

Màster en l'Ensenyament de la Llengua Anglesa en Contextos Multilingües  
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# ICTs IN DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The educational centre where my teaching practice has taken place is called CEEDCV (Centre Específic d'Educació a distància de la Comunitat Valenciana) which stands for an Online Educative Centre for non-university adult students.

The online conception stands for an Open Educative system which is focused on the addressers and pretends to develop an inclusive focus into the diversity of students who vary depending on the social, cultural or economical necessities, interests of learning, abilities and difficulties of learning, styles, rhythms of learning, among many others.

The main point of the online learning assures that the success of this type of learning is based on the constant contact among teacher-tutor and student and the curricular content adapted to the necessities established for the online education, based on the self-learning. This concept of the self-learning refers to the way students learn which is a skill that students must develop during the course when studying online in order to be constant and fruitful during their learning practice.

This centre depends on the Valencian Educative Government, and the Conselleria de Cultura, Educació i Esport and it is placed in the capital of València, specifically in the outskirts of the city but it is well communicated by public transport and the towns around València by road. There are two main buildings, one is placed within the educative centre Misericordia where you can find other educative centres, such as high schools or UNED (the Spanish online university), and the other building is placed next to the former building but it is a

high school placed alone. There are two associated high schools where high school diploma teachings (Batxillerat) are taught, they are placed in Alacant and Castelló de la Plana, and the centres are IES Francisco Figueras Pacheco and IES Francisco Ribalta properly.

This educative centre also has entities connected to social organisations and which offer integrative projects and community development that helps the educative reintegration of specific groups of adults with special needs.

As it is the only centre with this specific educative program (online program) it has students coming from different parts of the Valencian Country so we are going to find a great variety of students with particular characteristics. Normally students attending the centre must be over 18 years old, except particular cases with students about 16-18 who attend special necessities such as work or elite sportswomen/sportsmen, among others. When we talk about adults they are normally studying in this centre due to the fact that they abandoned their studies when they were young, or they have started an educative program once working to improve their job opportunities or in order to find a job.

Regarding the online educative offer of this centre, it is based on the following programs: Compulsory Secondary Education (two courses of basic education); high school diploma with four possible options (Batxillerat); professional training including, Business and Marketing; official language teaching, as Spanish as a foreign language, Valencian language for foreigners, official Valencian exam preparation classes, English for obtaining EOI titles, English for teachers; and finally other special teaching systems that require it, as Music courses and sociocultural and computer courses. Other programmes offer preparation for obtaining the Secondary Education title for adults over 18, high school diploma

for adults over 23 years old and titles for professional training. Other courses include the preparation for the exam to access university grades, and professional training, including intermediate and superior levels.

Talking about the attention to students in an online course, the students have a book that serves as a guide but they can also find all the book uploaded in the Moodle courses where all the contents students are going to deal with in the course are available. So, having a physical book is an option as any sheet teachers give in collective tutorials will be later uploaded in Moodle.

Classes are organised in three different options: individual tutorials, collective tutorials and online individual online tutorials. Collective tutorials are given in four different days, offering two classes in the morning and two classes in the evenings to satisfy the students' needs. In these tutorials, teachers are going to explain the main points of the session established for the week and the practical contents related with the class. Moreover, it is also useful for students who can attend classes, to ask possible questions and doubts about the content they have already studied at home. Individual tutorials are focused on attending the individual student's needs, the possible learning difficulties, and the most basic problems students can have when applying for a professional training in general or in particular cases. Online individual tutorials are based on the same requirements as the individual tutorials but they can be offered via Skype, phone, e-mail or Moodle tasks and doubts.

Talking about the professors and teachers who are in the centre, I must first explain that permanent teachers are teachers who won their own vacancies many years ago, but they are specialised on the online teaching and with ITC ways of learning. Regarding the youngest professors found in the centre, they are

teachers with a recent obtained vacancy but they have had to gain an internal exam and a personal interview done by people from the centre, and who are in a kind of job list. Even though teachers have won a state exam, they must have a specific kind of requirements to be teachers there, such as being commissioned. The professors of the centre are around 80 people, 19 of whom are teachers and 58 of whom are professors of Secondary Education, who are experienced in teaching adults and in online teaching. These professors are capable of working in groups and collaboratively to promote an integrative process in order to adapt the ways, the methodologies and the strategies of learning to the contents of the course. Some teachers from the centre CEEDCV attend Picassent's penitentiary Centre in the following areas: linguistic, scientific and social's fields.

Regarding the materials in the centre Misericordia are based on five common classrooms, and four classrooms devoted to music, drawing, computer, technology and a specific one devoted to professional training. There is also a classroom devoted to audio-visual communication with a TV, a computer and a projector; there are Labs for Physics and Natural Sciences; there are also departments exclusively for each field: Natural Sciences, Geography and History, Philosophy, Valencian and Spanish languages, Foreign languages, Latin and Greek, Maths, Professional training and an orientation department. We can also find a Secretary, and a caretaker, the file's room, a staff's room, departments for the directives of the high school, the library and two store rooms.

In the other centre, Berenguer Ferrer, we can find a two-storey building containing five classrooms, and two classes devoted to music and audio-visual communication. Moreover, there are departments for each field taught in the centre such as Social Sciences; three of them devoted to Communication

(Valencian, Foreign languages and Spanish language); two of them for the Scientific and technologic field; a secretary and a big classroom devoted to meetings and events. Each professor has his/her own computer with one or even two screens, a table and a comfortable chair and a phone; the classrooms are equipped with a music system, a projector, and a computer as well as photocopiers.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The students I am going to focus on my teaching proposal are going to be those students who are preparing the access exam to study a superior professional training course, as they present some of the most controversial class variety and need to develop a high level of proficiency to pass the exam. These students come from different backgrounds and have different ages compressed between 17 to 55 years old approximately. Some of these students dropped school when they were young and they started working with no opportunity to study until some point in their lives; other students are students who did not like to study the regular school diploma in the high school and dropped school but then they realised they wanted to study a superior professional training course; other type of students are students who are unemployed and decide to study to have a professional training and open to new job opportunities; other students are studying while they are working in order to promote in their jobs, or because the companies for who they work ask them to have qualified studies; other students are women who are pregnant and take advance of the time they are not working to prepare the access exam; other students are immigrants who cannot bring their career diploma to Spain and start studying a professional training

course related to the career they have studied in their countries, and there are other students with different situations. Among the students we can observe that their level of English varies a lot as there are students who have never studied English before and they start learning from zero, and there are students who come from studying a career and the level of English they have is medium high, and in the middle, there are a great range of levels of English. Due to the experience I have had during this course, I am going to focus on these students as we as teachers face a great deal in their future careers and necessities to access to professional training courses.

The objectives I would like to reach with my teaching proposal are mainly to teach students the amount of grammar required via the information and communication technologies in order to pass the access exam, as well as make them feel motivated to keep them interested in the learning of English in a future to promote their professional training studies. The amount of grammar I am going to make them learn is going to be accompanied with reading comprehension and writing expression due to the fact that they are the main objectives in the exam devoted to pass the access exam. As long as students prepare themselves via an online course I am going to design a unit in which I will try to maintain student's motivation and I will try to raise students' confidence to be able to follow the course via online. Moreover, I will give them material and visual aid to improve their affective factors towards the English language and to develop linguistic attitudes favourable to the learning of a foreign language in an online course.

The online course devoted to the students in the CEED educative centre is based on a distance learning environment and students can learn the contents in the course via Moodle, or other students can attend Collective Tutorials where the



main contents will be clarified and the practical contents will be put into practice or in Individual and Online Tutorials. The number of students who attend the Virtual classes is about 500 people, even though not all of them finish the course and they drop because of several reasons. The number of students who attend the classes during the course are about 50 people and they vary depending on their necessities and the time of the year, as students start the course highly motivated but as the course is developing, they start to drop classes and tend to miss the rhythm of the class. Normally, at the end of the course, students start attending the course again to feel more secure about their knowledge of English to do the final exam.

## **2.1 EVOLUTION OF SLA TEACHING THROUGH HISTORY**

Taking into account the evolution of theories of second language acquisition during the last years, there has been a shift of paradigm related to the way languages are learned given by the theories Krashen (1982) developed. His model involved five different hypothesis which differentiated between learning and acquisition, which stand for the unconscious and conscious way knowing a second language. His main point was that acquisition could never be learned as the acquired system is similar to the way children acquire their first language. Another of the hypotheses he considers included that we learn a language in a natural order so we learn some structures before others given the fact that we are going to find them lately in our speaking conditions. The Monitor hypothesis Krashen (1982) introduces is based on the fact that the acquired system is the initiator of speech and the learned system is in charge to continue or monitor the output presented to the acquired system, even though it needs three conditions to be used: time to think about the rules they know; focus on form which is the

attention the speaker pays on how he is saying something and not what they are saying; and the grammatical rule in order to apply the knowledge into words. Regarding some other of his theories, we find the input hypothesis, which explains the evolution we have over the process of speaking. Krashen defends that speakers develop the learning of a language by receiving comprehensible input which is input slightly ahead of the learner's grammatical knowledge and is represented by the  $i+1$ . Last of Krashen's hypothesis is the affective filter hypothesis, which has had great importance in the development of second language acquisition given the fact that it takes into account the affective factors when learning a language. His hypotheses include the theory that not all students of a second language acquire language in the same way due to insufficient provision of comprehensible input or because the students have the affective filter low and it allows acquisition to take place. The affective filter needs to be low in order to let input pass and in this way, it allows acquisition to succeed. When we talk about affect, it involves motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, attitude and self-confidence. Following Du (2009), we know that there are other objective factors that prevent acquisition to take place, and these are that the students are unmotivated, they lack confidence or other factors concerned with failure. We can also find individual variation in the way students acquire language depending on the motivation, the desire, the impetus of the acquirers and the attitude towards the way acquirers face L2 learning. Those students with a positive attitude are going to find easier the acquisition of a L2 and in a quicker way and those students with negative attitude will be slower in acquiring it. Attitude also decides commitment and those who give up without ending the process of learning are passive with lower commitment than those learners who are positive and

persistent. And finally, attitude also increases class participation to students with a positive learning attitude, who perform actively and obtain higher marks than those students who do not participate. In relation to anxiety, we can find three types of anxiety regarding the second language class and they are: communication apprehension, which stands for a mental health condition that affects the L2 learners' achievement and are promoted with personal traits such as quietness, shyness and reticence, and they vary from student to student; test anxiety, which is a condition that affects students before they doing a test or after it, and this causes a poor performance or interferes with normal learning. It can be caused by a previous bad experience in a test and this causes the student to block or blank, and it provokes anxiety previously the exam. In other cases, test anxiety can be caused by lack of preparation, poor time management, poor study habits, lack of confidence, fear of failure or negative thought processes. The third type of anxiety is negative evaluation and accompanied with anxiety deals with the fear to be evaluated when the L2 learner cannot offer a proper social impression. L2 learners tend to avoid others' opinions, negative feelings and prevent situations in which students can be evaluated. It has been proved that negative evaluation is one of the strong points of language anxiety. The last type of individual variation is self-confidence, and those students with high self-confidence and a positive image are going to succeed more and they are normally more adventurous, they communicate in foreign language and they gain from every situation presented. Those learners who do not have self-confidence do not participate and lose the opportunities to put into practice what they know and take less advantage of every situation experienced.

Following Du (2006), he proposes several tips to promote students' motivation and are mainly based in the way teachers cultivate the students' interest in the L2. He proposes different methods for teaching, based in a more enjoyable language to engage students and to create a good atmosphere in the classroom for learning, as well as to include cultural and background knowledge of the target language. Moreover, he claims that teachers should promote social activities where students can put into practice their L2 knowledge and in this way, students will increase interest and motivation for the L2 and develop a positive attitude towards the L2 what will help them by increasing the acquisition of the second language. Moreover, teachers should take into account every individual variation of the acquirers of the L2, and cultivate the students' learning process with affective factors and the L2 connection, and allowing the students to adapt to the different rhythms of each learner in order to adapt to the class environment created by the students and the teacher.

Going back to Krashen's Monitor model and his five-hypothesis, they had a great impact in the development of second language acquisition given the importance he gives in some aspects that had never been studied before such as the difference between acquisition and learning and the observation of affect when learning a language. Although Krashen's hypothesis have been criticised, it has given a path to develop other theories that include his theories for learning further how we acquire a second language. One of the critics done towards Krashen's Hypothesis has been done by Zafar (2009), who criticised all the hypothesis by saying that in the Acquisition Learning hypothesis, we need to know the rules of language and we develop a way to know that they are correct in a subconscious way equal to first language acquisition. Moreover, Zafar (2009) takes into account

the fact that the terms are contradictory and need to be more accurate when describing the conscious/unconscious, acquisition/learning, and implicit/explicit learning processes. He also explains that it is not well defined how acquisition and learning are placed in two linguistic systems and why learning can never be acquisition. Zafar defends that acquisition should be understood as a process enriched by the learned system and that instead of being two separate concepts, they should be taken into account to be acknowledged and explained in order to explain themselves in second language acquisition. Regarding the Monitor Hypothesis, Zafar says that when dealing with difficult grammatical rules, the Monitor cannot be used as there are more complex semantic properties. Gregg (1984) and McLaughling (1987) also criticised the fact that acquisition is not utterance initiator, and comprehension has a limited function, and they say that learning is also an utterance system initiator. The Monitor is poorly supported because children can also learn the L2 without even have developed the Monitor yet. In relation to the Natural Order Hypothesis, Zafar defends that the learners of the L2 do not have the same way to achieve the target language proficiency and the influence of the L1 can make easier or difficult the learning of the L2. The system Krashen defines is based on the English system which proved not to be satisfactory and does not take into account the individual variation of the students. Zafar criticism on the Input Hypothesis is based on the fact that in the  $i+1$  there is a lack of information that the student cannot guess, and even they can be learned from books, it does not always mean that it is acquisition. Another thing is that Krashen never specifies what comprehensible input is neither how to measure the level of competence of the student, nor what sufficient amount or right quantities are to be put into practice. In the last of the theories, the Affective

Filter Hypothesis, Zafar criticises the fact that the affective filter does not offer the results when trying to apply to acquisition as children do not have a filter and Krashen does not take into account that learners can be affected by personal variables. He also criticised the fact that how can he explain that adults achieve native-like proficiency with some exceptions in grammatical rules, and defends that the filter is not able to determine which parts of the language can be learned and which cannot. Moreover, he asks himself how can some processes like fossilization and inter-language development be conditioned by the filter and defends that there is a lack of information towards the nature and tools required to define the filter strengths and weaknesses.

Regarding the teaching proposal I am going to present for the learning of a second language, I must highlight the importance of affective factors, specially taking about motivation when learning a second language via an online course given the effort it takes to study in an online course, and given the personal circumstances of the students who prepare themselves to do the exam access to do the superior professional training course. But not only motivation is an important point when learning a second language, beliefs towards the language, personal feelings, thoughts or emotions, are factors that are going to affect the students' ability to learn a second language. As Horwitz (1988) studied, students learn a second language depending on the beliefs they have towards the language, some think it is easy to learn a second language, other students think that learning a second language is easier when they are young. For that reason, Horwitz created the BALLI inventory (Beliefs about language learning inventory) in order to find out the difficulty of language learning, foreign language aptitude, the nature of language learning, the learning and communicative strategies and

the motivations and expectations towards the language. Given the importance of motivation and beliefs towards the language, Altan (2006) assumes that teachers' beliefs are also important for the learning of a foreign language, as well as the teaching methods used and the teaching policies. So as important is to create a good atmosphere in the classroom to make students feel comfortable when learning a second language as to make students believe that there are misconceptions about a particular language and a given way of learning a language. Taking into account beliefs and motivations, it should be taken into account the need of the students' learning practices, as students will not have the same motivation to learn a second language for pleasure, as students study a foreign language to pass an exam. With this, should be noticed that adult students tend to be motivated even they have no knowledge of English as a second language, due to the fact that they study because they really want to do it or because some factors, such as to promote in a job, and not because they have to complete a compulsory course. This is what Dörnyei (2001) differentiated in the motivation and Self-Determination Theory, about intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The former is the motivation to perform something for pleasure and satisfaction and the latter is the motivation which is acquired to achieve and end, in this particular case, to pass the access exam. An important aspect on motivation which is still being investigated is the motivational self-regulation or self-motivation as a field which studies the ways by which learners can have the appropriate skills to motivate themselves to continue learning a language, and which are closely related to affective learning strategies.

The impact motivation has when learning a second language in an online course is trivial because of the great effort students have to do to maintain the interest in

the subject. Despite the fact that professional help is going to be provided to the student, it is the own student who has to create a good environment and has to work hard in order to fulfil the preparation course to do the access exam, so activities devoted in the informatics and communication technologies need to be dynamic and complete in order to keep the students' motivation.

## **2.2 EVOLUTION OF DISANTANCE LEARNING TEACHING**

Observing the learning of languages' evolution during the years, we observe that the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the spread of the Internet has meant a huge step in the learning of a second language, and an evolution in the recent paradigm of online learning or distance learning. In order to focus on it, attention should be paid on the history of online education during the last years. Following Garcia Aretio (1999) online education started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the apparition of the printing press and the postal service which allowed a modality of education via correspondence. Some educative programs wrote a manuscript which was sent via correspondence to students in order for them to study the course, but soon they realised it was a difficult way of studying because they lack the guide to help students and as well as exercises and evaluations. The relationship between the student and the educative centre was basic and, for that reason, the figure of the teacher was thought to be a guide who could give answer to the students' doubts and give students feedback about their works. This fact established the bidirectional relationship student-teacher even though it was not face-to-face. In England, Isaac Pitman created in 1840 a stenography system that allowed an exchange of information with cards to students, and in 1830 the invention of the telegraph and in 1876 with the invention of the telephone, distance



communication started to be used orally. In 1856 the French professor Charles Touissant and the German professor Gustav Lanfertscheidt were the first to give a correspondence foreign lesson and they founded the first high school in the world. The invention of the teleprinter in 1910 allowed the sending of written messages by means of codes and in 1923 the invention of television had a great impact in society and was a worldwide revolution.

With the development of the mass media and the sociological and political changes, education appeared in the press and television as a means to educate population. Important facts occurred during this time such as the widespread growth of educative centres, the importance given to education for people from rural areas who could not attend educative centres, and also the importance of people who lived in war areas or areas where revolution was taking place and they wanted to offer them educative opportunities. One of the most important facts was the importance given to lifelong learning, an idea which is nowadays spread all over the world, and that allows a permanent formation during our lives. As people have to combine their working lives, the personal lives and studies, the conventional educative structure could not fit into this world of constant change. The technological transformations and inventions gave birth to computers and the invention of multimedia devices which allowed the reduction of the distance between teachers and students. In the 60s the *Open University Británica* was created and with it, the distance education with multimedia elements was created. The written text started to be accompanied with audio-visual resources such as the cassettes, videos, video-cassettes or slides as well as the use of the telephone. All these advances gave the opportunity of learning without attending classes thanks to the design and production of didactic resources via information

and communication technologies which were improving every time more, leaving apart the interaction between teacher and student.

The last changes distance education had, were given in the 80s with the evolution of informatics and the information and communication technologies (ICTs) which incorporated educative programs assisted with computers and the creation of virtual campus, which was a technological tool for the telematic education and the most effective for students. At the end of the 60s distance university systems were born in the USA and in the 70s arrived to England and Europe. With the creation of the university extension movements, distance education was created at university levels and students who could not attend university were considered to have a proper education and as time passed, the number of students grew and there were students who studied independently and did the exams in the universities. In 1962 radiophonic baccalaureate started in Spain and in 1968 this was transformed into the Instituto Nacional de Enseñanza a Media Distancia (national educative high school of middle distance), and in 1977 the Asociación Nacional de Centros de Enseñanza a Distancia (ANACED) was born, which is an association of centres that offer distance learning, and they had the aim of offering a high quality educative level though the centres linked to this organisation.

Following González (1996) the information and communication technologies are a group of processes and products that come from new tools of software and hardware, they are the support of the information and the channels of communication, related to the storage, processing and transmission of the digital information. The technological innovation of the ICTs allowed the creation of new communicative and expressive environments that open new doors to new

formative, expressive and educative experiences allowing the creation of new activities. Nowadays, apart from traditional and distance learning, we can find online teaching, which uses telematic networks where teachers and students are connected to guide the learning activities.

Following Ferro, Martínez and Otero (2009), the use of ICTs in education has several advantages in the improvement of the teaching practice, as it can be the connection from remote areas, flexibility of time and space for the development of activities in the teaching practice or the possibility to interact with information involving different people who are doing the activities. The positive reinforcement of the introduction of the ITCs in the educative field has been the breaking of time and space in the teaching and learning process as it is offered in the cyberspace which tends to develop communicative mediatic interactions. The incorporation of ICTs has also improved the communication among the participants of the teaching and learning process as doubts about a particular problem, feedback and corrections of a work can be asked every time they are needed. Moreover, ICTs have improved the communication between students and have created cooperative learning through blog comments, questions and debates, as well as the fact to stay in touch with other institutions and students from other parts of the world.

Among the most important characteristics is the quick access to information as the classroom and the materials are always found in the virtual website which offers, at the same time, other websites to access information and activities that offer feedback when students are doing them. The incorporation of ICTs improves the students' attention and promotes the thinking and the realization of activities, and this allows students interact with the computer, ask the teacher questions,

do activities, watch videos and readings, and all these promotes the student to spend more time devoted to the subject. The work the students do with the computer and the ICTs requires a high level of interdisciplinary work as it is the student who has to create a good study environment and willingness to learn.

A comparative study made in a public University in Mexico done by Hernández, Ibarra, Martínez, Espinosa and Mancera (2016), proved to teach a unit of the subject Electricity and magnetism from the area of physics and mathematical department to different groups of students based on distance learning and site learning. The study was mainly focused on observing the grades of the students and the standard deviation in five different on-site groups and a distance learning group, who learned via Moodle with the help of ICTs, and during three periods. Their findings were that the average rating per group was higher in the distance learning group and they improved better than the other groups even though they needed some time to adapt to the new methodology used to learn and they needed some teacher help, but at the end of the semester the distance learning students proved to be more satisfactory as they spent more time in the virtual platforms, they understood the content clearly, they answered in a quicker way to the virtual tutor who solved their problem within less than 24 hours. This study demonstrates that once students are used to learn via Moodle, the results are much better than those of site learning groups, students tend to be more self-educated and they develop the skills required to learn. Moreover, the use of technological tools facilitates the evaluation of large groups; the obtaining of results scored in real-time; it allows the versatility of teaching-learning scenarios where students and teachers interact in a complementary way; students create new cognitive learning strategies that create 'virtual classrooms'; and there is

more participation in discussion forums, internal messaging, document repository, assignments, quizzes, among other many activities devoted to learning.

Further on in the 80s, we can mention other methods of distance learning devoted to the learning of languages, which were called Computer-Assisted Language Learning. This was a method to teach languages with the help of computers to teach languages with the use of technological devices to help students deal with real conversations and updated exercises. As Levy (1997) describes it, CALL is the “search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning”, it means, to use the computer for teaching purposes in order to provide knowledge and to allow the application of language learning in a more specialized field of study. Computer-Assisted Language learning materials can be used as bottom-up, to include technology to solve a classroom problem or top-down approaches based on a theory of language learning. It was in the 80s when CALL was developed thanks to the evolution of microcomputers, which led to the development of computer specialized programs. CALL was first presented as a stimulus in the form of a text to which the learner has to give a response by typing a response to the text. When microcomputers were affordable to all the people, there were computer programs called BASIC which needed the language developed by Higgins and Johns (1984), Kenning and Kenning (1984), and Davies (1985) and were interactive videodiscs adapted to multimedia personal computers. Nowadays language teachers are free to develop their own conceptualization of CALL in the computer by designing their own activities to learn a language, and this has been given thanks to the launching of the World Wide Web and websites by which teachers explore different resources to teach

languages. The Net has changed the educational field and has developed new ways for teaching and learning, which also require new pedagogies adapted to the necessities of the learning environments. The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the educational field has also changed the paradigm to teachers and students in order to adapt themselves to the 21<sup>st</sup> century technological advances and has also allowed the way in which students access educative degrees, by making studying a flexible activity that can be coursed at the same time a person is working or doing other activity. The incorporation of ICTs has helped the new concept of virtual learning (VL) and distance learning (DL), which is the one I am going to focus on due to the fact that the teaching practice I am proposing is based on this typology.

García Aretio (2004) gives a definition of Distance Learning as “learning being based upon a mediated didactic dialogue between the teacher and the student, who, in turn is placed in a different space and who learns in an independent and collaborative form”. Distance learning has suffered many phases during the last 150 years and many authors such as Garrison (1989), Taylor (1995) among others have studied the field due to the shifts communication has given the Internet or Web-based learning. Distance multimedia teaching was born in the 60s with the creation of Open University in 1969 which incorporated audio and video files to written texts. At the beginning, telephone was used, but during the 80s integrated communications with other educational media came through the use of computers. With the invention of the Internet, Web-based learning which uses interactive multimedia systems and computer-mediated communication was common in the 90s. With the help of his development, Virtual Learning Environments and Virtual Resource Centres were created and were aimed at

supporting and enhancing the teaching of foreign languages through the use of ICTs. Following BECTA (2004) virtual learning environments are computer-based environments that supports the delivery of web-based on-line learning. It offers various learning contexts, from traditional classroom delivery to distance or on-line learning, and the communication between the teacher and the learner are on-line based, via e-mail, Skype or Moodle.

### **2.2.1 BASIS FOR A THEORY FOR DISTANCE LEARNING**

The evolution of distance learning since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the efforts done have offered theoretical explanations for it. Holmberg (1986) claimed the necessity to write about the theory for distance learning in order to know what to expect about it, in what conditions and in order to establish a way to apply the practical methodology. Moore (1994) claimed the necessity to define the field so the components could be established and the elements could be identified and with it, the different ways of learning and learning could be identified. Keegan (1988) said that a basis for a theory for distance learning was needed due to the fact that it could be the first stone for political, educative, social, economic decisions. In 1986 Keegan classified the theories of distance education into three groups: theories of independence and autonomy; theories of industrialization of the teaching practice; and theories of interaction and communication.

Regarding the theory of independent study based in Charles Wedemeyer' work, he defended that the essence of distance education was the independence of the student in the university field or the college, and criticized superior education because he believed they used old models of learning which could not use modern technology because this could modify the instruction. Wedemeyer established a system with ten characteristics which reinforced the idea of

independence and the adoption of new technologies as the means to establish the independence. This system should be able to function everywhere where students could be found, even though there were no teachers in the same place and in the same moment; this system should set free the members of the teachers from other tasks which were not educative tasks; it should offer students and adults a wider range of opportunities of choice, course, and methodologies; it should use all the means and methods of learning which had demonstrated to be effective; it should also combine means and methods which include the best way of learning the unit. This system should also conserve and improve the opportunities of adapt to individual differences and should evaluate all the students' efforts; moreover, it should allow students to study in his own pace. The most successful point in this theory was the development between the teacher and student relationship.

Michael Moore's theory of independent study (1994) was formulated in the 70s and it is a classification for distance learning and designed by the experience of university extension courses and adult education. It examined two variables of the educative programs: the autonomy of the students and the distance between professors and students. He classifies the educative programs as 'autonomous', being determined by the student, or 'not autonomous', being determined by the professor, and defends that there is a vacuum between professor and student that implies a high level of responsibility on the students. The autonomous student needs little help by the professor but adult students normally need the professor's help in order to know the aims of learning, to identify sources of information and to measure the aims of learning.



Börje Holmberg (1985) defended the theory of interaction and communication which he called 'didactic guided conversation'. He observed an explicative value when relating the effectivity of the teaching practice with the impact of feelings for the belonging and cooperation and real exchange of questions, answers and reasoning in the mediated communication. His theory helped the idea that distance education will help the students' motivation, it will promote the pleasure for learning and will make the study relevant for the individual student and its needs, that will allow a relationship of understanding between the institution and the student in order to participate in the activities and creating a simulated communication. This theory is a description of distance education and at the same time a basis for a theory upon which hypothesis are formed and explains a general focus on the learning process and the studies related to the educative practice that allow the learning process.

Malcom Knowles (1990)'s work was based on andragogy, and it is based on the framework designed for adult programs. His main idea is that the adult age is associated to the idea of perceiving themselves as people who redirect themselves. His andragogy suggests many characteristics needed in distance educative systems devoted to adults such as the physical environment of the adult student should allow audio and video; the physiologic environment would promote respect and dignity for the adult; adult students must feel helped and the comments should be addressed towards the content and the ideas and not towards a particular person; the course plans should offer clear instructions of the course, the objectives, the resources and the hours needed to the acquisition of knowledge; it should include the active participation through group work and study teams.

The last theory I will focus on, is the theory of equivalence proposed by Desmond Keegan (1988) that arises by the impact of the new technologies in the distance education field. He suggests an electronical connection between the instructor and the student in different places and to create a virtual classroom. In this environment of virtual education has emerged the theory of distance education, but has created a dilemma in the idea that distance education has proposed the same didactic situations for all the students, no matter the place or when they study. This made Simonson and Schlosser (1995) develop their approach defending that every student could use different didactic strategies, resources or activities, which are proposed individually for each student, and if the course was designed in an effective way and offers equivalent experiences, students will achieve the objectives of the course. His theory based the definition of distance education as formal education based on an institution that allows the interactive telecommunication systems.

The main claim in this approach is the concept of equivalence, which stands for the functions that professors must do in order to equate the traditional and the distance educative methods to create experiences with the same value for the students. Another claim in this theory is the concept of the learning experience, which is everything that promotes the learning process, and that includes what it is seen, heard and done. The aim of the didactic planning is to offer an amount of different learning experiences adapted to the students' needs. The design of the didactic procedures should anticipate and promote a great variety of experiences which are the adequate for every student.

The theoretical framework Desmond Keegan proposed (1986) was based on three questions: if distance education was an educative activity; if it was a

conventional way of education; and if it was possible the distance education or it was a contradiction. His answers were that distance education has characteristics related to private companies, not high schools, and they dominate their educative activities. For him, the theoretical basis for distance education was included in the theory of education, but it could not be found in the oral structures based on groups as he did not recognise the distance education as interpersonal communicative but as a privatization of the institutional learning. Moreover, he considered that virtual systems based in-class distance education were a new field in the distance education. He also defended that education requires intersubjectivity, a shared experience between teacher and student and it should be promoted by enthusiasm, so distance education is a contradiction. For Keegan instruction in the distance is possible, but not education. The incorporation of virtual systems in the distance education is a challenge for the traditional answer to the question, so he defends the separation into two acts: time and space of learning. The successful distance education will include both concepts: the artificial intersubjectivity of the professor and the student in which the leaning of education is given. Regarding time and distance, a distance education system should reconstruct the moment in which the interaction between learning an education is given; and the reintegration of the distance education act is given by two ways: the materials of the learning process are designed to achieve as many characteristics as interpersonal communication is possible, and when the educative act is given in a course by means of correspondence, phone tutorials, online communication, or tutor comments about the works done.

### 2.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning is a modality of an educative subsystem which includes different types of knowledge, among them *gnosilogic* (comprehension and explication of the distance learning and of its pedagogical practices), technological (know how to do, which allows the transformation towards this educative reality, projecting, regulating and controlling the intervention sequences) and axiological (from the aims of formation that allow the 'know to be'). In order to know what Distance Learning is, and following Aretio (1989:91), the theory of distance learning is the scientific construction based on the systematisation of laws, ideas, principles and norms with the aim to describe, explain, comprehend and predict the educative phenomena in the distance learning and the pedagogical regulation of the field. Several studies upon which Distance Learning is based are Peters' work (1971, 1981) that talks about the industrial character of learning and teaching that would include planning, division of work, massive production, standardization and quality control, among others. Following Wedemeyer's theories (1971, 1981) he defended the independent and autonomous work based on the independent way of studying via correspondence towards space and time and also over the control and direction of work. Moore (1977) reinforced Wedemeyer's theory and developed a transactional theory of the education that suggests two variables: dialogue (teacher-student) and structure (of the course). Both are in relation with the autonomy of the learner. Holmberg (1985) studies focused on the interaction and communication among teachers and students which was called *guided didactic conversation*, which

supposed a simulated communication throughout the interaction of the students, the materials and a real communication through written or telephonic interaction.

### **2.2.3 STRUCTURE OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

Talking about distance learning we see that the relationship between student and teacher does not occur in the same space and neither in the same real time. From the students' point of views, it is a flexible way of learning that does not demand the physical presence of the professor and the place where they are learning. This fact has many advantages such as the flexibility when selecting the contents, the time of study, the alternative ways of learning, or the relationship with the students, among others. So, we find a bidirectional didactic dialogue between two people separated from one another and established through means formed by materials already produced and through ways of communication, no matter they are face-to-face or distance learners. The interaction between the one who teaches and the one who learns is the main element of every learning-teaching process.

Normally we can find two types of dialogues in the distance learning which are: the simulated dialogue and the real dialogue. Following Aretio (1999), the former is the organization of the center which is in charge of distance learning as they are a group of people working for the creation of contents, materials and activities devoted to the teaching of students. The interest of the institution is to design the learning of the students in the process, but it has to allow the student to be the main character when talking about time, space, and rhythm of learning. The learning process must foster the flexible learning process of the student and this is given by offering a mediated didactic interaction between student and the educative center. The materials prepared for the students are stored in the

institution that creates the contents and they can be found in the format of writings, audios, videos, computer or in the internet and they are offered to the students who read or study the contents in an autonomous and independent rhythm of learning. The former type of dialogue, real dialogue, is found in face-to-face tutorials as it is a dialogue by which the students ask and are answered in the same moment they are studying. Tutorials can be found in different ways: face-to-face, e-mail, telephone, fax, videoconference or the internet. This real dialogue pretends to produce a guided way of learning.

#### **2.2.4 COMPONENTS OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

Following Aretio (1994), he characterizes among the distance learning components: the student, the teacher, the materials, the communicative ways, the organizational and management structure, and the space and structure of distance education.

Regarding the student, s/he is the addressee of the educative means and the process is structured around the student. It is important to know the psychological development, the style of learning, and motivations, among many other things. Distance educative systems are established to attend adults who learn and are different from teenagers and children; students are normally mature individuals with experiences, knowledge, capabilities, habits, attitudes, and interest in participating in their own learning process, what allow a better way of learning. The methodology used to motivate and teach is different from the traditional one given the fact that are the students who have to do most of the process in an autonomous and independent way. But at the same time, this will foster the students' abilities to learn by themselves and their autonomy to achieve aims in long and short terms. Moreover, independence and self-study in future

acquisitions will be developed, and distance learning will need to be individual and personalized and will also need to be adapted to the necessities, characteristics and personal interests of the students as well as time, space, motivations, and rhythms of learning. Distance learning courses are also offered to pre-university students, disabled students and also to foreign students who are learning a language.

Regarding the teacher, we should take into account that the efficiency and effectiveness of an educative institution depends on the formation, capabilities and attitudes of the teachers. Taking into account that in distance education the teaching is not direct, several methods are used to facilitate a bidirectional communication in which a tutor collaborates. The way of teaching must be focused on motivation and must promote independent and autonomous learning of an adult. Moreover, a technological process should be required towards previous planning and more detailed than in traditional educative centers. The technological process is a referent in previous planning much more detailed than in traditional centers. In distance education, teacher's functions are guided by a group of experts in different fields which should divide the work into: experts in contents, experts in production and didactic materials, teachers responsible of guiding the learning process and tutors. Distance learning offers qualified didactic material related to the transmission of contents of science, techniques, culture, personal orientation, individual help and through the relationship towards classmates, by which is taught the motivation to study, the transference of contents and the application of knowledge.

Regarding the communication through the media, it is the teacher who should govern and regulate the process by means of which the teacher-student actions

should answer the other. The educative aim of the teacher or institution should give the rhythm of the interactive process and the interactivity when teachers are more than one, should be produced in a vertical way and in a horizontal way and should enrich all the group in all directions. In distance learning the student interacts in real and virtual ways with the teachers, the class mates, the materials and the institution. Without communication, education could not be possible given the fact that the sender allows the receiver the message through a channel which will allow the simultaneous message to its emission or it will be pre-recorded. The feedback will complete the communicative process and will offer the beginning of the process again.

One of the most criticized facts of distance learning education is the solitude and the distance between the teacher and the classmates. There is a necessity to interact with other and this is what most of the times is one of the most important points to achieve the learning process. So, the main aim in distance education is to maintain an efficient communicative system in the distance in order to feel the student accompanied during the learning process and to orientate and motivate the students' goals.

Regarding the structure, the organization and the management of distance education we should say that it is required the information section and matriculation of the students, centers to help students external to the central building, and also should have a section for the design and production of materials and distribution of them; a process of communication with the aim to coordinate and guarantee of the medium which allow the bidirectional communication; the coordination of the learning process given the number of



people integrated in the process; and the evaluation in the distance which takes into account the processes and the products.

The centers and unities of help and study are organized depending on the number of students and the economic and administrative functioning, but in the centers students have buildings and equipment such as classrooms, library, laboratories; students could solve administrative problems; they must stay in touch with the tutor in order to be oriented in his/her learning process; they should interact with the class mates and they should solve doubts and share circumstances; and they should take into account the center as a cultural focus in their area.

#### **2.2.5 STUDIES ON ICTs**

Several studies have been proved over students in order to know which are the different possibilities of the use of information and communication technologies when learning a second language. One of these studies is carried on by Kreutz and Rhodin (2016) in a Swedish school who studied the motivation students have when learning a second language in the foreign language classroom. The study is taken over 90 students from an elementary school who have been surveyed with questionnaires and the results are that the majority of students answered positive towards attitude of learning with ICTs and they founded that students thought it was fun learning with computers. Otherwise, students think that it is difficult when writing on computers rather than doing it with pen and paper. Moreover, students think it is better when teachers show pictures or movies during the lessons; they think the use of ICTs is a tool that can help them learning English as a foreign language; and their attitude is favorable when learning a

second language with the help of ICTs, what improved the motivation towards the learning process.

Another study was carried on by Hoang Tri and Thi Nguyen (2014), who did a research on the attitudes teachers and students had towards the use of ICT to study English in universities in Vietnam. The study was made on 149 English major students at Hoa Sen University, from second course of Advanced Business. This study found that students used more ICTs for general purposes than for learning English; students has positive attitudes towards learning a second language by means of ICTs in order to learn listening, speaking, reading, witting skills, grammar and vocabulary; and finally, students thought that ICTs could be more used in the learning and teaching process as it was a little bit limited as teachers prefer using traditional methods than employing ICTs.

These two are two examples of research in ICTs towards learning English as a second language but we can find a great variety of studies made on students and in the era of computer advances and new technologies it is still being investigated the several ways in which ICTs is still affecting the way students learn the second language.

### **3. TECHING PROPOSAL**

Regarding the type of students who attend the course, there is a great variety of ages and levels of English in that course and I am going to try to fulfil all the students' necessities by planning activities for all students in order to do their best to pass the exam.

#### **3.1 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives I would like to reach with my teaching proposal are mainly to teach students the amount of grammar necessary via the information and communication technologies in order to pass the access exam as well as make them feel motivated to keep them interested in the learning of English in a future to promote their professional training studies. The amount of grammar I am going to make them learn is going to be accompanied with reading comprehension and writing expression as they are the main objectives in the exam devoted to pass the access exam. Given the fact that the students prepare themselves in an online course I am going to design a unit in which I will try to maintain student's motivation and I will try to raise students' confidence to be able to follow the course via online. Moreover, I will give them material and visual aid to improve their affective factors towards the English language and to develop linguistic attitudes favourable to the learning of a foreign language in an online course.

#### **3.2 TIME SEQUENCING**

My teaching proposal is going to be based on four sessions devoted to two units, two of the sessions will be planned to finish a unit at the beginning of the course and two other sessions will be dealt almost at the end of the course in order to make sure that the students have achieved the contents needed to pass

the exam. Each session is going to take two hours approximately, and they are normally organised to be two sessions for a book unit where grammar, vocabulary and practical contents are going to be dealt.

### **3.3 MATERIALS**

The book normally contains the grammar explanation, an amount of vocabulary related to a topic and a format of writing which explains what should be written in each paragraph of a text. In the Moodle courses students are provided with online content and more explanations about the grammar dealt in the unit and vocabulary, and also online exercises to practice the contents learned in the unit. The book has been done by the professors teaching the subject during many years and know very well the structure of the exam. In the Collective Tutorials, students are given the main information about grammar and vocabulary and they ask questions if they have some, due to the fact that students should have read and studied the lesson previously they come to class, and then, we do some practical exercises about the grammatical content and the vocabulary in order to see if they found any other question and they have learned the content properly. In the second part of the session students are given a past exam for the access exam to the superior training course, they read it and do it for themselves and then, we correct the exam all together. Those students who have time enough to do the writing, they do it and deliver it to the teacher to correct it and for further recommendations, and those students who have not had time enough take the exam with them and write it at home and they can deliver it in paper or via email.

### 3.4 METHODOLOGY

I am going to describe the four sessions of my teaching practice in the next lines and I will describe the activities in detail.

The first two sessions are going to be taught at the beginning of the course and they are going to be Unit 1, although there is a preparation unit at the beginning of the course just to deal with the most basic content such as vocabulary, numbers, colours, days of the week, month and other basic material. Unit 1 deals with the grammatical content that includes the verbal tense present simple and the vocabulary related to daily activities and routines, and landscape and cities vocabulary. In order to start the session, students are going to be faced with the grammatical content and they are going to be explained how to use the Present Simple verbal tense of several verbs, such as the main ones: to be, to have / to have got, there is/are, and other common verbs such as: to live, to find, to see, to observe, to try, and some others. The most important points to explain to students are the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular 's' and the auxiliary verbs, which is a difficulty in grammar at first for students who start from zero knowledge of English. The verbal tense is going to be explained in affirmative, negative and question structures so that students can formulate them in the writing if they want to.

Once the verbal tense is explained students are going to find exercises in the Moodle course related to the content they have just seen and they are going to practise doing different types of exercises as filling the gaps, matching the person and verbal tense and creating the own sentence in affirmative, negative and question verbal tenses. These exercises will be done in the classroom while projected in the whiteboard to prove that students understand the content. If there is any problem, students will do questions and we will solve their doubts. In order

to explain this content and do the exercises we are going to use one hour of the session and the following hour I am going to give students an access exam for the superior training course and we are going to read it all together to see how it is. This text is called *The World's Movie capital is not Hollywood but Bollywood*, and deals with the description of the film industry and makes a description of a typical Bollywood movie. This reading is going to shock students as it contains difficult vocabulary, but I have chosen this text because of the writing part which is the hardest to achieve. After we have read the text, they are going to ask questions about the vocabulary they do not understand and I will try to clarify it so that students make themselves a general idea of what a text can be about. Then, I am going to focus on the writing part which has two different options for the writing, one deals with 'write about a movie you like' and the other writing is about 'What do you do in your free time?'. As the last writing is related to the simple present tense and it may contain easy vocabulary I am going to motivate them to write about the second topic. After that, I am going to give them the structure of a text and I am going to write an example of what they are asked to write in order for them to make an idea of what they should write in each paragraph. Moreover, I am going to give them a few linking devices to start writing and sequencing the verbal tense, as well as structures related to talk about descriptions of what they do in their free time. Once they are given this information, I am going to ask them to start writing the topic selected and answer some questions about the doubts they find, but I will make them finish the writing at home making them read the vocabulary section at home dealing with free time, routines and daily activities.

In the following session devoted to Unit 1 I will start by reviewing the verbal tense Present Simple and then I will deal with the vocabulary they have previously seen at home, and I will show them images so that they can tell me the name of the activities. Once we have seen the contents related to the unit I will ask them for questions about the unit and I will answer them. Then, I will give them a previous access exam text called 'London' and we will read it together clarifying the meaning of some words and we will do the complete exam. The first exercise are two questions based on the content of the text, so I will make them do the questions for themselves and underline the information of the text where they think the information is found. Then we will continue by doing the following exercise which is a multiple-choice activity and a True or False exercise. Once we finish, I will make them a fill in the gaps exercise related to the present simple tense and routines vocabulary. In order to finish the session, I will ask students to do the writing at home which deals with the description of their hometown and I will tell them to follow the text information in each paragraph to do it. In the Moodle classroom I will upload an example of the writing with questions related to the information they can include in each paragraph to give them ideas about what to write in each paragraph and vocabulary related with things they can find in a town to start developing the vocabulary section.

By making students work at home and searching his own vocabulary I am trying to foster them to work on their own and looking for vocabulary and grammar in order to be able to do the writings. At the beginning of the course we should tell students that this is an online course and the contents should be learned before they arrive to collective tutorials or individual tutorials as they are devoted to the clarifying of contents, or in case it is a difficult content to be explained, they would

be explained in detail, but as a punctual fact. With this, I do not mean that students cannot be explained the contents, but as each one has a different rhythm of learning, students should study in their own and ask questions related to their own problems.

Students can have their own book, but the material in the book is the same as students are provided in the Moodle course, where they are going to find grammar explanations, vocabulary, writing tips, linking devices and other material which is given in the classroom. They are also provided with the answers to the access exams they do from previous years. Moreover, there are many links provided to different ways of grammar explanation via YouTube or other specialised grammar websites, in order to help students understand the contents in each unit, as well as a website where students can listen to a sentence with vocabulary and grammar related to the unit which is also translated for better comprehension.

In the two other sessions devoted to these students I am going to focus on the last unit of the course which is Unit 15. In this Unit students are going to deal with the future tense *will*, *to be going to* and present continuous as different verbal tenses to talk about the future and regarding the vocabulary, it is going to be based on the environment and natural disasters. The first session is going to be organised in a similar way as the first unit, but students are supposed to be used to following a determined way of studying and in this way, they do not have to be advised about learning the session previously they go to collective tutorials. In the first session, the first hour will be devoted to the explanation of the verbal tense *will* and *to be going to*, and I will provide students with exercises from Moodle in order to clarify the difference among both tenses. Once exercises have



been done and doubts have been solved, I will explain vocabulary related with natural disasters and we will do exercises related to them, as well as relating them to daily life events around the world. The second hour devoted to the first session I am going to give students a text from a previous access exam to a superior training course which is called 'Brazil prepares for tourist boom' and I will follow the particular methodology proposed to students to hack the exam. As students only have 45 minutes to complete the exam I gave them several tips to fulfil the exam in order to gain time to complete the exam, I recommend them to look first at the title of the text and the exercise devoted to find synonyms in the text. They are normally two words but if students can find them in the first two readings of the text, they will avoid reading the text too many times and it will avoid to make students stress. Then, students will have to focus on the first exercise which deals with two questions about the comprehension of the text and students have to underline the answer in the text and rephrase it in order to formulate a good sentence for the answer. Students with a low level of English can copy the sentence literally from the text and they will not be penalised for doing it. In the second exercise students have to choose among three options a, b or c, and then they have to do an exercise about true or false. Students have been advised that normally these two exercises seem very easy but they are not what they seem, and they have to look the text in detail and read the sentences in detail. Then, students will deal with a grammar exercise which will normally be about verbal tenses, fill in the gaps, or find infinitives, and in the last place, students will have to do the writing. I recommend students to look at both topics proposed in the exam and write about the one they think they can write more successfully, using a variety of verbal tenses and vocabulary. I also advise

students to look at the verbal tense the writing asks you to write: past, present or future, and then decide which one they should do.

In the second session devoted to Unit 15 I am going to do a review of both verbal tenses seen in the previous session, *will* and *to be going to*, and I will add the present continuous as a tense used to talk about the future, too. I will also deal with the vocabulary related to the environment and I will make a review about the vocabulary given in the previous lesson. Exercises will be provided in order to practice what has been explained and I will also give students a review of verbal tenses to practice from present simple to future tenses. By doing this, I try to make students see how prepared they are in order to write a text and what variety of tenses they already know and they have internalised.

In the second hour dedicated to the second session, I am going to give students a past exam called 'The European Green Capital Award' which they will have to do in their own, following the tips and recommendations to do it and they will have to organise their time in order to finish it before the class has finished. With this, students will prove themselves to see if they are prepared to do the official exam in a few weeks. This exam is organised in 5 exercises, being the first devoted to two questions for the comprehension of the text; the second exercise about choosing among three different options; the third exercise is about True or False; the fourth exercise is devoted to a grammar question and the last one is the text, which in this case is related to the topic students have dealt with the last unit they have studied in the text: environment. I will recommend students to write as neat as they can, using linking devices, and a great variety of verbal tenses and vocabulary if they feel comfortable but at the same time, I will recommend them

to write what they expect is going to be correct in order not to have many grammatical errors.

### **3. 5 MEANS OF EVALUATION**

The means of evaluation proposed for my teaching proposal are going to be based on two different ways of evaluation. Regarding the activities and exercises offered in Moodle, they are not going to have any evaluation as they are prepared to be for self-evaluation and prepare oneself for the understanding of contents of the unit. During the Units, students are normally going to write the writings of the access exams models but they are also asked to write another writing which is normally related to the topic of the unit, and it can be submitted via Moodle or in paper to be corrected by the teacher. When correcting these writings, they are normally assessed with 4 points maximum which is the punctuation students are going to have in the access exam. As the course preparation is not going to have any official assessment and students are only going to be assessed to obtain an academic progress diploma, we are going to evaluate the students' activity in Moodle, delivering of writings, attendance to collective, individual or online tutorials, and participation in the Moodle debates and exams at the end of the units. If the student has had a moderated activity during the course and has not dropped the course, we are going to evaluate students in a positive way in order to have the academic progress diploma. I must say that this diploma has not any academic or official validity as the official exam is what will allow students to access a superior training course, and regarding the mark they achieve in the exam, they will be able to access a particular training course in a public high school, or in a private high school if they do not achieve the required mark.

A different type of evaluation will be provided for the exam preparation to access the superior training course. This is going to be evaluated as it is established by the Valencian government of education and it is established for all the Valencian Community. The exam has recently added a new grammatical question for this year 2017, and the punctuation for the exam is divided as follows: for the questions related to the comprehension of the text, they are two points, one point for each question; for the multiple-choice exercise, there are two sentences which are 0.5 each (1 point); the exercise related to finding synonyms, they are 1 point, 0.5 each synonym; for the questions true or false, they are also 1 point, 0.5 each; the grammar question is 1 point; and finally, for the writing of one of the topics they are given 4 points, and they can choose among two topics do to the writing.

#### **4. ASSESSMENT**

The expected results students are going to obtain after the teaching of these units I consider they are going to be positive given the fact that students will be really prepared to face the exam. Students have been preparing during all the course doing access exams from previous years to train themselves to do the exam as well as complementing with grammar and vocabulary. This year, students are going to find an extra question in the access exam to superior training courses related to grammar, but it is going to be about conjugating verbal tenses which is one of the most important grammatical aspects we are going to deal in the course, the mastering of verbal tenses to do the writing exam and to show a great control of the language.

In this course we are going to find a great variety of students, that as I said previously, come from different backgrounds and have different levels of English. Most of the students will face the exam with no problem other than few grammatical errors, but we are also going to find students who do not have a great level of English even though they have strived themselves to learn it. These students have memorized by heart several sentences that can match in all the writings proposed in the exam, and as the writings tend to be normally related to the text they are given, they can take vocabulary and verbs to do it. The most important thing for these students is going to be the topic they are going to find in the exam as students will depend on the vocabulary to comprehend properly the text and find the information required for the comprehension questions, as well as the exercises related to it. Normally, I try to give more importance to the writing because it is the exercise which gives more punctuation, but as important is the comprehension of the text because all the other exercises except the one related with grammar are going to be related to it.

As the units are programmed to be ended before the course ends, during the last weekend, students are doing reviews of the content of the course and are specifically trained to reading and writing exercises as well as the use of vocabulary which can be found in the access exam. This exam is an official exam done by the Valencian government but what the students do not know is that this exam is prepared by teachers in the centre, as some teachers propose several exam models following the requirements established, and the educative government chooses one of those. This process is done in the previous months of the official access exam and teachers of the subject already know the topic

which students are going to find in the exam, and they prepare without telling students into more specifically topics than in others.

The expected results for this course I think they should be positive as there is a group of students who are really motivated towards passing all the subjects of the access exam in order to study a higher professional training, and they are normally adults who want to promote in their jobs. We can also find some young students who are really qualified because they come from studying the high school diploma (Batxillerat) and they are going to pass the exam with no difficulties. The expected results are based mainly on the students who attend Collective tutorials as they are the ones to who we can have a monitoring on their learning process, and on some students who do all the online exercises and participate in debates, blogs and in the delivering of writings via Moodle. What we do not know is the number of students who really do the access exam as they depend on the administration.

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## 6. APPENDIX

### 6.1 SUPERIOR TRAINING ACCESS EXAM: LONDON



PRUEBA DE ACCESO  
A CICLOS FORMATIVOS DE GRADO SUPERIOR  
JUNIO 2010  
PARTE COMÚN APARTADO A2  
LENGUA EXTRANJERA (INGLÉS)

Duración: 45 minutos.

#### LONDON

London is located in the south of England and on the River Thames, which crosses the city from the southwest to the east. It has a population of over 14 million inhabitants and is the largest urban zone in the European Union.

London, whose ancient name was *Londinium*, is a beautiful city full of gardens and parks, where you can not only walk but also lie on the green grass and relax. It is famous for its pubs, where drinks and meals are served.

Samuel Johnson\* said *when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life*. There is such a big variety of places, it is not easy to choose: from the best museums in the world and smart churches, to markets and shops, without forgetting libraries, art galleries, concerts, plays, films and live shows...

In spite of London's winters, chilly and rainy, autumns are mild and summers are glorious. However, the best of London is the diverse range of peoples and languages, whose cultures are not only respected, but also fostered\*, making London the leading global city and also the world's largest financial city.

\*Samuel Johnson: an 18th century English author who wrote the *Dictionary of the English Language*

\* Foster: help, promote, support.

Read the instructions to each question carefully before answering.

1. Answer the following questions. Give complete answers. (2,50 p.)

- Why is London considered the leading global city?
- What does *when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life* mean?

2. Choose the best option. (1,50 p.)

- In English pubs you can ...
  - drink, but not eat.
  - eat and have beer, wine or spirits.
  - drink and eat.
- In London parks and gardens ...
  - you can't walk on the grass.
  - you have to walk along the paths.
  - you can walk and lie on the grass.
- London weather is...
  - cold in winter, but rainy in autumn.
  - cold and wet in winter, but fine in other seasons
  - fine in spring, but chilly and rainy in winter.

3. Are the following sentences true or false? (1,00 p.)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| a. The River Thames flows through London.             | T | F |
| b. There are more than 14 million people in London.   | T | F |
| c. London used to be called <i>Londinium</i> .        | T | F |
| d. London museums are not the best ones in the world. | T | F |

4. Write a composition. (50 words) Choose one of the following topics. (5,00 p.)

- Describe your hometown.
- Describe a city, a town or a village you have visited.

#### CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN Y CALIFICACIÓN

- La calificación de esta Parte o Apartado se adaptará a lo establecido en la RESOLUCIÓN de 15 de marzo de 2010, de la Dirección general de Evaluación, Innovación y Calidad Educativa y de la Formación Profesional, por la que se convocan pruebas de acceso a los ciclos formativos de Formación Profesional. (DOCV 13.04.2010)

## 6.2 SUPERIOR TRAINING ACCESS EXAM: THE WORLD'S MOVIE CAPITAL IS NOT HOLLYWOOD BUT BOLLYWOOD

**PRUEBA DE ACCESO  
A CICLOS FORMATIVOS DE GRADO SUPERIOR  
JUNIO 2014**

**Parte Común. Apartado A2 LENGUA EXTRANJERA (INGLÉS) - Duración 45 minutos**

**THE WORLD'S MOVIE CAPITAL IS NOT HOLLYWOOD BUT BOLLYWOOD.**

Bollywood is the nickname given to the Indian film industry. It is a combination of the word Hollywood and the letter "B" from Bombay (now known as Mumbai), a big city in India. Indian movies are becoming more and more popular around the world. Fourteen million Indians go to the movies every day (about 1.4% of the population of 1 billion) to see any of the over 800 films produced in Bollywood each year. That is more than twice the number of films produced in the United States.

Most Bollywood movies follow a similar format. They are three to four hours long. They have dozens of songs and dances with top stars and a hundred choreographed dancers. Between the songs there is a love story without any kissing or sexual contact, lots of action and a happy ending. The stars of Bollywood are very popular and highly paid. Movies are made so fast that actors can be working on four films at the same time.

Bollywood's biggest problem is piracy; not all films make more money than they cost to make, even though they can be seen by millions of people. Another problem is that younger generations sometimes find the stories a bit predictable and boring. Film-makers are trying to solve this by changing the movies to reflect real life stories.

The future looks good for Bollywood. Big US film companies such as Warner Bros and Twentieth Century Fox have opened offices in India. Indian film-makers have found it difficult to compete with Hollywood's special effects and this is seen as the next big area for Bollywood to develop.

*Adapted from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/2003/bollywood/> and <http://geography.about.com/od/culturalgeography/a/bollywood.htm>*

**Read the instructions for each question carefully before answering (Total score:10 points)**

**1. Answer the following questions. Write complete sentences. (1 point each = 2 points)**

- Why is Bollywood, instead of Hollywood, considered the world's movie capital?
- What are three characteristics of a typical Bollywood movie?

**2. Underline the best option (0.5 points each = 1 point)**

- Bollywood needs to...
  - increase piracy.
  - create more real-life stories and make movies a bit predictable.
  - improve special effects in movies.
- Bollywood movie stars...
  - participate in plenty of singing, dancing and kissing scenes.
  - work in more than a movie at a time.
  - are badly paid so they work fast and make a lot of movies.

**3. Find a synonym in the text for these words (0.5 points each = 1 point)**

- double: b) a little:

**4. Are the following sentences true or false? Underline the correct option (0.5 points each = 1 point)**

- Hollywood produces special effects for Bollywood movies. TRUE / FALSE
- Unauthorized copying and reproduction of movies is a major problem for Bollywood. TRUE / FALSE

**5. Choose one of the following topics and write a text 60-80 words long (5 points)**

- Write about a movie you like (You can write the movie title in English or Spanish).
- Write about what you do in your free time

**CRITERIOS DE EVALUACION Y CALIFICACION**

La calificación de esta Parte o Apartado se adaptará a lo establecido en la RESOLUCIÓN de 2 de abril de 2014, de la Dirección General de Formación Profesional y Enseñanzas de Régimen Especial, por la que se convocan pruebas de acceso a los ciclos formativos de Formación Profesional (DOCV 09-04-2014).

## 6.3 SUPERIOR TRAINING ACCESS EXAM: BRAZIL PREPARES FOR TOURIST BOOM



### PRUEBA DE ACCESO A CICLOS FORMATIVOS DE GRADO SUPERIOR JUNIO 2012

#### Parte Común. Apartado A2 LENGUA EXTRANJERA (INGLÉS)

Duración: 45 minutos

#### BRAZIL PREPARES FOR TOURIST BOOM

Brazil is preparing for major tourist invasion as two of the world's biggest sporting events will be organized in the country in the coming years. The 2014 Football World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil is expecting twice the number of visitors that it has in normal years. In 2010, about 5 million visitors came to the country. That is a very low number compared to France which has almost 80 million visitors a year and the US with 60 million. There are two main reasons why Brazil has not been a popular tourist destination. First, it is far away from Europe and flight costs make it an expensive place to go to. Secondly, the country's crime rate has discouraged many potential tourists. Brazil's economy is successful and the money that it is generating is being invested in infrastructure and projects for the future. Airports are being improved, roads are being built and public transportation expanded. New hotels are being constructed and more and more people are being employed in tourism-related jobs. The Brazilian government hopes that these sporting events will give the country a great tourism expansion. Once tourists are in the country, they should not only concentrate on the sporting events but also on the spectacular attractions that Brazil has to offer, like the Iguacu Falls in the south, or the Amazon rainforest in the north and central parts of the country. During the two big events police forces supported by army units will be patrolling the streets to give visitors the feeling of safety.

(Adapted article from <http://www.english-online.at>)

<b>Vocabulary</b> rate: amount, percentage falls: movement of water to a lower position patrolling: guarding, protecting
--

Read the instructions for each question carefully before answering (Total score: 10 points)

1. Answer the following questions. Give complete answers. (1 point each = 2 points)

- Why is Brazil expecting an important tourism expansion in the coming years?
- What are two examples of the country's development to prepare for that tourism expansion?

2. Underline the best option (0.5 points each = 1 point)

- Compared to Brazil, France has ...
  - a higher number of tourists.
  - a lower number of tourists.
  - twice the number of tourists.
- Visitors coming to Brazil's sporting events, should also...
  - be employed in tourism-related jobs.
  - enjoy the country's tourist attractions.
  - patrol the streets to feel safe.

3. Are the following sentences true or false? Underline the correct option (0.5 points each = 1 point)

- Brazil has been considered a safe country for tourists. True False
- Brazil is an expensive country to live in. True False

4. Find a synonym in the text for these words (0.5 points each = 1 point)

- distant: b) security:

5. Choose one of the following topics and write a text 60-80 words long (5 points)

- Write about your best holiday experience.
- Do you think Valencia/Spain is a popular tourist destination? Why?

#### CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN Y CALIFICACIÓN

- La calificación de esta parte o apartado se adaptará a lo establecido en la RESOLUCIÓN de 3 de abril de 2012 de la Dirección General de Formación y Cualificación Profesional, por la que se convocan pruebas de acceso a los ciclos formativos de Formación Profesional. (DOCV 27.04.2012)



## 6.4 SUPERIOR TRAINING ACCESS EXAM: THE EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL AWARD



### PRUEBA DE ACCESO A CICLOS FORMATIVOS DE GRADO SUPERIOR JUNIO 2011

#### Parte Común. Apartado A2 LENGUA EXTRANJERA (INGLÉS)

Duración: 45 minutos

#### THE EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL AWARD

Following Stockholm in 2010 and Hamburg in 2011, Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain) and Nantes (France) will be The European Green Capitals for 2012 and 2013.

The award of European Green Capital is given each year to a European city that has made exceptional efforts to protect the environment and to achieve sustainable development. The judges' decision is based on eleven environmental criteria such as: local transport, green urban areas, quality of air, noise, waste production and management and water consumption.

Inhabitants of the city centre of Vitoria-Gasteiz do not live more than 300 metres away from a green space. The city has also made an enormous effort to reduce its water consumption, and aims to bring it down to less than 100 litres a day per person.

Nantes, the winner for 2013, has an ambitious transport policy. It was the first French town to reintroduce electric trams, and it now has a desirable air quality and expects to reduce CO2 emissions by a quarter by 2020.

Europe is now an essentially urban society, with four out of five Europeans living in towns and cities. Our well-being is closely linked to the quality of our urban environment. The aim of the Green Capital Award is to make winning cities models and inspire other European cities to improve the quality of life of their citizens.

(Adapted from European Commission News: [http://ec.europa.eu/news/environment/101022\\_1\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/news/environment/101022_1_en.htm))

<b>Vocabulary:</b>	
award: prize or money given to the winner of a contest or competition.	waste: not wanted material or substances after use.
to achieve: to complete something successfully or get good results.	aim: objective, goal.

Read the instructions for each question carefully before answering (Total score: 10 points)

1. Answer the following questions. Give complete answers. (1.0 points each = 2.0 points)

- a) What must a European city do to win the European Green Capital Award?
- b) What has the 2012 winner city achieved?

2. Underline the best option (0.5 points each = 1.50 points)

- a) The European Green Capital Award...
- has already been given to 4 cities
  - is given to a different European city every year.
  - Both 1 and 2 are correct.
- b) Nantes...
- has improved its air quality.
  - will increase its CO2 emissions by a quarter by 2020.
  - Both 1 and 2 are correct.
- c) The aim of the award is to...
- have more parks in European cities.
  - offer examples of good practice to European cities.
  - reintroduce electric trams in European cities

3. Are the following sentences true or false? Underline the correct option (0.5 points each = 1.50 points)

- a) 80% of Europeans live in urban areas. True False
- b) Vitoria-Gasteiz has a lot of water for consumption. True False
- c) The winner of the award is selected by European cities. True False

4. Choose one of the following topics and write a text 50-70 words long (5 points)

- a) What can you do in your daily life to protect the environment?
- b) What would you do to improve the quality of life in your town or city?

#### CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN Y CALIFICACIÓN

- La calificación de esta parte se adaptará a lo establecido en la RESOLUCIÓN de 17 de marzo de 2011, de la Dirección General de Evaluación, Innovación y Calidad Educativa y de la Formación Profesional, por la que se convocan pruebas de acceso a los Ciclos Formativos de la Formación Profesional. (DOCV 01.04.2011)