgroup of written interaction shows the scales to measure the use of correspondence, notes, messages and forms.

Figure # 10 Overall spoken interaction	
C2	Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it
C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language
B2	Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances
	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments
B1	Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music etc.
	Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events)
A2	Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations
	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord
A1	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics
Source: Common European Framework, page 74	

Figure # 11 Overall written interaction	
C2	As C1
C1	Can express him/herself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively
B2	Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others
B1	Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point he/she feels to be important
A2	Can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need
A1	Can ask for or pass on personal details in written form
Source: Common European Framework, page 74	

The interaction strategies compass both receptive and productive activities as well as an activity unique to the construction of joint discourse involved in interaction. (Council of Europe 84-85) Taking the floor or taking turns, co-operating with others, dealing with the unexpected, asking for help, and asking for clarification are some of these strategies.

4. Mediating activities and strategies

In this category, the language user is not concerned to express his/her own meanings; he/she simply acts as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other. (Council of Europe 87) Some examples of mediating activities include translations, summarizations, interpretation, and paraphrasing.

The strategies reflect the ways of coping with the demands of using finite resources to process information and establish equivalent meaning. (Council of Europe 87-88) Checking congruence of two versions, checking consistency of usage, refining by consulting dictionaries or thesaurus, and consulting experts, and sources are some examples of these strategies.

1.6 The use of English as a Foreign Language

According to the CEF approach, the language learner is in the process of becoming a language user when he/she finds the necessity and the desire to interact with others using the language as the answer to this request. (Council of Europe 43)

The CEF has established that “each act of language use is set in the context of a particular situation within one of the domains (spheres of action or areas of concern) in which social life is organized” (Council of Europe 48). According to the CEF, a domain “refers to the broad sectors of social life in which social agents operate. A higher order categorization has been adopted limiting these to major categories relevant to language learning/teaching and use: the educational, occupational, public and personal domains”. (Council of Europe 10)

This framework contains tables of self assessment in the areas of listening comprehension, reading comprehension, oral language, and speaking and writing, detailing the extent of student's knowledge, corrections, fluency, interaction and coherence. These tables detail the skills that a person should possess and the values according to scales of language proficiency and quality ratings based on the tests applied.

1.7 Learner Competences

Language competence is the learner's capability to achieve the target language. In order to apply tasks and activities, learners rely on a number of competences developed through previous knowledge and experience. All human competences contribute in one way or another to the language user's ability to communicate and may be regarded as aspects of communicative language competence.

General competences:

1. Declarative knowledge (savoir)

- Knowledge of the world: locations, institutions, events, processes, geographical, demographical, political situations
- Socio cultural knowledge: culture of the community, everyday living, living conditions, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs and attitudes, body language, social conventions, ritual behavior

- Intercultural awareness: understanding of the relation between "world of origin" and "world of target community" , awareness of context and stereotypes
2. Skills and know-how (savoir – faire)
 - Social skills , living skills, vocational, and professional skills, leisure skills: arts, crafts, sports, hobbies
 - Know how: bring both cultures together, intercultural understanding, solve conflict
 3. Existential competence (savoir –etre)
 - Personality: attitude, motivation, values, cognitive style, personal identity
 4. Ability to learn (savoir – apprendre)
 - Observe and participate in new experiences and incorporate knowledge. Includes general phonetic awareness, study skills, heuristic skills

Communicative language competences:

The competences are used with communicative intentions; in this case, the user's linguistic, sociolinguist, and pragmatic language competences will be more detailed. (Council of Europe 108)

1. Linguistic competences

- An exhaustive description of the language as a formal system for the expression of meaning
- The lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographical, orthopedic competences will be detailed in this section (Council of Europe 108-118) .

2. Sociolinguistic competences

- Knowledge and skills need to deal with social dimension of language use
- The linguistic makers of social relations, politeness, conventions, expression of folk-wisdom, register differences, and dialect and accent are covered in this section. (Council of Europe 118-123)

3. Pragmatic competences

- The user/learner's knowledge of the principles according to which messages are organized, structured and arranged, are used to perform communicative functions, and sequence according to interactional and transactional schema. (Council of Europe 123)

However, it may be useful for the present paper to distinguish competences less related to language from linguistic competences, considering that the aim of this thesis is not a linguistic analysis of the language.

1.8 Learning and language teaching

According to the CEF, a set of grids has been presented to describe the abilities in the use of language of learners at different levels; they have also defined the objectives and aim of language teaching and learning as the result he/she could achieve at the moment he/she uses it to solve situations and interact with others in life.

In this context, the CEF has defined the objectives of language learning and teaching based on “the appreciation of the needs of learners and of society, on the tasks, activities and processes that the learners need to carry out in order to satisfy those needs, and on the competences and strategies they need to develop/build up in order to do so” (Council of Europe 131).

It is also important to analyze the different contexts each person could have because this particular issue will determine the necessary competences, the ability to put these competences into action, and the ability to employ the necessary strategies to bring the competences into action which can vary within the population. (Council of Europe 131). The CEF considers the role of exams and qualifications, official curriculum, textbook writers, teachers, and learners as the main participants in the process of teaching-learning.

Exams and qualifications

It has to be considered the learning parameters and the level required. The authorities/teachers will have to make concrete decisions on which particular tasks and activities to include, which themes to handle, which formulae, idioms and lexical items to require candidates to recognize or recall, what socio-cultural knowledge and skills to test, etc.

Official curriculum / syllabus

Authorities, when drawing up curricular guidelines or formulating syllabuses, may concentrate on the specification of learning objectives. They may specify only higher-level objectives in terms of tasks, themes, competence, etc. If they want, they could lay down guidelines or make suggestion related to the methods to be employed and the stages through which learners are expected to progress.

Textbook writers

Textbook writers are obliged to make concrete, detailed decisions on the selection and ordering of texts, activities, vocabulary and grammar to be presented to the learner. They are expected to provide detailed instructions for the classroom and/or individual tasks and activities to be undertaken by learners in response to the material presented.

Teachers

Teachers are generally called upon to respect any official guidelines, use textbooks and course materials (which they may or may not be in a position to analyze, evaluate, select and supplement), devise and administer tests and prepare pupils and students for qualifying examinations. They have to make minute-to-minute decisions about classroom activities, which they can prepare in outline beforehand, but must adjust flexibly in the light of pupil/student responses. They are expected to monitor the progress of pupils/students and find ways of recognizing, analyzing and overcoming their learning problems, as well as developing their individual learning abilities.

It is necessary for them to understand learning processes in their great variety, though this understanding may well be an unconscious product of experience rather than a clearly formulated product of theoretical reflection, which is the proper contribution to the partnership for learning to be made by educational researchers and teacher trainers.

Learners

Learners are the persons ultimately concerned with language acquisition and learning processes. They are who have to develop the competences and strategies (if they have not already done so) and carry out the tasks, activities and processes needed to participate effectively in communicative events. However, relatively few learn proactively, taking initiatives to plan, structure and execute their own learning processes. (Council of Europe 139-140)

1.9 The tasks and their role in language teaching

The Common European Framework establishes that "Task accomplishment by an individual involves the strategic activation of specific competences in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a clearly defined goal and a specific outcome" (Council of Europe 160). These tasks can be defined as the group of activities that a person uses to interact, produce, receive, and mediate in order to communicate.

The task accomplishment includes two categories: performance and difficulty. The task performance takes into account the learner's competences and the conditions and constrains to do a specific task which is used by the teacher to modify the level of difficulty (Council of Europe 159). The difficulty describes the fact that a specific task can be perceived in a particular way by an individual where he/she will have to use strategies and competences to manage and carry it out (Council of Europe 159).

The main learner's competences and characteristics are related to the cognitive, affective and linguistic factors. These factors describe the qualities a student should have and the ones that teachers need to know in order to learn and teach effectively.

- Cognitive nature
 - Task familiarity
 - Skills
 - Ability to cope with processing demands
- Affective nature
 - Self-esteem
 - Involvement and motivation
 - State
 - Attitude
- Linguistic nature
 - Level of knowledge
 - Control of grammar, vocabulary, phonology and orthography
 - Language resources (range, grammatical and lexical accuracy)
 - Language use (fluency, flexibility, coherence, appropriacy, precision)
 - (Council of Europe 159-161)

The conditions and constraints that are related to factors that can be manipulated by the teachers in the classroom describe the steps and the procedures to prepare tasks according to the background students could have.

- Interaction and production
 - Support
 - Time
 - Goal
 - Predictability
 - Physical conditions
 - Participants
- Reception
 - Task support
 - Text characteristics
 - Type of response required (Council of Europe 165-166)

CHAPTER #2 THE INSTITUTION AND THE CHOSEN MATERIAL

This chapter presents a brief history of *Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción* since its creation and its relationship with *Universidad del Azuay*. It also describes the teaching resources chosen by these institutions and their relationship with the Common European Framework in terms of contents and levels. The methodology used to prepare classes and the number of hours taught per week, have also been analyzed.

2.1 History

La Asunción high school was founded in 1963 under the supervision of the La Asunción Community of Nuns and as an extension of Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE). The aim of this community was to establish an educational institution according to the necessities of that time. Since its founding, this school has been concerned about developing methods according to the demands of the society.

In 1973, they implemented the Individualized Education System (SISTEMA DE EDUCACIÓN PERSONALIZADA) whose main principles are still used nowadays. During this year, they changed the system to co-financed regimen, agreement No. 1160, October 5, 1973.

In 1981, the Community of Nuns stopped cooperating with PUCE, now Universidad del Azuay

In 1983, the school changed their system to Experimental by an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In 1988, the school recognized the necessity of co-education which led to an integral formation, and adapted a mixed system which allowed boys.

In 1991, the school signed an agreement to develop a project named "New Structure and Orientation of the High School Level within the Education System." (Colegio Fiscomisional Experimental "La Asunción")

In 2002, the school became a member of the Assessment and Accreditation System for Experimental Institutions (Sistema de Evaluación y acreditación para Planteles Experimentales – SEAPE)

In 2006, the institution received the QUALITY CERTIFICATE ISO 9001:2000 which guaranties that they satisfy the requirements of their stakeholders and that they have a process of continuous improvement.

In the same year, the institution started working in a new Institutional Project named "CURRICULAR RE-ENGINEERING FOR EDUCATIONAL SKILLS OF LA ASUNCIÓN" which was approved by the Dirección Provincial de Educación del Azuay and became effective from September 2006.

In 2009, this educational Project was developed with the aim of graduating competent students who will be able to pursue higher education and be competent during their entire life. (Colegio Fiscomisional Experimental "La Asunción")

2.2 Mission

Unidad Educativa Particular Universitaria La Asunción is a private institution that is continuously improving. It is formed by professionals who are constantly updating their knowledge. The School provides a humanistic and holistic educational service to children and adolescents, according to the latest pedagogic, scientific, and technological tendencies in a warm environment with commitment and social responsibility. (Unidad Educativa La Asunción)

2.3 Vision

As stated on Unidad Educativa Particular Universitaria La Asunción's webpage, their vision is to "Consolidate ourselves as an Educational Unit of trust and social

recognition, staying ahead in the educational field, providing innovative proposals and offering formation and education of human beings that contribute with their own personal transformation to the social and environmental renovation". (Unidad Educativa La Asunción)

2.4 Objectives

The main goal of Asunción is to provide innovative proposals through a competency-based education. The institution offers different specializations for their High School graduates in Physical-Mathematical, Social Studies, and, Chemical-Biological areas, and in all these specializations students receive five hours of English per week. The school offers its students an English instruction through texts that meet the standards of the CEF. (Unidad Educativa La Asunción)

2.5 The English books chosen

The academic data describes the material used at *La Asunción* high school and the University of Azuay. The book used during the 2009-2010 period in *La Asunción* was Elevator that is published by Richmond Publishing, and Upstream published by Express Publishing that is also used in the University of Azuay.

2.5.1 Elevator

The series of books Elevator include four different levels and it is oriented to adults from an elementary to an upper intermediate level. The official website of Elevator mentions that "the course provides carefully graded reading and listening sections, systematic help with pronunciation, and lots of opportunities for communication practice" (Richmond Publishing S.A.)

Elevator International is a four-level general English course that takes students from beginner to upper intermediate level (CEF levels A1 to B2). Each level provides up to 120 hours of material, and includes a Student's Book, Workbook, Language Lift reference booklet, and CD-Rom – as well as a Teacher's Book and Teacher's Resource Book. (Richmond Publishing S.A.)

Figure # 12 Student's book covers – Series of books Elevator



Source: http://elevator.richmondelt.com/web/index.php?about_elevator_en

The next table presents the contents of Elevator – Level 3 which was used by the students of the senior year of La Asunción at that time.

The key features of Elevator – Level 3 include:

- "Clear presentation and practice of grammar in the Grammar Elevator sections
- Carefully selected reading and listening material graded to the level
- Strong focus on high-frequency vocabulary, lexical sets, collocations and idioms
- Clearly structured guided writing activities in the Workbook that deal with real life situations
- Varied speaking tasks that will get students communicating
- Regular consolidation of key grammar and vocabulary provided in the Student's Book review units" (Richmond Publishing S.A.)

Figure # 13 Elevator contents – Level 3 (units 01 – 08)

Contents						
Unit	Grammar	Vocabulary	Useful expressions	Speaking and writing	Listening and reading	Task
01 My life Page 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present simple Adverbs of frequency Present simple vs present continuous Stative verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free-time activities Verb + noun collocations related to the music industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversational language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss personality Write and complete a questionnaire Conduct a survey Role-play a celebrity interview Write a profile of a student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to a radio interview Listen for question forms and conversational interjections Read a quiz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an interview
02 American dreams Page 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past simple Used to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synonyms and antonyms Adjective-noun word building related to personality characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing an informal letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss immigration Role-play a dialogue Describe personality characteristics Talk about things you used to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify pronunciation of -ed endings Listen to a conversation in a DVD hire shop Read an extract about American immigration Read an informal letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a letter to a long-lost friend
Revision 01 Page 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present simple for facts and habits Present simple vs present continuous Present simple vs past simple Used to Past simple questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free-time activities The music industry Word building: adjectives and nouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking about a holiday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to a conversation about lifestyle changes 	
03 Eyewitness Page 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can and could Past continuous While, as and when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The law Collocations describing physical features Appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking about appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss capital punishment Conduct a survey of life skills Summarise an article Describe an important person in your life Describe a scene from the past Write a newspaper report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stressed and unstressed words Listen to a tall story Listen to a police interview Read an article about eyewitness testimonies in US courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give an eyewitness account
04 Time out Page 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present perfect simple vs past simple Present perfect simple vs continuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitive and intransitive phrasal verbs Verb + noun collocations related to travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing a story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a survey about travel experiences Talk about life experiences Tell a travel anecdote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a magazine article about a year off Listen to a conversation between two travellers Read a travel journal Listen to a travel journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a travel anecdote
Revision 02 Page 32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countable and uncountable nouns Can, can't, could and couldn't Past simple vs past continuous Present perfect simple and present perfect continuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The law Travel-related activities Phrasal verbs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe someone's appearance Discuss aspects of law Discuss travel experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to identify a person from a physical description 	
05 Working hard Page 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must, mustn't and don't need to Future with going to and present continuous Future time expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal characteristics Expressions related to work and domestic arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss characteristics required for jobs Write a job advert Express opinions about job duties Describe future arrangements and intentions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify elided letters Read job adverts Listen to a conversation between work colleagues Listen to job interviews Read CVs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend an interview for a job
06 Food heaven? Page 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparatives and superlatives Modifiers with comparatives and superlatives Quantifiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synonyms and antonyms related to food Food Verbs related to cooking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing quantity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a food quiz Discuss restaurant food Write a description of a restaurant and its food Discuss cooking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read an article about fast food Identify the /ɔ/ sound Listen to a conversation in a restaurant Read a recipe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invent a recipe for a competition
Revision 03 Page 46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going to vs present continuous Must, mustn't and don't need to Comparative adjectives and modifiers Time expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjectives to describe personality Work Adjectives and nouns related to food 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss work responsibilities Discuss diets Write exam rules 		
07 Climate chaos Page 48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future with will, going to, may and might Adverbs of probability First conditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental problems Phrasal verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss global warming Write about the planet's future Discuss solutions to environmental problems Write a slogan and notes for a speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read an article about global warming Identify the words 'll and 'll Listen to a conversation between a father and daughter Listen to a discussion about social problems Read a speech for a campaign meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and give a speech
08 City creatures Page 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can, have to and should Comparative structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compound nouns related to the city Adjectives to describe locations and lifestyles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss laws and customs in different countries Write a description of customs in different countries Express preferences about city and country life Write comparisons about different places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a guidebook extract Listen to a discussion about city and country life Listen and identify strong and weak forms Read a tourist information leaflet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a tourist information leaflet
Revision 04 Page 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First conditional Comparatives phrases Can, have to and should 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compound nouns related to global warming and the environment Phrasal verbs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make and discuss predictions about the environment Write about cultural rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to a conversation about environmental problems 	

Source: Elevator Internacional http://elevator.richmondelt.com/web/download/syllabus/elevator_3_contents.pdf

Figure # 14 Elevator contents – Level 3 (units 09 – 16)

Unit	Grammar	Vocabulary	Useful expressions	Speaking and writing	Listening and reading	Task
09 Fashion victims Page 62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second conditional Expressing wishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words related to music, clothes and jewellery Physical appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreeing and disagreeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss clothes and fashion Discuss cosmetic surgery Discuss hypothetical situations Write a wish list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read an article about fashion Listen and identify contracted forms Read an advert about cosmetic surgery Listen to a discussion about cosmetic surgery Read a fashion questionnaire Listen to a discussion about fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss ethical dilemmas
10 Modern love Page 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verb patterns: gerunds and infinitives Giving advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phrasal verbs related to relationships Meanings of the verb <i>to get</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss relationships and speed dating Write an informal letter to a friend Give advice about personal problems Write dialogues using <i>get</i> Discuss marriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read an article about speed dating Read e-mails on an advice column web page Listen to an advice columnist's radio programme Listen and identify elided letters Read a for-and-against essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a for-and-against essay
Revision 05 Page 74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second conditional Gerunds and infinitives Giving advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clothing and accessories Physical appearance Phrasal verbs related to relationships Meanings of the verb <i>to get</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing wishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss fashion sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to short dialogues 	
11 Buy it! Page 76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present simple passive By in passive sentences Past simple passive and uses of simple passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbs and nouns related to gadgets Adjectives for describing size, colour, shape and material Parts of an MP3 player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe gadgets Write a description of a gadget Describe an object Write a quiz about great inventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a consumer review about a gadget Listen to a radio programme about inventions Listen to a conversation in a shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shop for an MP3 player
12 Fantastic! Page 82	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past perfect simple Narrative verb forms Linkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradable and non-gradable adjectives Verb + adverb combinations related to movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding out details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe comic book characters Write about an invented superhero Write an ending to a story Discuss a person's biography Write notes about a person's biography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a magazine article about a comic book writer Listen and identify tenses Listen to a comic strip story Read a magazine interview with Matt Groening Listen and identify intonation patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a biography
Revision 06 Page 88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present simple passive Past simple passive Word order of adjectives Narrative verb forms Linkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbs related to technical description Adjectives for describing objects Gradable and non-gradable adjectives Verb and adverb collocations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss local news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to a news bulletin 	
13 Read on! Page 90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining relative clauses Non-defining relative clauses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book genres Adjectives ending in <i>-ed</i> or <i>-ing</i> Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss reading habits and experiences Discuss the book and film of <i>The Beach</i> Write a book quiz Write book recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a book synopsis Listen to a discussion about an essay title Listen for pauses in non-defining relative clauses Read a notice about a book club Listen to a discussion at a book club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a book for a friend
14 The box Page 96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported statements Reported questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nouns and verbs related to the film industry Reporting verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting survey results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss soap operas Report statements Write reported sentences that people might say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a newspaper article about an incident Read an extract from a TV guide Listen to an extract from a TV programme Listen to identify stressed syllables Read a survey and report about TV watching habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a survey report
Revision 07 Page 102	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relative pronouns Defining and non-defining relative clauses Reported speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book genres Books The film industry Reporting verbs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss a plot summary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to a conversation about a soap opera 	
15 A place to live Page 104	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of articles Causative and reflexive pronouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of property and parts of a house Expressions to describe location Household chores Bad habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewing and discussing people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss types of houses Write an advert for a house Describe a house Discuss living arrangements Write about services provided in businesses Discuss bad habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read estate agents' adverts Listen and identify the indefinite article Listen to two monologues about living arrangements Read personal profiles Listen to discussions about a new lodger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a lodger
16 Holiday time! Page 110	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making predictions <i>So, so that, because and in order to</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefixes Holiday accommodation Adjectives related to holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making and responding to requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make and write predictions Discuss holiday accommodation Talk about plans for the summer Discuss holiday problems Write a dialogue about a holiday problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a magazine article about space tourism Listen to a conversation about holiday possibilities Read short dialogues about holiday problems Listen to dialogues about holiday problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with holiday problems
Revision 08 Page 116	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles Causative and reflexive pronouns <i>So, so that, because and in order to</i> Making predictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation Household chores Adjectives to describe holidays Prefixes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to unusual situations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to a conversation about holiday plans 	
Pairwork activities Page 118		Transcripts Page 128		Irregular verbs Page 142		Pronunciation chart Page 143

Source: Elevator Internacional http://elevator.richmondelt.com/web/download/syllabus/elevator_3_contents.pdf

The official website of Richmond Publishing S.A. has also published the Can do Statements or expected knowledge that students should get after studying a unit. A set of 16 tables has been presented and these are directly related with the Common Reference Levels mentioned on top.

Figure # 15 Can Do Statements

Unit 01: My life

B1

Speaking	Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics. (B1) Can engage and participate in conversation on most general topics, even in a noisy environment. (B1) Can carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended. (B1)	pp.6 & 7 p.7 pp.9 & 11
Listening	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect. (B1)	pp.8 & 10
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, of from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task. (B1)	pp.6 & 10
Writing	Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. (B1)	p.11

Unit 02: American dreams

B1

Speaking	Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics. (B1) Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. (B1)	p.12 pp.14 & 15
Listening	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent. (B1)	p.14
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, of from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task. (B1) Can read correspondence relating to his/her field of interest and grasp the essential meaning. (B1)	p.12 p.16
Writing	Can write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music and film. (B1)	p.17

Unit 03: Eyewitness

B1

Speaking	Can express his/her thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music and film. Can explain why something is a problem. (B1) Can give brief comments on the views of others. (B1) Can reasonably, fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points. (B1)	p.20 p.21 pp.23 & 25
Listening	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent. (B1)	pp.22 & 24
Reading	Can recognize the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. (B1)	p.20
Writing	Can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources. (B1)	p.25

Unit 04: Time out**B1**

Speaking	Can engage and participate in conversation on most general topics, even in a noisy environment. (B1)	p.27
	Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. (B1)	p.29
Listening	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent. (B1)	pp.28 & 30
Reading	Can scan quickly through texts, locating relevant details. (B1)	p.26
Writing	Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. (B1)	p.31

Unit 05: Working hard**B1/B2**

Speaking	Can participate actively in routine and non-routine formal discussion. (B2)	pp.34 & 36
	Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. (B1)	p.39
Listening	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect. (B1)	pp.36 & 38
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, or from different texts in order to fulfill a specific task. (B1)	pp.34 & 38
Writing	Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence. (B1)	p.35

Unit 06: Food heaven?**B1/B2**

Speaking	Can participate actively in routine and non-routine formal discussion. (B2)	p.42
	Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. (B1)	p.45
Listening	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect. (B1)	p.42
Reading	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. (B2)	p.40
Writing	Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. (B1)	p.43
	Can synthesize information and arguments from a number of sources. (B1)	p.45

Unit 07: Climate chaos**B1/B2**

Speaking	Speaking Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis. (B2)	pp.48, 49 & 50
	Can construct a chain of reasoned argument: can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. (B2)	p.53
Listening	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect. (B1)	p.50
Reading	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. (B2)	pp.48 & 52
Writing	Can summarise, report and give his/her opinion about	p.51

	accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. (B1)	
Unit 08: City Creatures B1/B2		
Speaking	Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis. (B2) Can account for and sustain his/her opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments. (B2)	pp.56 & 57 p.59
Listening	Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is signposted by explicit markers. (B2)	p.56
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, of from different texts in order to fulfill a specific task. (B1)	pp.54 & 58
Writing	Can write clear texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesising information and arguments from a number of sources. (B1)	p.59
Unit 09: Fashion victims B1/B2		
Speaking	Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a noisy environment. (B1) Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis. (B2)	pp.62 & 63 pp.65 & 67
Listening	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect. (B1)	pp.64 & 66
Reading	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. (B1)	p.62
Unit 10: Modern love B1/B2		
Speaking	Can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences. (B2) Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a noisy environment. (B1) Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting forward his/her point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses. (B2)	p.71 p.72 p.73
Listening	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. (B2)	p.70
Reading	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. (B2)	pp.68 & 72
Writing	Can write letters conveying degrees of emotion and highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences and commenting on the correspondent's news and views. (B2) Can express news and views effectively in writing and relate to those of others. (B2) Can write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. (B1)	p.69 p.73
Unit 11: Buy it! B1/B2		
Speaking	Can give clear, detailed description of how to carry out a procedure. (B2) Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis. (B2)	p.81 pp.77 & 81

Listening	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. (B2) Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is signposted by explicit markers. (B2)	p.78 p.80
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, of from different texts in order to fulfill a specific task. (B1)	p.76
Writing	Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest. (B2)	p.77

Unit 12: Fantastic!

B1/B2

Speaking	Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a noisy environment. (B2) Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting details. (B2)	pp.83 & 84 p.87
Listening	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. (B2)	p.84
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, of from different texts in order to fulfill a specific task. (B1) Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. (B2)	p.82 p.86
Writing	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources. (B2)	p.85

Unit 13: Read on!

B2

Speaking	Can express his/her ideas and opinions with precision, present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly. (B2) Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis. (B2) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest. (B2)	p.91 pp.93 & 94 p.95
Listening	Can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers. (B2) Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers. (B2) Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers. (B2)	p.92 p.94
Reading	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. (B2) Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details. (B2)	p.90
Writing	Can write a review of a film, book or play. (B2)	p.95

Unit 14: The box

B2

Speaking	Can express his/her ideas and opinions with precision, and present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly. (B2) Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting forward his/her point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to	pp.96 & 100 pp.98 & 101
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	hypotheses. (B2) Can take initiatives in an interview, expand and develop ideas with little help or prodding from an interviewer. (B2)	p.99
Listening	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. (B2)	p.98
Reading	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. (B2)	pp.96 & 100
Writing	Can write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. (B2)	p.101

Unit 15: A place to live B2

Speaking	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. (B2) Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting forward his/her point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis. (B2) Can take initiatives in an interview, expand and develop ideas with little help or prodding from an interviewer. (B2)	p.105 pp.106, 108 & 109 p.109
Listening	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. (B2)	pp.106 & 108
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, of from different texts in order to fulfill a specific task. (B1)	p.104
Writing	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources. (B2)	p.105

Unit 16: Holiday time! B2

Speaking	Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis. (B2) Can express his/her ideas and opinions with precision, and present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly. (B2)	pp.113 & 114 pp.111 & 115
Listening	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. (B2)	p.112
Reading	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, of from different texts in order to fulfill a specific task. (B1)	p.110
Writing	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources. (B2)	p.117

Source: Elevator International

http://elevator.richmondelt.com/web/download/mapping/elevator_3_cef_mapping.pdf

2.5.2 Upstream

This series of books Upstream have been designed for students from absolute beginner to intermediate level according to the CEF. The website mentions that “each book consists of five modules and provides systematic preparation in all four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing - required at these levels” and also establishes that “the Student's Book and the Workbook are designed to be covered in approximately 60 to 80 hours of classroom work”. (Express Publishing S.A.)

Upstream covers the levels from Beginner A1+ to Intermediate B1+. The website established that the books include “all four skills through a variety of communicative tasks, while allowing for a flexibility of approaches which make them suitable for all classes, including large or mixed-ability groups” and that “their syllabi reflect the guidelines of the Council of Europe Framework” (Express Publishing).

Figure # 16 Student's book covers – Series of books Upstream



Source:

http://www.expresspublishing.co.uk/catalogue_details/familydetails.php?Country=uk&Family=UPSTREAM%20I&id=1512

The following tables present the contents of Upstream – Elementary A2 which was used by the students of *Universidad del Azuay* during the 1st level at that time.

The key features of Elevator – Elementary A2 include:

- “Theme-based units from a wide variety of sources
- A variety of cross-cultural and cross-curricular topics
- Systematic development of all four language skills through realistic challenging tasks which encourage the learner’s personal engagement

- Lexical exercises practicing and activating all essential vocabulary including collocations, everyday English, phrasal verbs and word formation
- A variety of authentic stimulating reading and listening tasks
- Grammar sections covering all major grammatical areas plus a Grammar Reference Section
- Composition analysis and practice on all types of writing with full models
- A wide range of speaking activities
- Culture Clips
- Literature pages
- Fully animated DVDs" (Express Publishing S.A.)

Figure # 17 Elevator contents – Level 3 (units 01 – 08)

Contents

	Topics	Vocabulary	Reading	
Module 1 Moments in life	UNIT 1 (pp. 6-13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jobs • daily activities • weekend activities 	types of jobs; job qualities; job routines; daily routines; free-time activities; chores; the time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an article about a shark scientist • arranging a meeting (dialogue) • a quiz • an email about summer activities • Culture Clip: <i>School of the Air</i>
	UNIT 2 (pp.14-21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • famous people • past experiences • types of houses • museums 	jobs; nationalities; words related to battles; types of houses; rooms; furniture/appliances/features; museum objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a biography • weekend activities (dialogue) • an article (types of houses) • Literature Corner: <i>Charlie & the Chocolate Factory</i>
Self-Assessment Module 1 (pp. 22-23) – Across the Curriculum 1 (p. 24) – Life in Tudor Times (History)				
Module 2 In a world of our own	UNIT 3 (pp. 26-33)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holidays • transport • festivals 	holiday activities; entertainment; means of transport; festive activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an internet holiday advertisement • discussing a holiday with a travel agent (dialogue) • a homepage about festivals • a letter from a holiday resort • Culture Clip: <i>Orlando, Florida</i>
	UNIT 4 (pp. 34-41)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weather • geographical features • animal kingdom 	weather & seasons; geographical terms; measurements; animals – parts of the body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a weather forecast • Record-Breaking Geography • buying a pet (dialogue) • a letter of advice • Curricular Cuts: <i>The Himalayas</i>
Self-Assessment Module 2 (pp. 42-43) – Across the Curriculum 2 (p. 44) – WWF for a living planet (Citizenship)				
Module 3 For dear life	UNIT 5 (pp. 46-53)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disasters • accidents • precautions 	types of disasters; parts of the body; types of accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diary entries • narrating an experience (dialogue) • a newspaper article • a story • Culture Clip: <i>The Great Plague</i>
	UNIT 6 (pp. 54-61)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health problems • medical professions • lifestyles 	illnesses & cures; medical professions & workplaces; emergency services; healthy/unhealthy lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a cartoon strip • at the chemist's/dentist's (dialogues) • a weekly advice column • an essay about exam stress • Curricular Cuts: <i>Micro-organisms on your body!</i>
Self-Assessment Module 3 (pp. 62-63) – Across the Curriculum 3 (p. 64) – Volcanoes (Geography)				
Module 4 Go for it!	UNIT 7 (pp. 66-73)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food & drinks • shops & products • money 	dishes; desserts; drinks; places to eat; ways to cook; types of shops; products; clothes; shopping habits & money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notices • deciding on a present (dialogue) • comments on a message board • a restaurant review • Culture Clip: <i>Great National Dishes</i>
	UNIT 8 (pp. 74-81)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • character qualities • sports • entertainment 	hobbies & personalities; sports & equipment; places for sports; films; reviews; types of entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people's profiles for a contest • notices • deciding on where to go (dialogue) • an email about a musical • Literature Corner: <i>The Prisoner of Zenda</i>
Self-Assessment Module 4 (pp. 82-83) – Across the Curriculum 4 (p. 84) – Budgeting (PSHE)				
Module 5 Incredible but true	UNIT 9 (pp. 86-93)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gadgets • inventors • technology 	objects (characteristics/uses); inventions & inventors; computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertisements • a 'timeline' quiz about inventions • asking for help (dialogue) • an essay about computers at work • Culture Clip: <i>International Spy Museum</i>
	UNIT 10 (pp. 94-101)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • space • unexplained mysteries • environment 	space; solar system; UFOs; the supernatural; environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an article about extraterrestrials • a visit to a haunted house (dialogue) • an article about the environment • a story • Curricular Cuts: <i>Stars</i>
Self-Assessment Module 5 (pp. 102-103) – Across the Curriculum 5 (p. 104) – The Flowers (Literature)				
Special Days: Earth Day (pp. 106-107); Mother's Day (pp. 108-109); Songsheets (pp. 110-114); Pairwork Activities (pp. 115-118); Word Perfect (pp. 119-123); Grammar Check (pp. 124-133); Grammar Reference (pp. 134-139);				

Figure # 18 Elevator contents – Level 3 (units 09 – 16)

Grammar	Listening	Speaking	Writing
present simple; present continuous; adverbs of frequency; present continuous (future meaning) – going to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing an advert • matching people to weekend activities • Pronunciation: word stress 	discussing types of jobs; discussing daily routines; arranging a meeting; requesting; making suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a leaflet about jobs • descriptions of photographs • an email about what you are doing this summer • an article about a school in your country
past simple; wh-questions; used to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing information about a concert • matching people to rooms • Pronunciation: “e” 	asking/giving personal information; talking about past experiences; talking about past habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a short biography • a history quiz • a poster about life in the past • a descriptive article about a visit to a museum
present perfect; present perfect vs past simple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matching people to activities • multiple choice questions • Intonation: reacting to bad news 	discussing your holiday to Mexico; reacting to bad news; catching up on news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an Internet holiday advert • a cruise advert • a homepage about festivals • a letter from a holiday resort
comparatives/superlatives; the definite article (“the”); plurals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note taking • matching people to activities • Pronunciation: homophones 	asking/giving/refusing permission; expressing intonation; giving advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a weather forecast • a poster about geographical features in your country • a poster about a missing pet • a letter of advice
past continuous vs past simple; reflexive pronouns; mustn’t–can; past perfect; linkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note taking • predicting content • Pronunciation: /N/ 	narrating past experiences; discussing a bad day; giving news & reacting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diary entries • a leaflet • a news report • a story
conditionals type 0 & 1; must, mustn’t; need, needn’t; should, shouldn’t	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note taking • Intonation: conditional sentences 	talking about health problems; asking for medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a cartoon strip • rules • letters asking for & giving advice • an article making suggestions
countable – uncountable nouns; quantifiers; containers; going to vs will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note taking • matching people to shops • Pronunciation: /V-/t/; /s/-t/ 	ordering food at a takeaway; making a shopping list; buying things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a restaurant advert • a note • comments for a message board • a restaurant review
infinitive; -ing form; -ing/-ed participles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matching people to sports • Pronunciation: stressed syllables 	expressing agreement/disagreement (so–nor); talking about evenings out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your own profile for a contest • a sports centre poster • reviews of performances • an email recommending a film
order of adjectives; the passive; question tags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note taking • multiple choice • identifying mood • Intonation: question tags 	describing objects; offering/accepting/refusing help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an advertisement • fact files about inventions • a note • a for-and-against essay
reported speech (statements, questions, commands); relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note taking • predicting content • Pronunciation: /h/ 	an interview about extraterrestrial creatures; exchanging opinions; narrating a story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a short story • a cartoon strip • a summary • a story

American English-British English Guide (p. 140); Irregular Verbs (p. 141); Word List (pp. 142-152); Tapescripts (pp. T1-T7); Suggested Answers section (pp. SA1-SA3); Evaluations (pp. E1-E10); My Language Portfolio Guidelines (pp. L1-L2)

Source: Upstream – Elementary A2, Teacher’s Book, page 3

2.6 The number of English hours per week

A regular period of English classes at La Asunción includes 5 hours per week. A total amount of approximately 160 hours is taught in a regular school year (September-June). Each period of class lasts 45 minutes.(Unidad Educativa La Asunción)

2.7 The planning method used in classes

The methodology used to plan classes is done based on competences which set the target a student should get in order to be promoted to the next level. They foster coherence between the competence or the ability to be achieved and a situation that will create a suitable environment to get it. This is to say, a student should be able to use and apply resources in complex tasks and situations coherently in order to achieve a high standard of quality(Maldonado 28).

Unfortunately, the historical record of the English Planning for the period 2009 2010 has not been kept on digital or printed formats at La Asuncion files. This information was submitted by Ms Rosario Tobar, vice president of the institution.

CHAPTER #3 DATA GATHERING, ANALYSIS, AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the survey applied to the teachers of *La Asunción*, the test and survey applied to the students of *La Asunción*, and the result of the analysis of the student's database of *Universidad del Azuay*. Different statistical techniques were applied in order to obtain tables and charts that are used to synthesize the English level of students in these two institutions.

3.1 Gathering and tabulation

The collection and tabulation of data was done thanks to the collaboration of authorities of both institutions who allowed me to obtain data, to apply the exam and survey to students, and to interview teachers.

The collected data in *La Asunción* were tabulated in Excel in order to create two databases with the information of students and teachers.

The IT Department of *Universidad del Azuay* provided me with a file in excel with the information of all students who attended English classes or took the proficiency exam at the English Department during the years 2005-2009. This file was depurated to obtain the relevant data of *La Asunción* students and their performance.

3.1.1. Survey to teachers

The next survey was applied to the 7 teachers of the senior year of *La Asunción* who were at that time in charge of the different specializations taught by the high school. The questions are related to their studies and their experience teaching English.

Figure # 19 Survey applied to teachers of the senior year



"Assessment of English proficiency of students in the sixth course of 'Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción' based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEF)"

Thesis prior to obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in Education, English specialty

Survey applied to the teachers of the senior year of *Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción*

1. Do you have a Bachelor's Degree?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If your answer was "Yes", please write down the field in which you got it.

2. Do you have a 4th level degree?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If your answer was "Yes", please write down the field in which you got it.

3. Have you lived abroad?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If your answer was "Yes", please write down where and how long you stayed there.

Place


Period of time

4. How many years have you been working in La Asunción?

3.1.2 Survey to students

In order to apply the survey, a sample of 50% of students was taken. This sample included students of the senior year of La Asunción from different specializations. They had to answer about complementary studies done in other places besides La Asunción, and the period of time they had studied at this high school.


Figure # 20 Survey applied to students of the senior year

 <p>"Assessment of English proficiency of students in the sixth course of 'Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción' based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEF)" Thesis prior to obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in Education, English specialty</p> <p>Survey applied to the students of the senior year of <i>Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción</i></p> <p><u>SURVEY</u></p> <p>Read the next questions and answer them with the most accurate option.</p> <p>¿Have you only studied high school in <i>Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción</i>?</p> <p>a. Yes b. No</p> <p>¿Have you ever taken English complementary classes in some institute, academy, or language school besides the classes gotten in your high school?</p> <p>a. Yes b. No</p>

3.1.3 The test applied to students

In order to evaluate the real English level gotten by the students of the senior year, a test was applied to the sample. This test was taken from the Test Booklet CD which comes with the entire set of material that the *University of Azuay* has; the used test was the Exit Test, units 1-5.

Figure # 21 Test applied to students of the senior year

 <p>"Assessment of English proficiency of students in the sixth course of 'Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción' based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEF)" Thesis prior to obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in Education, English specialty</p>
Specialization area: _____
Course: _____
Vocabulary A Write the missing word.

- 1 I don't wear a u _____ at my new school.
- 2 Bad weather makes me feel d _____.
- 3 The r _____ control requires two AA batteries.
- 4 Can you help me to put up the d _____ for the party, Jim?
- 5 Are you okay, Dave? You look like you've seen a g _____!
- 6 Can you get me some cough sweets, please? I've got a s _____ t _____.
- 7 Take your umbrella! There's going to be h _____ rain.
- 8 I don't have a c _____ c _____. I prefer to pay cash in.
- 9 Where is the f _____ room, please? I'd like to try this on.
- 10 It was very f _____ last night. I couldn't see the road.
- 11 What a p _____! The plot was really exiting and the dancers were great!
- 12 We should all r _____ our rubbish to help protect the Earth.
- 13 Let's h _____ a car and drive there ourselves.
- 14 Cornflakes were i _____ by William Kellogg.
- 15 It rained all week and f _____ the town.

B Circle the correct item.

- 1 Greg's new house has lovely bay fences/windows.
- 2 Eating a fatty/balanced diet is the best way to lose weight.
- 3 The volcano erupted/spread and sent ash flying into the air.
- 4 Put your coat and hat on. It's boiling/freezing today!
- 5 Can you please go to the butcher's/baker's and get me some bread?
- 6 Cats have got four paws, wings/whiskers and a tail.
- 7 At my house, everyone makes/does their own bed.
- 8 Can you lend/borrow me a pound please, Jenny? I haven't got any change.
- 9 I'm going to switch the computer off now. Did you save/lose your work?
- 10 Tom tripped over the cat and grazed/twisted his ankle.

Grammar

C Circle the correct item.

- 1 Anna isn't here. She the dog.
A 's walking B walks C walk
- 2 London is the expensive city I have ever been to.
A most B more C much
- 3 You worry about watering the plants. I'll water them tomorrow.
A mustn't B needn't C don't
- 4 He told me that he something strange.
A is seeing B saw C sees
- 5 Can you get some milk on your way home? We haven't got left.
A a little B much C some
- 6 We on a picnic last weekend. It was great!
A are going B went C have been
- 7 You will call me when you arrive,?
A will you B don't you C won't you
- 8 There are biscuits in the cupboard, Sandy. Have one if you are hungry!
A a little B many C a few

- 9 If you a painkiller, your headache will go away.
A are taking B will take C take
- 10 Tom! I haven't seen you ages!
A from B since C for
- 11 You talk in the library. People are trying to work.
A mustn't B don't have to C needn't
- 12 I can't wait you, Angie. I've got so much to tell you!
A to see B seeing C see
- 13 I like coffee, but now I do.
A didn't use to B used to
C don't use to
- 14 That's the famous actor sister I met.
A who B whose C which
- 15 Sarah's to the bakery. I think she'll be back in a few minutes.
A been B gone C going

D Put the verbs in brackets into the correct tense.

- 1 Mum (go) shopping every Saturday morning.
- 2 I (visit) my grandparents in London this weekend. Would you like to come?
- 3 (find) your wallet yet, Sam? You lost it, didn't you?
- 4 It (snow) this morning when I left the house.
- 5 Matt (not play) football yesterday. He had a splitting headache.
- 6 I went back home again because I remembered I (not lock) the door.

Everyday English

E Complete the exchanges.

- A Could I have something
B You really have to go
C Can you please
D Would you like me to
E Why don't you

- 1 A: _____ buy a cat?
B: No way! I don't have enough time to take care of a pet.
- 2 A: _____ for sunburn please?
B: Yes, try some of this cream.
- 3 A: _____ help me to iron the clothes?
B: I'm afraid not. I'm helping Grandma to do her shopping this morning.
- 4 A: What did you think of the opera last night?
B: I loved it! _____!
- 5 A: _____ help you put up the decorations for the party?
B: Yes, please.

Listening

F Listen and fill in the gaps (1-5).

**The London borough Of Westminster invites you to:
HALLOWEEN PARTY IN THE PARK!**

(0) Saturday, October 31st, Hyde Park
Kids' 'Scary (1) ' competition,
music, (2), food stalls and much much more!
Gates open: (3) pm
Nearest underground (4) : Hyde Park Corner
Entry: (5)! Everyone welcome!

Reading

G Read the text and mark the sentences right (R), wrong (W) or doesn't say (DS).

**ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT...
MOUNTAIN RESCUE SEARCH DOGS IN THE UK**

How did it all begin?

SARDA (the Search and Rescue Dog Association) was founded about 40 years ago by the leader of a mountain rescue team.

What does SARDA use search dogs for?

Today, SARDA uses dogs to look for lost walkers and climbers, for missing children and for victims of disasters and crime. They manage to find 50-100 people every year. It's amazing!

Why do rescue teams use dogs for searches?

A dog's sense of smell can be a million times better than a human's! They know exactly where a smell is coming from, how old it is and many other things. Dogs can also work in the dark and in bad weather. One search dog is the same as about twenty human searchers!

What kind of dog makes a good search dog?

Good search dogs come in many shapes and sizes but they have to be intelligent, brave and strong. They also have to have very friendly personalities!

What about training?

It takes about 2 years to train a SARDA search dog. Their handlers have to develop a very close relationship with their dog and take training classes in first aid, helicopter safety and many other things.

- 0 SARDA is 40 years old. R
- 1 Search dogs don't find many people.
- 2 The dogs can work in difficult conditions.
- 3 Search dogs find more lost people than humans do.
- 4 All dogs make good search dogs.
- 5 Search dogs live with their handlers.

Source: Upstream, Elementary A2. Exit test, units 1-5

3.2. Descriptive Statistics

The databases were analyzed to obtain descriptive statistics such as the mean, mode, minimum, maximum, frequency and cross tabulation tables, and charts.

The mean is the arithmetic average of a number of cases a variable could have.

The mode is the category with the greatest number of cases a variable could have.

The minimum value is the lowest value that a variable has registered.

The maximum value is the highest value that a variable has registered.

A frequency table presents both the number and percentage of cases for each observed value of a variable.

A cross tabulation table (contingency table) displays the relationship between two or more nominal or ordinal variables. The size of the table is determined by the number of distinct values for each variable, with each cell in the table representing a unique combination of values. This table can present the amount of cases or the percentage of them. (PASW Statistics 18)

3.3. Generation of charts and tables

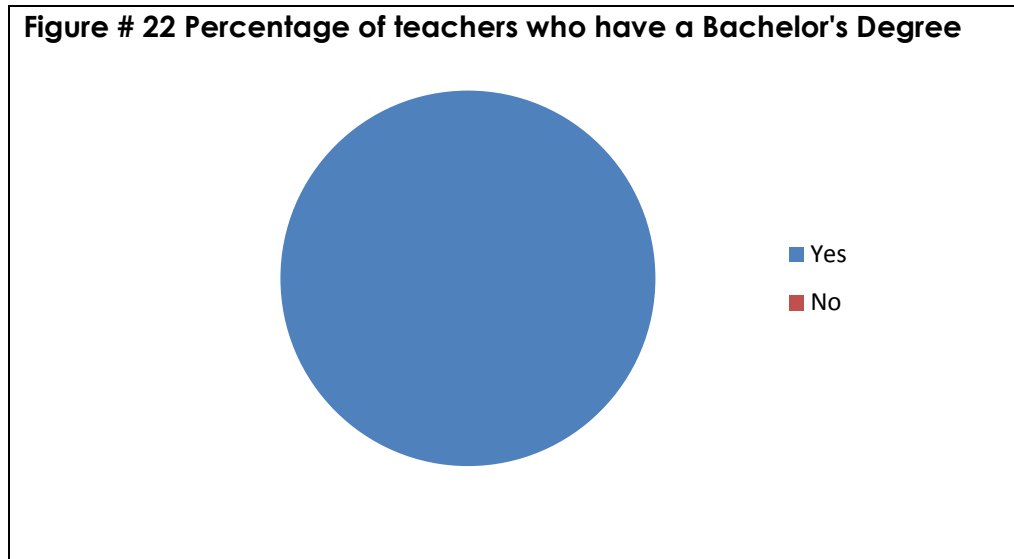
A set of charts and tables were created to show and synthesize the information gotten.

3.3.1 Results of the survey to teachers

The survey to teachers had 4 questions that were used to collect data related to their studies and experience working at *La Asunción*.

Question No. 1 Do you have a Bachelor's Degree?

Table # 1 Number and percentage of teachers who have a Bachelor's Degree		
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	100%
No	0	0%
Total	7	100%



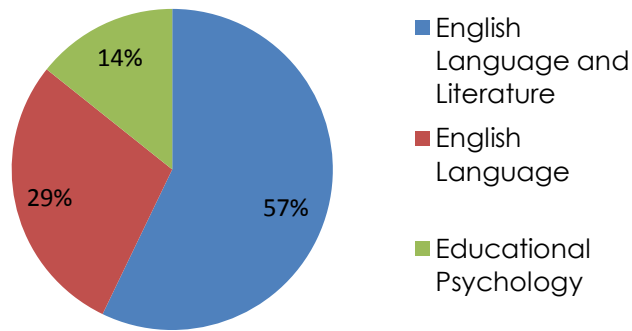
The information about Bachelor's Degrees and Post-graduate Degrees were also asked to the teachers who responded about their studies.

It can be observed that 100% of teachers have a Bachelor's Degree, but it is also important to mention the type of degree they have.

Question No. 1 Type of Bachelor's Degree

Table # 2 Type of Bachelor's Degree		
Bachelor's Degree	Frequency	Percentage
English Language and Literature	4	57,14%
English Language	2	28,57%
Educational Science, Minor Educational Psychology	1	14,29%
Total	7	100%

Figure # 23 Percentage of teachers who have a Bachelor's Degree

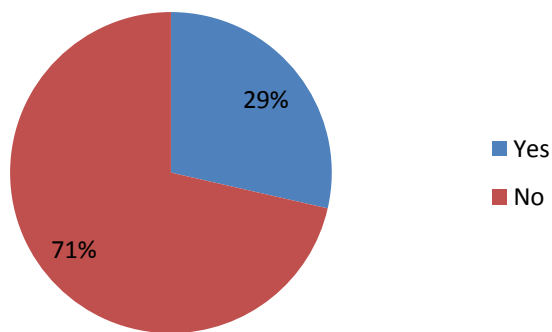


It is important to mention that more than 90% of teachers have gotten a Bachelor's Degree that certifies them in the English teaching field.

Question No. 2 Do you have a 4th level degree?

Table # 3 Number and percentage of teachers who have a 4th level degree		
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	28,57%
No	5	71,43%
Total	7	100%

Figure # 24 Percentage of teachers who have a 4th level degree

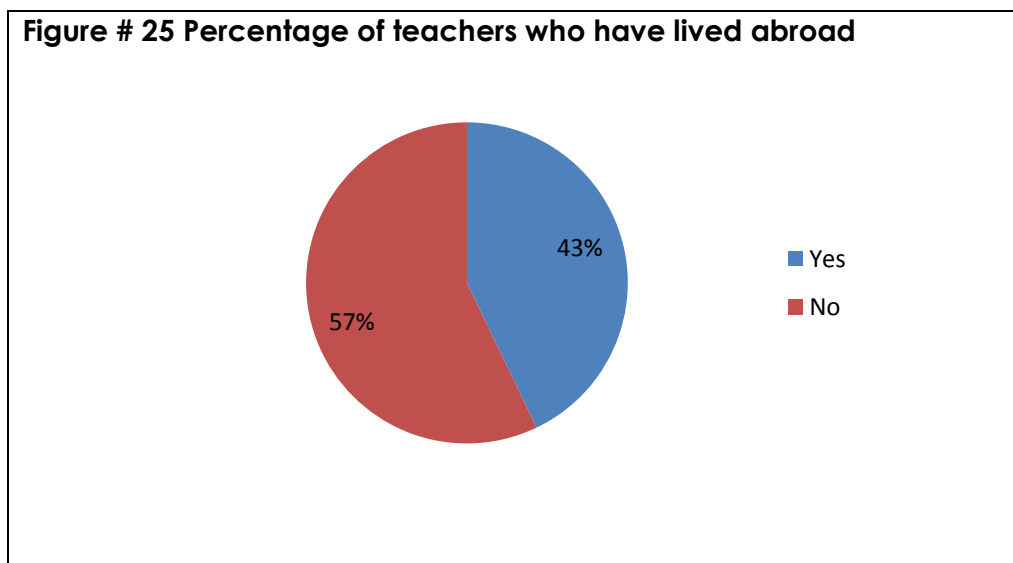


The 4th level Degrees have been obtained in the Educational Field (Specialization in Intellectual Development), and are a Specialization which is studied in 1 year. This program is not directly related to the English field.

No one has a Master's degree.

Question No. 3 Have you lived abroad?

Table # 4 Experience living abroad		
Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	42,86%
No	4	57,14%
Total	7	100%



Less than 50% of teachers have lived abroad in English spoken countries. The time they spent abroad is showed in the following table.

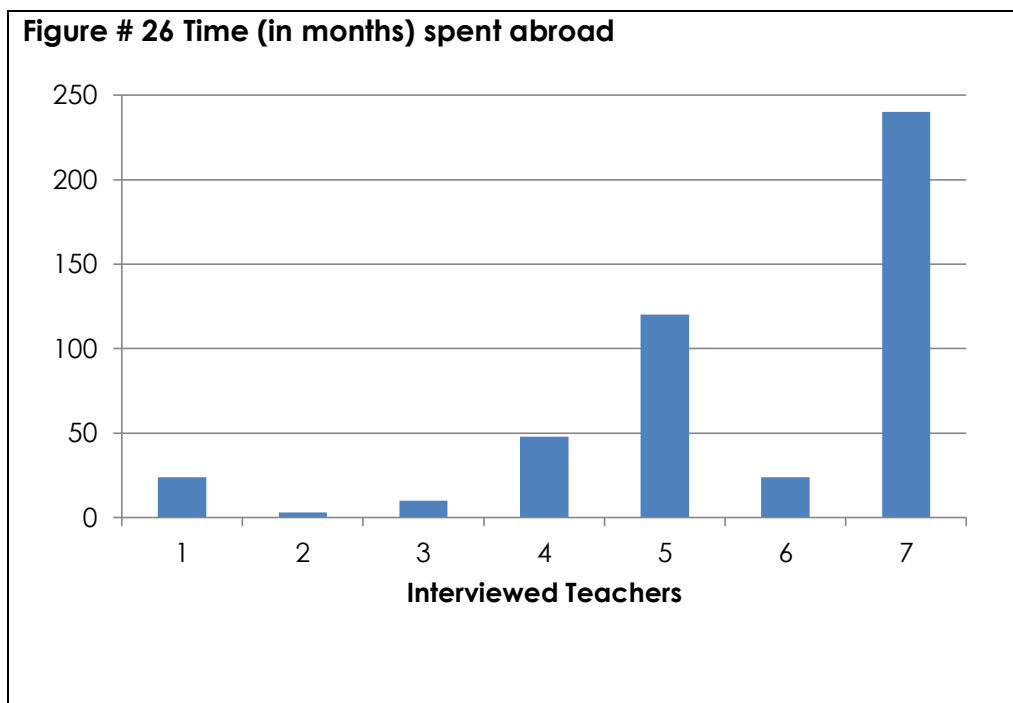
Table # 5 Places and period of time where teaches lived abroad	
Place (abroad)	Spent time
USA	6 months
USA	9 months
USA	3 years
Venezuela	9 months

The experience of the teacher who lived in Venezuela was not considered as a valid one because English is not spoken there as an official language.

The average period of time in months is 15. This shows us that teachers have not been exposed long enough to countries where English is spoken. Only one person has spent a considerable time in the United States of America.

Question No. 4 How many years have you been working at *La Asunción*?

Table # 6 Period of time working at <i>La Asunción</i>		
Teacher's survey	Time (in months)	Time (in years)
1	24	2
2	3	-
3	10	-
4	48	4
5	120	10
6	24	2
7	240	20



The data have been analyzed in months due to the fact that a couple of teachers have not worked more than a year in the institution.

This chart shows clearly that the spent time working at *La Asunción* is not significant for the majority teachers.

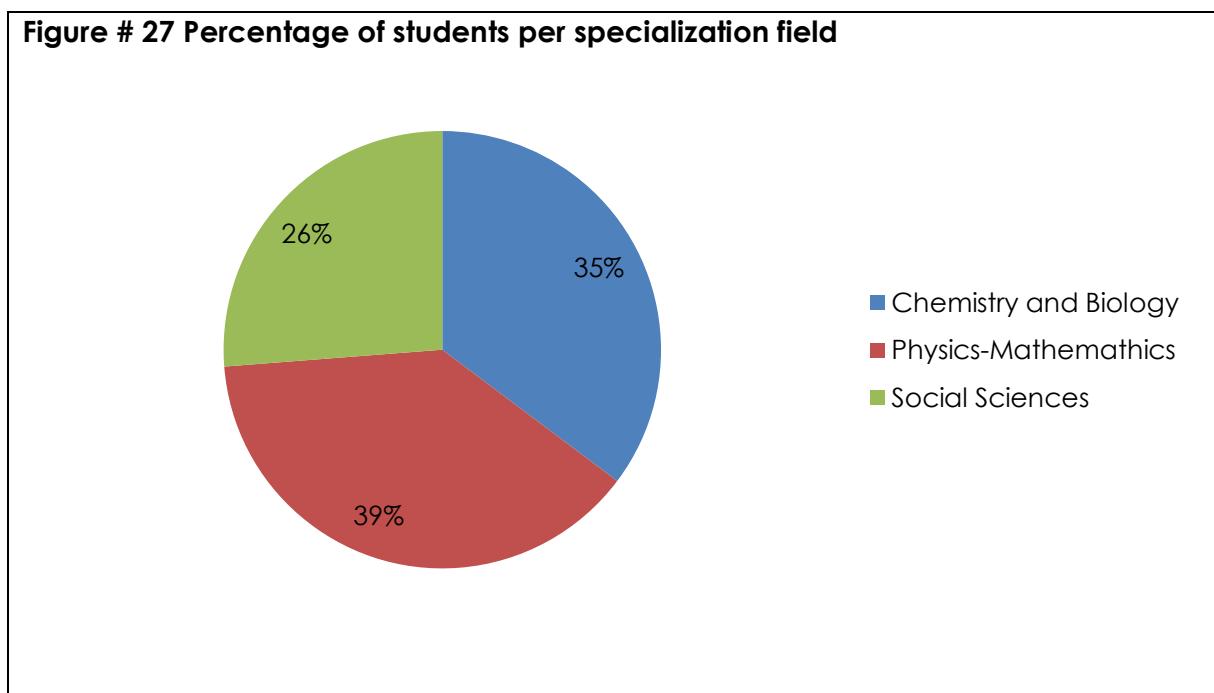
3.3.2 Results of the survey to students

The survey was applied to 122 students from 6th level of La Asunción which is an estimate of 50% of the entire population of that year.

Question 1 ¿What specialization are you studying?

Table # 7 Number and percentage of students per specialization field		
Specialization	Number of students	Percentage
Chemistry and Biology	43	35,25%
Physics-Mathematics	47	38,52%
Social Sciences	32	26,23%
Total	122	100%

Figure # 27 Percentage of students per specialization field



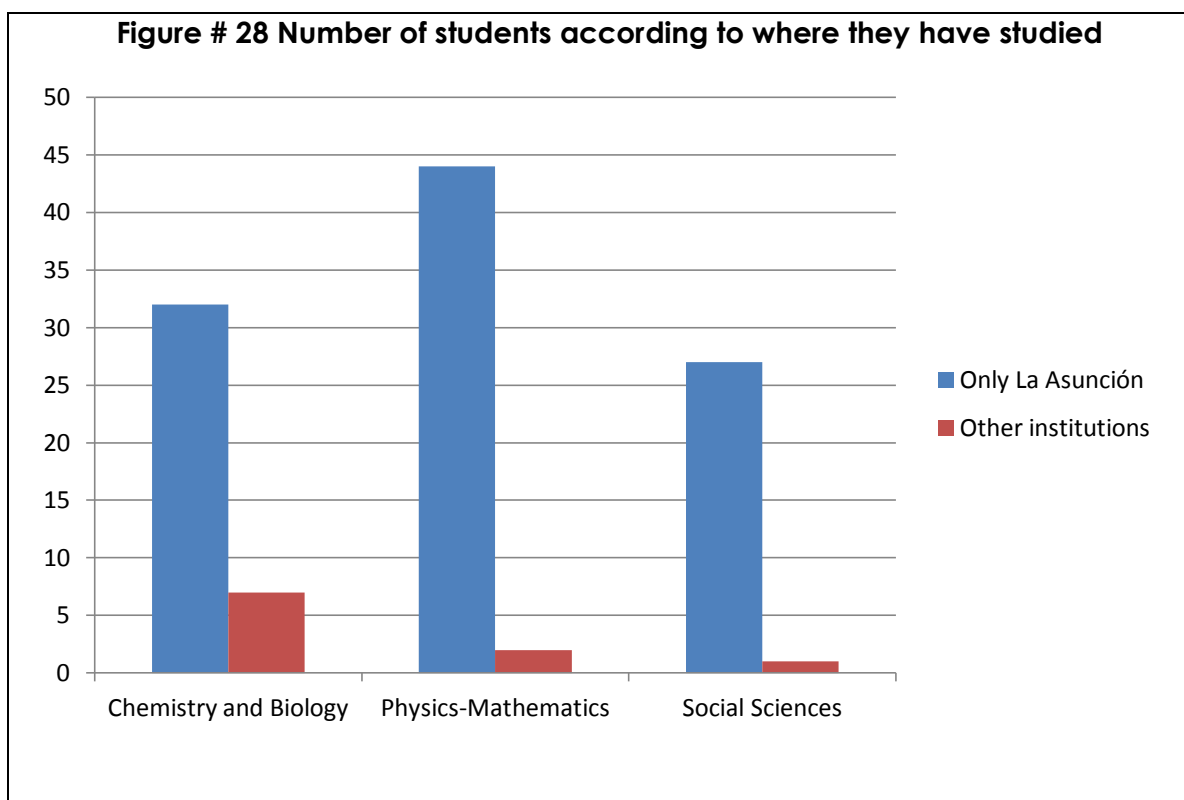
Question 2 ¿Have you only studied high school at *Unidad Educativa Universitaria La Asunción*?

Table # 8 Number and percentage of students according to where they have studied		
Studies	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	103	84,43%
No	10	8,20%
Do not answer – Do not know	9	7,38%
Total	122	100%

It is also necessary to analyze the number of students according to the specialization field. The results “do not answer” and “do not know” are not considered in this analysis.

Specialization field	Only La Asunción	Other institutions
Chemistry and Biology	32	7
Physics-Mathematics	44	2
Social Sciences	27	1
Total	103	10

Specialization field	Only La Asunción	Other institutions
Chemistry and Biology	26,23%	5,74%
Physics-Mathematics	36,07%	1,64%
Social Sciences	22,13%	0,82%
Total	84,43%	8,20%



These tables and the chart show that a high percent of students has only studied at La Asunción.

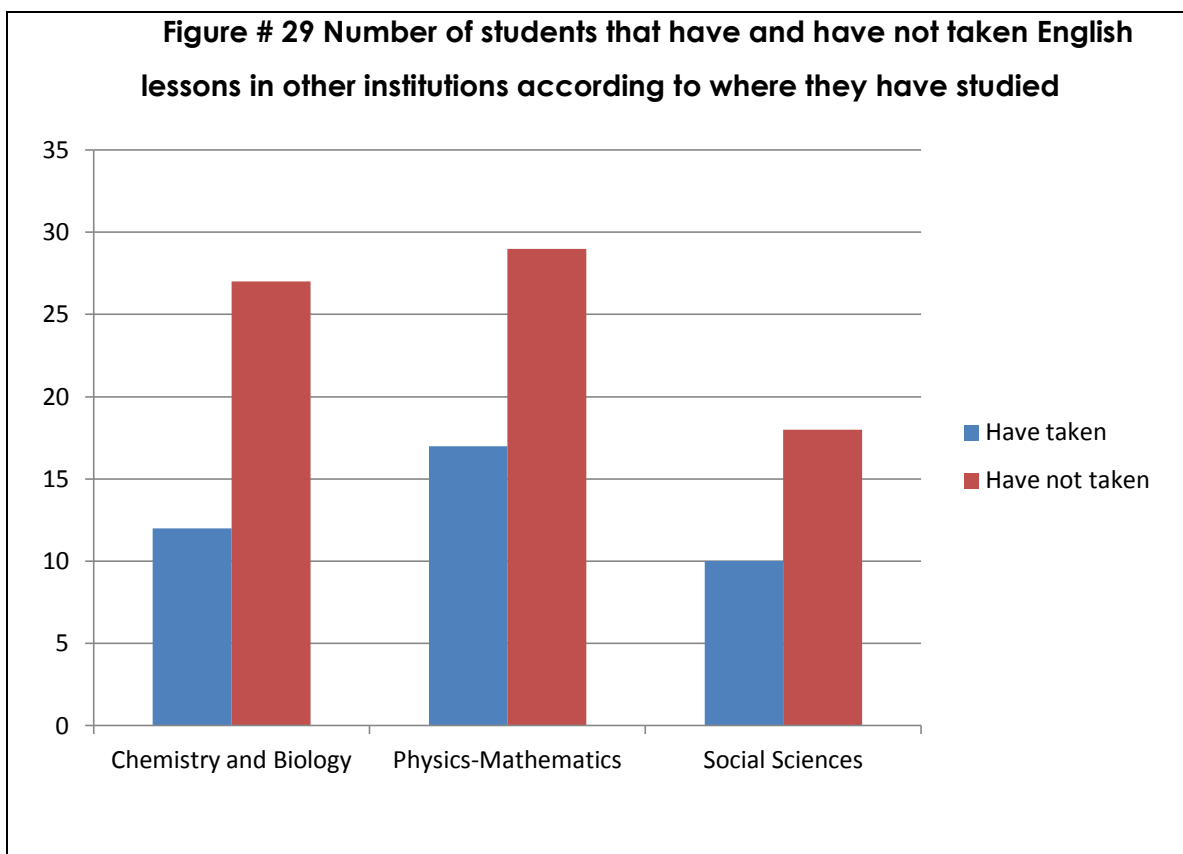
Question 3 ¿Have you ever taken English complementary classes in some institutes, academies, or language schools besides the classes in your high school?

Table # 11 Number and percentage of students who have taken complementary English classes		
English complementary classes	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	39	31,97%
No	74	60,66%
Do not answer – Do not know	9	7,38%
Total	122	100%

It is also necessary to analyze the number of students who have taken complementary classes according to the specialization field.

Table # 12 Number of students that have and have not taken English lessons in other institutions according to where they have studied				
Specialization area	Have taken	Have not taken	Do not answer	Total
Chemistry and Biology	12	27	4	43
Physics-Mathematics	17	29	1	47
Social Sciences	10	18	4	32
Total	39	74	9	122

Table # 13 Percentage of students that have and have not taken English lessons in other institutions				
Specialization area	Have taken	Have not taken	Do not answer	Total
Chemistry and Biology	9,84%	22,13%	3,28%	35,25%
Physics-Mathematics	13,93%	23,77%	0,82%	38,52%
Social Sciences	8,20%	14,75%	3,28%	26,23%
Total	31,97%	60,66%	7,38%	100,00%



These tables and the chart show that a considerable percent of students have taken complementary English classes. It can also be observed that there is no relationship between the specialization field and the percentage of students with these classes.

3.3.3 Results of the exam applied to students

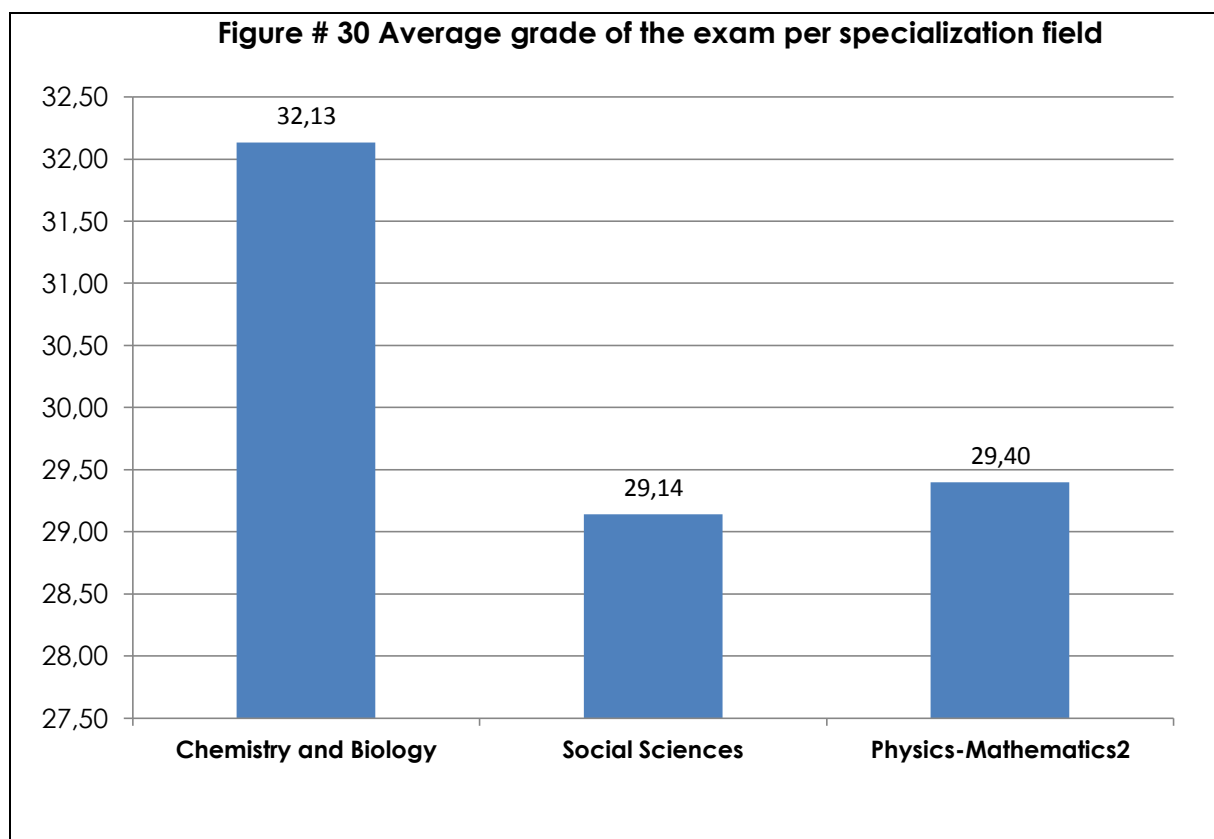
The exam applied to *La Asunción* students was taken from the book *Usptream*, Level Elementary A1, Exit Test 1-5 whose contents correspond to the 1st level of English taught at the University of Azuay.

This exam is divided in 4 categories and is evaluated over 60 points which are divided in 25 for Vocabulary, 21 for grammar, 10 for reading, and 4 for listening.

The grade evaluated over 60 points had to be converted in a score over 50 points because this is the maximum grade assigned by the *Universidad del Azuay*. The minimum score to approve the 1st level at *Universidad del Azuay* is 30/50.

The next tables and charts have been calculated to analyze the performance of *La Asunción* students.

Table # 14 Average grade of the exam	
Specialization field	Average /50
Chemistry and Biology	32,13
Physics-Mathematics	29,40
Social Sciences	29,14
Class average	30,29

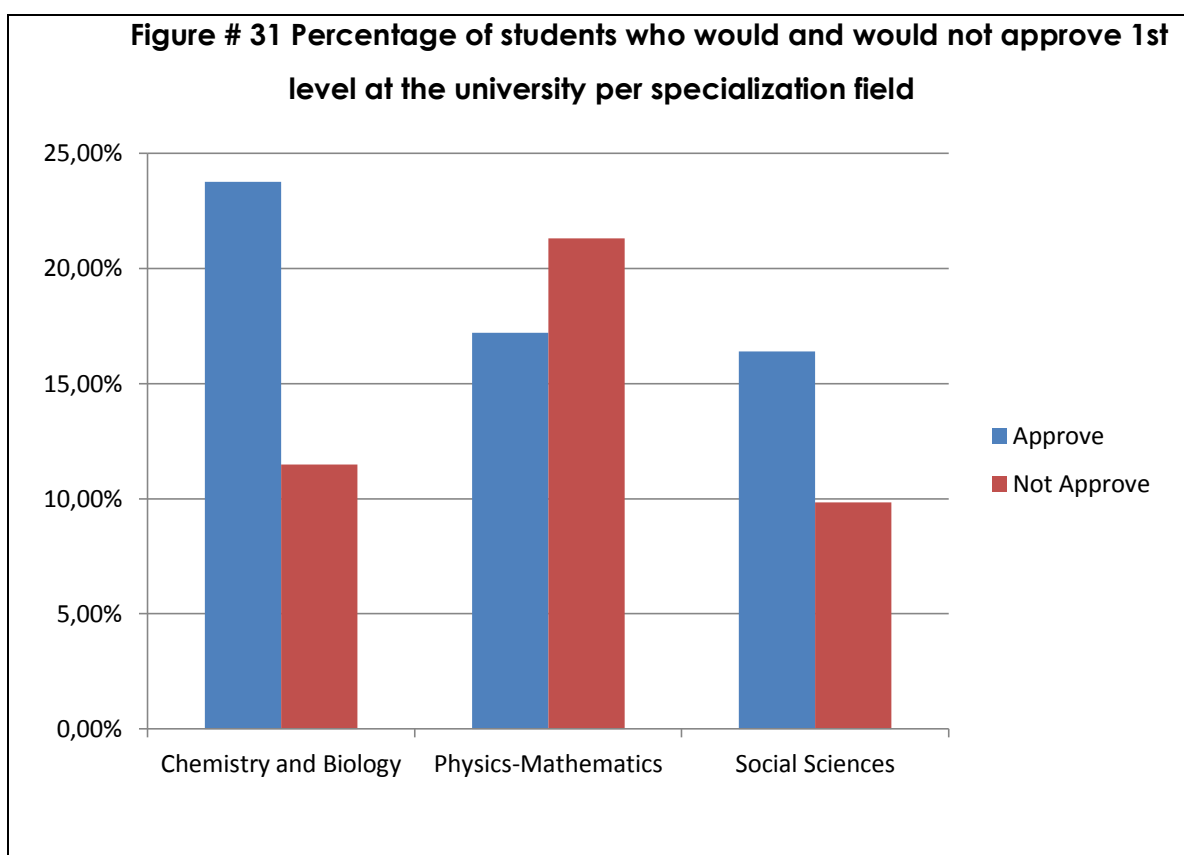


The variation between the fields is similar, but only the students of Chemistry and Biology would approve the 1st level at *Universidad del Azuay*.

The number of students who would and would not approve the 1st level at the *Universidad del Azuay* has been analyzed to evaluate their performance more clearly.

Table # 15 Number of students who would and would not approve 1st level at the university per specialization field			
Specialization field	Approve	Not Approve	Total
Chemistry and Biology	29	14	43
Physics-Mathematics	21	26	47
Social Sciences	20	12	32
Total	70	52	122

Table # 16 Percentage of students who would and would not approve 1st level at the university per specialization field			
Specialization field	Approve	Not Approve	Total
Chemistry and Biology	23,77%	11,48%	35,25%
Physics-Mathematics	17,21%	21,31%	38,52%
Social Sciences	16,39%	9,84%	26,23%
Total	57,38%	42,62%	100,00%



The analyzed data show that there is not relationship between the number of students who could approve with the specialization field.

The next analysis takes into consideration the number of students who have approved the English exam according to the institution where they have studied high school to analyze if there is or is not a relationship between them.

Specialization field	Only La Asunción	Other institutions	Do not answer	Total
Chemistry and Biology	22	6	1	29
Physics-Mathematics	19	2	0	21
Social Sciences	17	1	2	20
Total	58	9	3	70

Specialization field	Only La Asunción	Other institutions	Do not answer	Total
Chemistry and Biology	31,43%	8,57%	1,43%	41,43%
Physics-Mathematics	27,14%	2,86%	0,00%	30,00%
Social Sciences	24,29%	1,43%	2,86%	28,57%
Total	82,86%	12,86%	4,29%	100,00%

These data show that there is not a strong connection between the residency of students in La Asunción and their performance in English; the average gotten is less than 13% which is not significant.

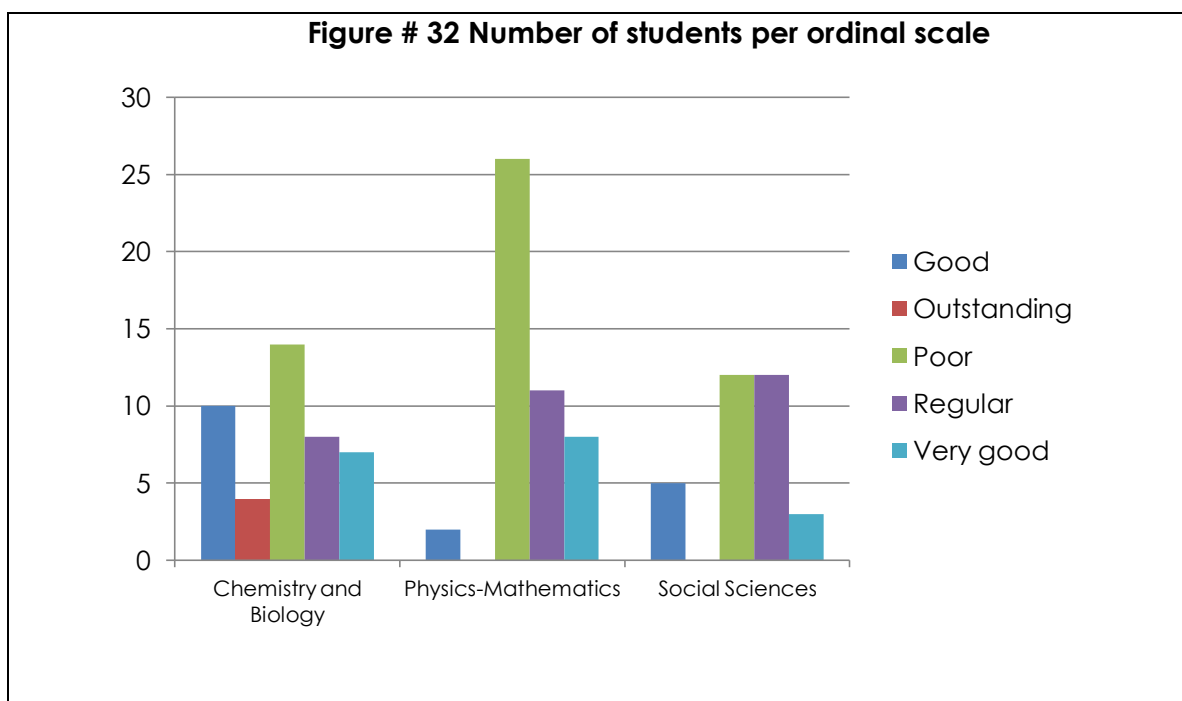
The grade obtained in the exam was measured into an ordinal scale given by the University with the purpose of analyzing the performance of students.

Range of grades	Equivalence
>= 45	Outstanding
>= 40 and < 45	Very good
>= 35 and < 40	Good
>= 30 and < 35	Regular
< 30	Poor

The results obtained are described in the next table:

Specialization field	Outstanding	Very good	Good	Regular	Poor	Total
Chemistry and Biology	4	7	10	8	14	43
Physics-Mathematics		8	2	11	26	47
Social Sciences		3	5	12	12	32
Total	4	18	17	31	52	122

Specialization field	Outstanding	Very good	Good	Regular	Poor	Total
Chemistry and Biology	3,28%	5,74%	8,20%	6,56%	11,48%	35,25%
Physics-Mathematics	0,00%	6,56%	1,64%	9,02%	21,31%	38,52%
Social Sciences	0,00%	2,46%	4,10%	9,84%	9,84%	26,23%
Total	3,28%	14,75%	13,93%	25,41%	42,62%	100,00%



This chart shows that the performance of students is very low. There are only 22 students whose grades are over 40 points, which gives a percentage of 17,21% compared with the 42,62% of poor grades.

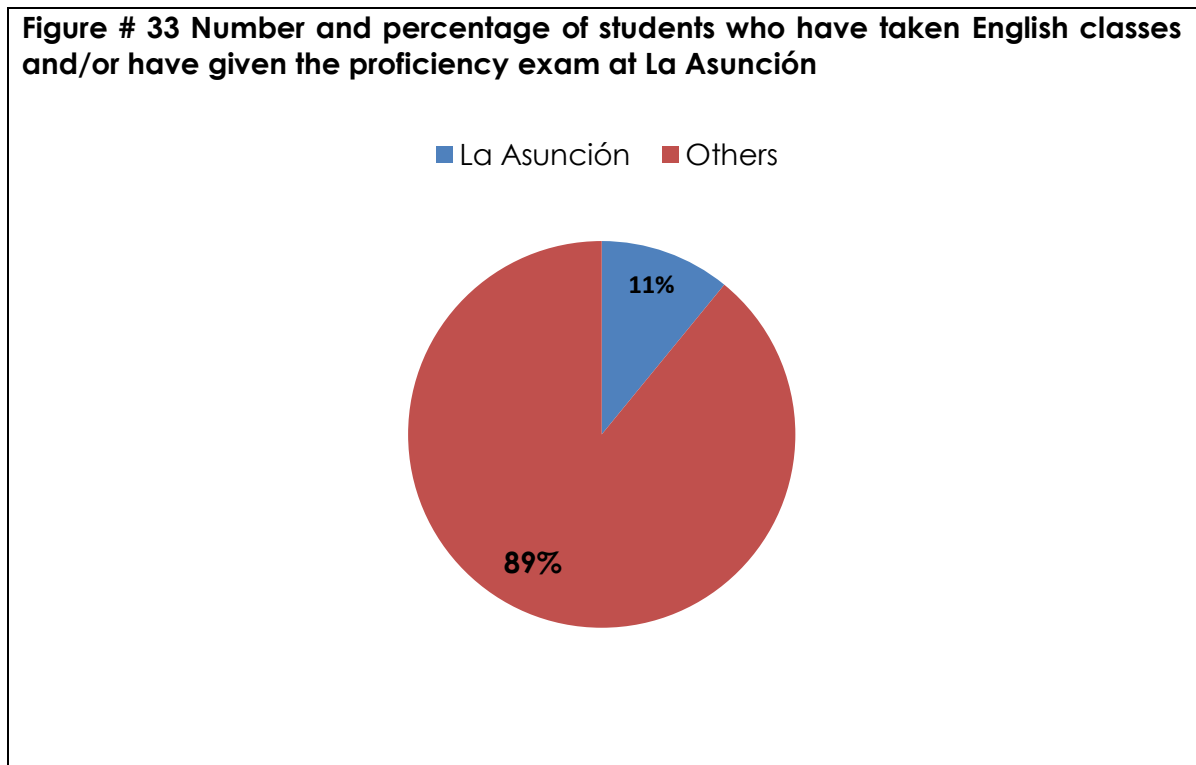
3.3.4 Results of the database from *Universidad del Azuay*

The entire collected data from the last 5 years (2005-2009) was analyzed with the aim of obtaining information about the performance of *La Asunción* students; the information was recorded when students have taken regular English classes and/or when they gave the proficiency exam.

A total of 4470 records of students have been analyzed, only 488 of them are from students who graduated at *La Asunción*.

Table # 21 Number and percentage of students who have taken English classes and/or have given the proficiency exam at <i>La Asunción</i>		
Graduation place	Number	Percentage
La Asunción	488	10,92%
Others	3982	89,08%
Total	4470	100,00%

Figure # 33 Number and percentage of students who have taken English classes and/or have given the proficiency exam at *La Asunción*

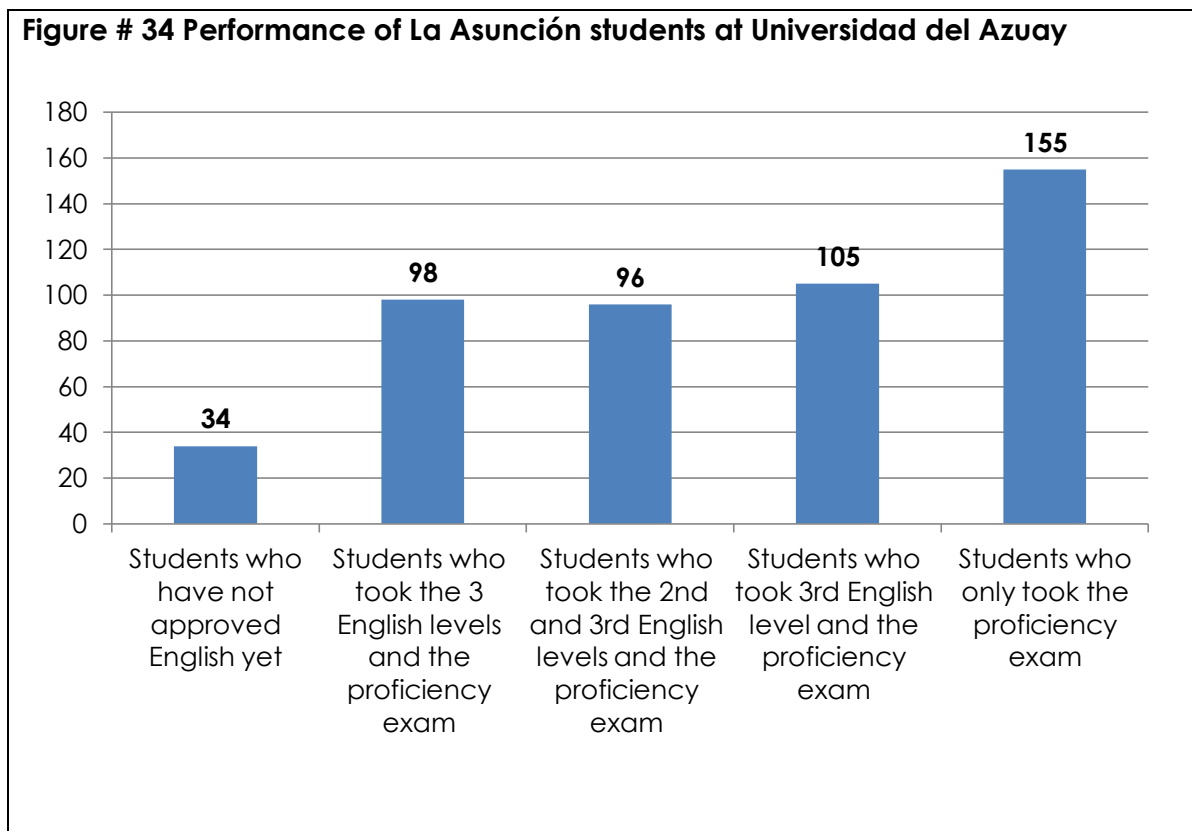


The next step was to establish if each student took English classes at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level, if they took the proficiency exam, or if they did both of these steps. It is important to mention that students of Tourism and International Relations are not in

this list because English has a different treatment in these careers. Their program does not include 3 levels that are common to the rest of careers of the university.

The table below presents this analysis.

Performance of students	Number	Percentage
Students who have not approved English yet	34	6,97%
Students who took the 3 English levels and the proficiency exam	98	20,08%
Students who took the 2nd and 3rd English levels and the proficiency exam	96	19,67%
Students who took 3rd English level and the proficiency exam	105	21,52%
Students who only took the proficiency exam	155	31,76%



If we consider the total amount of students who have taken classes at the university, there is a total of 299 students, with a percentage of 61,27% which can be interpreted as a high number of students who are not ready to approve directly this university requirement.

The same range of grades was applied to the proficiency grade in this database and the results gotten show one more time the poor performance of *La Asunción* students with the highest percentages in the Regular and Good category.

Table # 23 Performance of <i>La Asunción</i> students at <i>Universidad del Azuay</i> per range of grades		
Range of grades	Number	Percentage
Outstanding	53	11,67%
Very good	110	24,23%
Good	122	26,87%
Regular	169	37,22%
Total	454	100,00%

It is important to state that only 11,67% of students are capable of obtaining an “outstanding” performance compared with the highest percentage of 37,22% who registered a “regular” score. This percentage (37,22%) represents more than three times the amount of students with regular performance contrasted with the outstanding one, and can be considered as the most common grade registered by *La Asunción* students at the university.

These tables and charts can be used to demonstrate that a significant number of students of *La Asunción* have to take English classes at *Universidad del Azuay* to comply with the established requirement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- The CEF is a practical guide to measure the level of English a student has and it can also be used to check the target set by the institution. This guide measures the 4 basic skills: listening, writing, speaking, and reading and places the level according to 3 categories: basic, independent and competent. La Asunción and Universidad del Azuay have chosen books based on this framework; this fact can be used to prove that students should have at least the basic level according to the specifications given by these books.
- The survey applied to the senior year teachers of La Asunción proves the lack of preparation in Master Programs because none of them has obtained a Degree in the English field. It can be also observed that their sense of belonging to the institution is related to their time of teaching experience there. There are only 3 teachers at the senior year with an experience of more than 4 years, 2 teachers with 2 years, and the last 2 teachers with less than a year.
- The survey applied to La Asunción students' shows that a high number of them takes complementary classes in other places. This can be used to indicate that only 68% of students have learned English only at La Asunción, the other 32% has received additional preparation.
- The exam applied to students of La Asunción was taken from the book Upstream and it measures the knowledge of a category A2. After analyzing the results, a clear idea of their global performance can be obtained where only a 3% has acquired an outstanding performance, and 15% demonstrated a very good one. And yet at the end, more than 40% of students are not ready to approve the 1st level at Universidad del Azuay.
- It was hard to prove the objectives and aim of language teaching and learning at La Asunción because they have not kept a printed or digital

record or their planning; they do not have any document which could be used to set a goal to be achieved in a period of time and the results obtained in the process.

- The database of Universidad del Azuay was also analyzed in order to measure the performance of La Asunción students. This database only contains the information of students who have approved the English requirement of 3 levels at the university and it can be used to show that only 35% of students have a very good performance. To conclude, the students' performance with the highest percentage is "Regular" demonstrating one more time that La Asunción students have not reached the A2 level which corresponds to the first level taught at Universidad del Azuay.
- According to *La Asunción* High School, their English program should reach B1 level when students finish the senior year. This is not real because 42,62% of them could not achieve the minimum grade to approve A1 level, which is the first one taught at *Universidad del Azuay*.
- After having analyzed the database of the university, only 31,76% of students who graduated at La Asunción, were capable of approving the proficiency exam without the necessity of taking English classes at the university. The proficiency level at the University is B1 which means that a graduate student at La Asunción should be capable of complying with this requirement.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that the planning of the English classes would be done according to the regulations and indications given by the CEF since the books chosen by *La Asunción* have been designed under these guidelines. Even though, the CEF framework of reference also allows planning base on competences, I consider more practical to use the planning proposed by the chosen material and adjust this to the necessities of La Asunción.
- The academic preparation and experience of teachers at La Asunción should be taken into consideration at the moment of assigning classes to

teachers. More experienced teachers should be in charge of more advanced levels.

- *La Asunción* should design a permanent program to train teachers in the educational field. This program should include proficiency tests to teachers in order to evaluate their knowledge and apply instruments to evaluate methodology and performance.
- The number of hours per week and the time of each session should be increased, because having only 45 minutes is too short considering that a teacher spends time getting ready to start the class (taking attendance, organizing students, etc.)
- It is necessary to keep a digital or printed record of plannings done each year because this can be used to analyze the proposed contents, the responsible teacher, the proposed activities, the obtained results, etc. and do the next year planning taking into consideration the previous experiences.

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