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FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS
ESCUELA DE LITERATURA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE

USING AUTHENTIC READINGS IN THE NINTH GRADE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF COSTA RICA, TO DEVELOP EFL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' COMPETENCE

SEMINARIO DE GRADUACIÓN PARA OPTAR POR EL GRADO DE
LICENCIATURA EN LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS

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Tomando en consideración los cambios emanados de la Asesoría Nacional de Inglés en el año 1991, del Ministerio de Educación Pública, donde se institucionaliza la utilización del enfoque comunicativo en la enseñanza/aprendizaje del idioma Inglés; y la ausencia del desarrollo de las destrezas de comprensión auditiva, expresión oral, lectura y escritura de manera integrada; nos dimos a la tarea de elaborar una propuesta denominada Guía Metodológica. En esta guía sugerimos el desarrollo integrado de las cuatro destrezas básicas junto con el componente cultural; partiendo de actividades basadas en lecturas auténticas, con el objetivo de enriquecer el desarrollo de la competencia lingüística de los educandos.

La investigación de este Seminario de Graduación toma en cuenta una muestra de la modalidad de colegios académicos diurnos de los circuitos I, II y III de la Región Educativa de la Provincia de San José.

Se espera que esta Guía Metodológica sirva de apoyo a los profesores de inglés de noveno año del III ciclo; como alternativa para el desarrollo integrado de las lecciones de inglés en beneficio del proceso enseñanza/aprendizaje de los estudiantes.

Descriptores: Inglés noveno año, enseñanza/aprendizaje lengua extranjera, guía metodológica, integración de habilidades lingüísticas (habla, escucha, lectura, escritura), lecturas auténticas.

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We want to dedicate this work to our families who believed in us and were always there to give us support.

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Chapter I

Introduction

I. **Background of English Teaching in Costa Rica.**

The learning of foreign languages in Costa Rica was originated during the Republican Era when the first exportation of coffee was made to England in 1820¹. With the first arrival of Europeans in Costa Rica, Costa Ricans felt motivated to learn a second language. The main reason to learn a second language was basically an economic one. As commercial activities increased, larger number of immigrants came to Costa Rica. As a result, more Costa Ricans became interested in learning foreign languages. The newcomers influenced education, new industries, family prosperity and arts. The government wanted to guarantee that both immigrants and Costa Ricans enjoy freedom, security and prosperity. As a result, many foreign families decided to settle in Costa Rica.

Thanks to this political stability many European professors came to foster the education and culture of our nation. During this period a great phenomenon took place: the immigration of prominent people to Costa Rica and the enrollment of young Costa Rican students in European institutions of higher education. The trip to England of the Montealegre brothers,² who studied medicine in London, is an example of this. As larger numbers of young Costa Rican students went to foreign countries to study; the need of learning a second language became very important.

At the beginning, the study of foreign languages was carried out through private lessons and officially through secondary schools. There were also embassies interested in promoting their language and culture through cultural

¹ Leonor E. Cabrera. Ministry of Public Education. Costa Rica. The teaching of Foreign Languages and their Impact in the Costa Rican Society. 1

² Idem 2

centers. English has been one of the most studied foreign languages in Costa Rica. The teaching and learning of English have been registered as a subject matter in the secondary school curriculum since 1824 in the " Casa de Enseñanza de Santo Tomás"³. The methods used were traditional; the students memorized and recited grammar rules, which were later monitored by the teacher to make sure the students had internalized them.

In regards to methods and approaches, the Grammar Translation Method was the first one used in foreign language teaching. Other methods such as the Direct Method, the Oral Approach, the Audio Lingual method were also used. Costa Rican teachers used the Audio Lingual method for more than thirty years; this was also motivated by the import of instructional materials brought to the country by foreign publishing houses. As a result, teachers of English adopted textbooks, which did not match the objectives stated in the official syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education.

In 1991, the Ministry of Public Education, through the National English Advisory, designed a syllabus for Costa Rican students. Consequently, teachers were challenged because of the lack of a foreign textbook to match this syllabus. The Binational Project LEARN created a syllabus and supporting complementary materials by the incorporation of national and regional issues in the everyday learning process. The English teaching and learning process officially changed in our country since 1991. This program was named Programa de Inglés, which made the implementation of the Communicative Approach official.

³ Idem 4

According to Celce-Murcia the Communicative Approach grew out of the work of the anthropological linguists Hymes and Halliday who viewed language first and foremost as a system for communication⁴. Thus, the goal of language teaching is the learners' ability to communicate in the target language. The learners can engage in role plays using the target language in different social contexts. Finally, teachers' role is primarily to facilitate communication and then correct mistakes.

Following these principles the Ministry of Public Education provides the basis for the methodology used in the English classroom. Therefore, a stress-free atmosphere is created for learning a language for communication. Ample opportunities for interaction and positive feedback for the learner are promoted. Finally, both the teacher and the learner make decisions together to get involved in the language learning process.

As a conclusion, the Ministry of Public Education English program was shaped due to the functionality of the communicative approach and the particular needs of Costa Rican learners.

A. The Public School System

The public school system in Costa Rica follows the "Educational Policy Towards the 21st Century", which prepares Costa Rican students to participate actively in the global economy for the benefit of the country. The educational policy is to give students the chance to bring up how much they care about their country,

⁴ M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991 8.

giving emphasis to topics such as: democratic environment, cultural diversity, respect for law, nature, and pacifism.

English is introduced into the curriculum to provide the students with a tool to develop awareness of an immediate need for protecting our environment, resources, and political and economic issues of our society. At the beginning, it was taught by native speakers of English, but after state universities were opened, local teachers taught the English language around the country.

B. Syllabus

The document entitled "The English Syllabus", has been written following principles stated in the Constitution of Costa Rica, the Educational Law and the "Educational Policy Towards the 21st Century".

1. Purpose of the syllabus

English is used in Costa Rica as a foreign language since it is a lingua franca for communication between people all over the world. Likewise, a great amount of scientific, technological and humanistic data is handled in English.

The purpose of the Ministry of Public Education in teaching English embodies three main components: the formal component, the functional component, and the cultural component. The formal component is grammatical devices: lexicon, syntax and morphology. The functional component refers to the communicative purpose for which the language is used. The cultural component establishes that knowing the features of the target culture makes it easier to

understand the language itself. Some of the cultural characteristics that should be taken into account are: values, ways of thinking, appreciation, and others⁵.

2. Objectives of the syllabus

The National English Syllabus for third cycle⁶ (seventh, eighth and ninth grades) states the following objectives.

To provide a motivating learning environment where the students can feel self-confident to work by themselves.

To develop consciousness in the students towards the need of inserting the country into the global economy.

To encourage the learners to develop an assertive attitude towards the use of technology in their everyday life for self and society improvement.

3. Content of the syllabus

The contents are based on situations dealing with the environment, the misuse of natural resources, and cultural topics such as the achievements of musicians, singers, artists, athletes, sportsmen, and others. The syllabus takes into consideration the job market, evolution of society, the drug problem and other topics such as health, pollution, gender, democracy, and others. So the syllabus takes into account many aspects of socio-political development, the environment, energy and resources, as well as behavior patterns, values and cross-cultural topics.

⁵ Ministerio de Educación Pública Programa de Estudios Inglés III Ciclo. San José, MEP, 2001.

C. Ninth Grade Student Profile

When giving a definition of a ninth grade student, three aspects should be considered:

1. The learner himself/herself
2. The educational context in which he / she develops the learning process
3. The English language as a means of communication

According to the "Educational Policy Towards the 21st Century", the ninth grade student is the main focus of the curriculum. In addition he/she is considered to have an inherited culture, and has the freedom to select his/her own way. The objective of learning/teaching is to provide a contribution to social and personal development. Therefore, education is seen as a formative and permanent social process, which contributes to shape human beings' capacities and values. English is conceived as a linguistic and cultural tool for communication which allows students to develop communicative competence in order to gain knowledge of a new culture, beliefs, and attitudes, and to understand the messages given and to reflect upon them.

II. Justification of the Project

The syllabus for the Third Cycle in the Public High School System indicates that English should be taught in an integrated way, taking into account the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, along with the cultural component. To cope with this, the Ministry of Public Education has not assigned an official textbook; although, there are suggested books for that syllabus, which is the Have Fun series. However, this supporting material is not

used by most of the teachers because this textbook does not integrate the four skills along with the cultural component. Since teachers should follow the principles stated in The National English Syllabus and they do not have a textbook that fulfills those principles, a methodological guide will be designed as supplementary material for ninth grade teachers of the public high schools of Costa Rica to satisfy the students' foreign language needs, based on the curriculum established by the National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education, and to help them enhance their language competence through the integration of the main skills using authentic readings.

This research project aims to provide teachers with a methodological guide which contains sample activities based on authentic readings integrating the four skills. This methodological guide contains three units with authentic readings selected to address three cognitive targets proposed by the National English Syllabus for the ninth grade. These three units are to be used as a model to develop the other cognitive targets. Each of these units develops a cognitive target as follows:

Unit 1 Sports and leisure activities

Unit 2 Operation of electrical appliances

Unit 3 Specific information of words in a given context

III. Objectives

A. General

To design a methodological guide for ninth grade teachers of the public high schools of Costa Rica to help them satisfy the students' foreign language needs, based on the curriculum established by the National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education, and to help teachers enhance the students language competence through the integration of the main skills using authentic readings.

B. Specific

1. To provide teachers with a tool to fulfill the students' language needs based on the National English Syllabus.
2. To help teachers improve the students' English competence in ninth grade.
3. To design supplementary material based on the objectives and cognitive targets proposed by the National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education; namely to design a methodological guide to help ninth grade teachers in the development of the four basic language skills and the cultural component in an integrated way.

IV. Research questions

1. What are the objectives proposed by the National English Syllabus for ninth grade?
2. What are the textbooks suggested by the Ministry of Education for ninth grade?

3. Do students achieve their language objectives based on the textbook used in ninth grade?
4. What is the professional point of view of the ninth grade teachers of English about the textbooks used nowadays?
5. What are the difficulties and/or weaknesses that teachers face with the textbook they use nowadays?
6. Do ninth grade teachers have access to other appropriate textbooks specifically designed for ninth grade students?
7. What are the teachers' professional suggestions to choose an appropriate textbook or methodological guide specifically for ninth grade students?
8. What should the suggested methodological guide contain?

Second Language Acquisition Theories

Since the proposal for the transfer of the acquisition of a second language that made the two languages more and more similar... a study of the acquisition of a second language is conducted... the process of second language acquisition within the... framework.

The following is a brief overview of several widely discussed theories of second language acquisition.

The Acquisition Model

It can be defined as the process of learning a second language according to... the... and... relationship between...

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Acquisition of a second language is a complex process... The... by... and... which... the... of...

The... Model

It is defined by... the... and... This model... the... between... and...

The... model... the... of... and... the... of...

I. Second Language Acquisition Theories

Since the proposal for this research project is the elaboration of a methodological guide that entails the four basic language skills and the cultural component, a literary review on second language acquisition theories is presented to better understand how students internalize the process of second language learning within the Communicative Approach.

The following is a brief definition of several widely discussed theories on second language acquisition⁷.

The Acculturation Model

It can be defined as "the process of becoming adapted to a new culture". According to Schuman⁸, the success of this model depends on the social and psychological relation between the learner and the target culture.

The Nativization Model

Andersen explains this model in two ways: nativization is assimilation. "The learner simplifies the learning task by building hypotheses based on the knowledge he already possesses. On the other hand, denativation is the accommodation "the learner makes by using inferencing strategies which enable him to remodel his interlanguage according to the external norm"⁹.

The Variable Competence Model

It is proposed by Ellis who extended the work of Tarone, Widdowson and Bialystok¹⁰. This model deals with two aspects: Process, which involves the distinction between linguistic knowledge (rules) and the ability to make use of this

⁷ Rod Ellis. Understanding Second Language Acquisition. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. 251

⁸ Idem. 251

⁹ Idem 253

¹⁰ Idem 266

knowledge (procedures), and product, which refers to a continuum of discourse types ranging from entirely unplanned to entirely planned.

The Universal Hypothesis

The universal hypothesis is an attempt to explain second language acquisition in terms of an independent language faculty, rather than in general cognitive terms. It deals with a set of inborn categories and principles common to all human languages. According to Chomsky¹¹, "the grammars for human languages are too complex and abstract to be learned on the basis of the type of experience to which children have access". Thus, these significant components of grammar must be inborn.

Studies carried out by Stephen Krashen¹² in regards to second language acquisition theories will give a wide view of five hypotheses related to second language acquisition. According to Stephen Krashen¹³, competence can be developed through language acquisition and through language learning. Language acquisition is compared with the way children develop their first language. As Krashen¹⁴ states, the language acquisition process is subconscious due to the fact that acquirers are not aware that they are acquiring the language; they are only aware that they are using the language for communication. According to this hypothesis, the result of language acquisition is acquired subconsciously. In this way when we

¹¹ Idem 270.

¹² Stephen D. Krashen. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. New York: University of Southern California Press, 1987. 10.

¹³ Idem 11

¹⁴ Idem 11



acquire a language, we are not aware of the rules of this language. Instead what we have is a sort of "feel" for correctness. This means that grammatical sentences "sound" right, or "feel" right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated.

In non-technical language, acquisition is "picking-up" a language. Acquisition can also be defined as a process that includes: implicit learning, informal learning, and natural learning¹⁵. In language learning, the term "learning" refers to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In non-technical terms, learning is "knowing about" a language, what is known as "grammar" or "rules", that is to say formal knowledge or explicit learning. In addition to second language acquisition theories, Stephen Krashen¹⁶ mentions that some theorists say that children acquire while adults can only learn.

The **acquisition/learning hypothesis** states that adults also acquire. This does not mean that adults will always be able to achieve native like levels in a second language; this means that adults can access the same "language acquisition device" that children use.

The **Natural Order Hypothesis** states that every language is acquired following a certain route, mastering syntactic patterns in a predictable way. Likewise, the order of difficulty tends to be similar for every learner during the acquisition phase. Children learning a second language follow the very same order. Adults also go through the same process children do, and experience the

¹⁵ Idem 9

¹⁶ Idem 10

same problems and mistakes. First language acquirers and second language learners encounter the same difficulties; for example, the inflection "ing", the verb to be, auxiliaries, irregular past, and the possessive.

The **Monitor Hypothesis** refers to the ability learners have to self-correct or monitor their language when writing or speaking. The conscious learning and formal knowledge of language activate this process. This means that people can check their performance before, while, or after speaking or writing. There are three different levels of monitor users; the overusers, who are so concerned with grammatical rules that sometimes it is difficult for them to speak fluently; the underusers, who do not care so much about mistakes, because they just want to communicate. Finally, the optimal monitor users who are people who are aware of their oral or written production. In fact, the optimal monitor users are aware of correctness but are more concerned with what and how they are expressing themselves.

According to Krashen's **Input Hypothesis**, people acquire language by being exposed to input that is a little beyond their current level of competence $(i+1)^{17}$. This is done with the help of context or extra-linguistic information. This means that learners need to be in contact with somewhat more complex input each day. If learners are not exposed to new vocabulary, structures and so on, they can retrogress in their learning/acquiring process. There are two ways in which this input can be provided; one is finely tuned and the other is roughly tuned input. An example of finely tuned input is when teachers simplify the vocabulary in order to be understood or to focus on a specific structure. Roughly

¹⁷ Idem 31.

tuned input is the teacher using the language to express something so that the acquirer understands what is said. In this way students are in contact with more vocabulary so that they can go beyond their current knowledge.

The **Affective Filter Hypothesis** deals with various affective variables that hinder or facilitate the internalization of a language; therefore, the effectiveness of the input depends on some factors: high motivation, self confidence, and low anxiety in second language acquisition. Successful students are those with a positive attitude and a low affective filter.

For the purpose of this research, Krashen's hypotheses were explained in detail due to their correspondence with the current teaching methodology suggested by the Ministry of Public Education: the Communicative Approach. Thus, this approach proposes to create a stress-free environment for the learning of the target language; meanwhile, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis entails a high motivation and low anxiety to learn a second language.

Criticism of Krashen's Theory.

According to Larsen-Freeman¹⁸, Krashen's theories contain several difficulties. For instance, in regard to the acquisition/learning distinction there is a methodological difficulty. Due to the fact that the acquisition/learning distinction is defined in terms of 'subconscious' and 'conscious' processes, it cannot be inspected or tested by empirical investigation. Furthermore, Krashen¹⁹ says that acquisition and learning are entirely separate and that 'acquired knowledge'

¹⁸ Diane Larsen Freeman, -Michael Long H. *Introducción al estudio de la adquisición de segundas lenguas*. Editorial Gredos, S.A. Madrid. 1994. p.226

¹⁹ *Idem*, p 222

cannot turn into 'learned' knowledge. However, this position has been challenged on the basis that when 'learned' knowledge is automatized through practice, it becomes 'acquired', that is, available for use in spontaneous conversation.

The Monitor Hypothesis claims that the monitor consists of learned knowledge; however, the only function of learned knowledge is to edit utterances. Thus, it is useless in comprehension. The Input Hypothesis does not explain how to define levels of knowledge. Then, it is difficult to know whether a learner is ready to move to the next level. In addition, Krashen states, there has to be sufficient quantity of the appropriate input. But what is sufficient quantity? The affective filter, according to Krashen, differentiates one individual from another. It explains why some learners learn and others do not, and brings out child-adult difference.

II. **Nine 20th-Century Approaches to Language Teaching**

According to Celce-Murcia²⁰, besides the Grammar Translation Approach, the Direct Approach, the Reading Approach, Audio-lingualism, and the Situational Approach- these are four approaches to language teaching that have been used during the last 25 years of the 20th century. Thus, there are nine approaches that should be listed:

Grammar Translation Approach

Direct Approach

Reading Approach

Audiolingualism

²⁰ M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991. 5

Situational Approach

Cognitive Approach

Affective-Humanistic Approach

Comprehension-Based Approach

Communicative Approach

a. Grammar-Translation Approach

According to Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers²¹, the Grammar Translation Method was the offspring of German scholarship, whose objective was "to know everything about something rather than the thing itself"²². In the United States the Grammar Translation Method was known as the Prussian Method which dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840's to the 1940's. Even though this method has no advocates, it is still widely used today in a modified form.

The main objective of this approach is to let people enjoy classical literature, and not to develop the ability to communicate in the target language. As a matter of fact, teachers do not have to speak the target language because the classes are taught in the native language. An exercise used under this approach is the translation of sentences or paragraphs from the target language into the mother tongue. These passages are usually taken from classical literary texts.

²¹ Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers. Approaches and Methods In Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press 1986. 3

²² *idem* 5

b. Direct Approach

As Richards and Rogers²³ state, the Direct Approach has its origins in the Natural Language Learning Principles, that suggests that a foreign language can be taught without translation or the use of the students' native language. Meaning can be conveyed through demonstration in action. This approach was widely spread by L. Sauveur and Maximilian Berlitz (1826-1907) in the United States²⁴.

Under this approach, students are expected to use the foreign language in order to communicate. Literary texts are used for sheer enjoyment and are not to be analyzed grammatically. The classes are conducted in the target language with the use of pictures and actions to get meaning across.

c. Reading Approach

The Reading Approach appeared as a result of a study published as the Coleman Report²⁵. This report states that a reasonable goal for a foreign language course would be a reading knowledge of a foreign language, achieved through the gradual introduction of words and grammatical structures in simple texts. This recommendation caused reading to become the goal of most foreign language programs in the United States. In this way then foreign language teaching was characterized by its emphasis on reading in the United States until World War II.

Translation is a useful exercise here. The sole purpose of this approach is to develop reading comprehension, and at first there is control of the vocabulary used. To work with the Reading Approach teachers do not need to have good oral proficiency in the second language.

²³ *Idem* 9

²⁴ *Idem* 10

²⁵ *Idem* 11

d. Audiolingualism

This approach became popular in the United States during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s²⁶. It takes some features from the Direct Approach, but adds some elements from structural linguistics and behavioral psychology. The lessons begin with dialogs; and memorization is used because it is assumed that language is habit formation. Grammar rules are taught inductively. Learner errors are prevented, and pronunciation is emphasized from the beginning. Language is frequently manipulated overlooking meaning and context. The teacher must be very proficient in the structures and vocabulary that are to be taught since learning activities and materials are carefully controlled.

e. Situational Approach

While in the United States Audiolingualism was dominant in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s²⁷, the Situational Approach was making its mark on the teaching of English in Great Britain. For the Situational Approach, spoken language is paramount; that is why all the material is practiced orally before being presented in writing, because reading and writing are taught only after an oral base in lexical and grammatical forms has been established. The target language should be used in class, making sure most general and useful vocabulary is presented. Grammatical features should be sequenced from simple to complex, and introduced and practiced in situations such as: at the hospital, at the university and at the restaurant.

²⁶ M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991. 6

²⁷ Idem. 7

f. Cognitive Approach

Under the Cognitive Approach²⁸, language learning is seen as rule acquisition, and not as habit formation. It is important to point out that learners are responsible for their own learning, and that instruction is individualized. Grammatical structures are treated in a deductive way: students are exposed to linguistic rules first and to practice later. The skills of reading and writing are as important as listening and speaking; the teaching of lexical items is crucial, mainly at intermediate and advanced levels. Learner errors are considered as part of the learning process. Teachers need to have good language proficiency, and sufficient knowledge of the target language to be able to analyze it.

g. Affective-Humanistic Approach

The affective part of learning is very important²⁹. Respect for students' and teachers' feelings are emphasized. Communication must be meaningful to learners. Pair and group work is widely used. Teachers should create a pleasant environment for learning, due to the fact that this is considered more important than materials or methods. Peer interaction is required for the learning process to take place. The role of the teacher is that of counselor or facilitator, and he/she should be proficient in the target language and the student's native language since translation may be used at the beginning stages.

²⁸ Idem 7

²⁹ Idem 7

h. Comprehension-Based Approach

According to Diane Larsen-Freeman³⁰ the Comprehension-Based Approach is named like that because of the importance it gives to listening comprehension. In the 1960's and 1970's research led to the hypothesis that language learning should start first with understanding and later proceed to production. As Larsen-Freeman states when the learner internalizes an extensive map of how the target language works, speaking appears spontaneously.

Listening comprehension is very important because the development of this skill enhances speaking, reading and writing. Learners are not forced to speak immediately; they speak when they feel ready to do so. Learners should also be exposed to comprehensible input (input +1). Error correction is not necessary; what counts is the meaning of the message, not the form. If the teacher is not a native speaker (or near-native), appropriate materials such as tapes and videotapes should be available to provide the learner with appropriate input.

i. Communicative Approach

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960's. Thanks to the work carried out by the Council of Europe, the writings of Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Christopher Brumfit, Keith Jonson, and other British applied linguists, gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as the Communicative Approach³¹.

³⁰ Diane Larsen-Freeman. Techniques and Principles in Language teaching. Oxford University Press 2000. 107

³¹ Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers. Approaches and Methods In Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press 1986. 64

The field of foreign language teaching has gone through many fluctuations and striking changes over the years; thus it deems necessary to offer an overview of nine 20th century approaches in order to encourage language teachers to learn more about the origins of their profession.

It can be considered that certain features of several of the first five approaches mentioned above appeared as a reaction to perceived inadequacies or impracticalities in an earlier approach or approaches. The last four developed approaches also do this to some extent; however, each one is based on a slightly different theory or view of how people learn and use foreign languages, and each one has a central point around which everything else revolves.

To conclude it is worth mentioning that the approach selected depends upon the purpose of teaching/learning a foreign language, instructional constraints and the needs, attitudes and aptitudes of individual students.

For the purpose of the present work the features of the Communicative Approach are mentioned in the official National Syllabus³² as follows:

1. The environment should be appropriate for the learning of the language.
2. The learners are the center of the learning process.
3. The methodologies put into practice during the learning process should be participative, dynamic and active.
4. The teacher should play the role of a facilitator guiding the students into the process of learning.

³²Ministerio de Educación Pública *Programa de Estudios Inglés III Ciclo.* San José, MEP, 2001.

5. The syllabus should be functional.

Following the preceding principles as well as the general objective of the present work, a methodological guide was created. This methodological guide embodies some sample activities that integrate the four basic skills based on authentic readings in order to help students develop communicative competence.

The following issues will be developed due to the fact they are the cornerstone of the proposed methodological guide:

Authentic readings

EFL classroom activities

Communicative competence

Cultural component

III. Authentic Readings

A. Definition

Authentic readings are those readings which are generated in the real world and which were not created for pedagogical purposes.

B. Characteristics

Authentic readings are not modified in any way; they should fulfill students' needs and interests. They are read for information and enjoyment. By reading carefully selected authentic materials students will certainly know how much they really understand of the target language in written form. Furthermore, authentic readings present real world tasks to be accomplished.

1. Sources

Authentic readings can be obtained from numerous sources, such as magazines, journals, newspapers, brochures, and other types of printed materials, which will help students, develop and/or improve communicative competence.

IV. EFL Classroom Activities

Since the aim in this research project is to elaborate a methodological guide with sample activities, it is important to define the meaning of activity in the EFL classroom environment.

A. Definition

Activities are defined as the units of which a lesson consists of. Most teachers, in discussing their lesson plans and behaviors, use units as a synonym of activities, although specific activities often have particular names³³.

B. Types of activities

According to Celce-Murcia³⁴, in a classroom observation carried out by Chaudron and Varcacel in 1988, a tentative list of activity types was developed. This list was grouped according to the degree of teacher versus student control over the performance of the activity. This list was classified into three categories: controlled, semi-controlled and free activities. They also considered that factors such as the topic and the teacher's purposes can influence the degree of control.

³³ M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991. 50

³⁴ Idem 52

1. Controlled Activities

The teacher has basic control over processes.

Warm-up: mimes, dance, song, and jokes, play. These activities stimulate, relax, and motivate the students to become engaged and ready for the lesson.

Setting: focus on the lesson topic with either verbal or non-verbal evocation of the context that is relevant to the lesson point by way of questioning, miming, picture presentation, or possible tape recordings of situations and people. The teacher directs attention to the upcoming topic.

Organization: managerial structuring of lesson or class activities: Includes reprimanding of students and other disciplinary action, organization of class furniture and seating, etc, general procedures for class interaction and performance, structure and purpose of the lesson, and so on.

Content explanation: explanation of lesson content and grammar or other rules and points, phonology, grammar, lexis, socio-linguistics, or whatever is being "taught".

Role-play demonstration: use of selected students or the teacher to illustrate the procedures to be applied in the lesson segment to follow. Includes brief illustration of language or other content to be incorporated.

Dialog/ Narrative presentation: reading or listening passages presented for passive reception. No implication of student production or other identification of specific target forms or functions (students may be asked to "understand").

Dialog/ Narrative recitation: reciting previously known or prepared texts either in unison or individually.

Reading aloud: reading directly from a given text.

Checking: the teacher either guiding the correction of the students' work, or providing feedback as a part of the activity.

Question–Answer display: an activity involving prompting of student responses by means of display questions, i.e., the teacher or questioner already knows the response or has a very limited set of expectations for the appropriate response.

Drill: a typical language activity involving fixed patterns of teacher and student responding and prompting, usually with repetition, substitution, and other mechanical alterations, typically with little meaning attached.

Translation: student or teacher provision of L1 or L2 translations of a given text.

Dictation: student writing down of a text presented orally.

Copying: student writing down of a text presented visually.

Identification: student picking out and producing/labeling or otherwise identifying a specific target form, function, definition, or other lesson-related item.

Recognition: student identifying forms, etc; as in identification, but without producing language as the response (i.e., checking off items, drawing symbols, rearranging pictures).

Review: teacher-led review of previous week/ month/ or other period as a formal summary and type of test of student recall and performance.

Testing: formal testing procedures to evaluate student progress.



Meaningful drill: a drill activity involving responses with meaningful choices, distinguished from information exchange by the regulated sequence and general form of responses.

2. Semi-controlled Activities

Brainstorming: an activity that involves free, undirected contributions by the students and teacher on a given topic, to generate multiple associations without linking them; no explicit analysis or interpretation by the teacher.

Storytelling (especially when student-generated): a not necessarily lesson based lengthy presentation of a story or event by the teacher or a student (may overlap with warm-up or narrative recitation); (may be used to maintain attention, motivation, or as a lengthy practice).

Question-answer, referential: an activity involving prompting of responses by means of referential questions.

Cued narrative / Dialog: student production of a narrative or dialog following cues from miming, cue cards, pictures, or other stimuli related to narrative / dialog (i.e., metalanguage requesting functional acts).

Information transfer: application from one mode, e.g., visual, to another, e.g., writing, which involves some transformation of the information, e.g., students fill in a diagram while listening to a description; distinguished from identification in that the student is expected to transform and reinterpret the language or information.

Information exchange: a task involving two-way communication, as in information gap exercises, when one or both parties (or a larger group) must

share information to achieve some goal; it differs from question answer; referential in that the sharing of information is critical for the resolution of the task.

Wrap-up: a brief teacher or student produced summary of a point and/ or items that have been practiced or learned.

Narration/ exposition: presentation of a story or explanation derived from prior stimuli. It differs from cued narrative because of lack of an immediate stimulus.

Preparation: student study, silent reading, pair planning and rehearsing preparing for later activity. Usually a student directed or oriented project.

3. Free Activities

Role-play: relatively free acting out of specified roles and functions. It differs from cued dialogs by the fact that cueing is provided only minimally at the beginning, and not during the activity.

Games: various kinds of language game activities, not like other previously defined activities e.g., board and dice games that make words.

Report: report of student-prepared exposition on books, experiences, projects, without an immediate stimulus, and elaborated on according to student interests; akin to composition in the writing mode.

Problem solving: an activity involving a specified problem and the limitations of means to resolve it; requires cooperative action on the part of the participants in small or large group.

Drama: planned dramatic rendition of play, skit, story, etc.

Simulation: an activity involving complex interaction between groups and individuals based on simulation of real life actions and experiences.

Discussion: a debate or other form of grouped discussion of a specified topic, with or without specified sides/ positions prearranged.

Composition: as in report (verbal), written development of ideas, stories, or other expositions.

A propos: a conversation or other socially oriented interaction like speeches carried out by teachers, students, or even visitors, on general real-life topics.

V. Communicative Competence

Since the final goal of this project is to help students in the ninth grade in public schools in the development of the communicative competence, its various types will be treated in this section.

A. Definition

It is difficult to define communicative competence, and various authors deal with it in different ways. It is worth mentioning that Hymes³⁵ was the first author to recognize the importance of communicative competence. He states:

The importance of concern with the child is partly that it offers a favorable vantage point for discovering the adult system, and that it poses neatly one way in which the ethnography of communication is a distinctive enterprise, i.e., an enterprise concerned with the abilities the child must acquire beyond those of producing and interpreting grammatical sentences, in order to be a competent

³⁵ Dell Hymes. On the Communicative Competence. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1972. 26

member of its community, not only what may possibly be said, but also what should and should not be said.

The National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Education as well as the proposed methodological guide encourage communicative competence.

In this section the four types of competence observed by Canale and Swain³⁶ will be featured.

B. Grammatical or Linguistic Competence

According to D.H. Hymes:

...linguistic competence has to do with the tacit knowledge of language structure which means knowledge of the language that is not conscious or available for spontaneous support, but it is necessarily implicit in what the speaker-listener can say.³⁷

The awareness of structural elements help learners of a language achieve a clearer and more accurate communication. Through reading and writing presented in the methodological guide teachers can deal with the grammatical component in a deductive way.

C. Sociolinguistic Competence

According to Canale and Swain³⁸ sociolinguistic competence includes the ability to produce and understand appropriate utterances along with politeness

³⁶ Birgit Harley et al. The Development of Second Language Proficiency. Cambridge University Press, 1990. 9

³⁷ C. J. Brunfit and K. Johnson. Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. 7

³⁸ Robin C. Scarcella. Developing Communicative Competence in a Second Language. Newbury House Publisher. N.Y. 1990. XV

features, speech acts such as refusals, and expressions of emotion. Swain and Lapkin³⁹ state that sociolinguistic performance:

...reflects the degree to which specific utterances are appropriate given the topic, the status of the participants, the purposes of the interactions, and other aspects of the sociolinguistic competence.

This is to say that speakers need to know the environment and the kind of interlocutors he or she is talking to in order to select speech acts and manners accordingly.

D. Discourse Competence

Different authors use this term in various ways. For Canale and Swain⁴⁰ discourse competence refers to the knowledge of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text and various genres and situations. Even though teachers work with the communicative approach they should include or reinforce grammatical structures in order to improve language accuracy, which can not be achieved if grammatical forms are overlooked.

E. Strategic Competence

This term was introduced by Canale and Swain⁴¹ and defined as a component of communicative competence that includes a person's ability to use communication strategies. Joyce Neu⁴² points out that the definition mentioned above does not include the nonverbal channel as well as the verbal. Although it is

³⁹ Idem 41

⁴⁰ Idem 103

⁴¹ Idem 121.

⁴² Idem 121

important to mention that nonverbal communication can serve either to undermine or reinforce the message.

F. Skills

As was explained before, the Communicative Approach emphasizes the use of four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) for the learning and management of the English language. This section deals with a brief view of each one, since they are significant elements of the present work as well as their use in the methodological guide.

1. Listening

a. Definition

Mary Underwood⁴³ defines listening in simple terms: " the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear.

b. History

There is little direct research on second language listening comprehension. Bachman, Littlewood, and Murphy⁴⁴ state that listening is not a passive but an active process of perceiving and constructing a message from a stream of sound.

According to Brown and Yule⁴⁵, instead of being an all-or-nothing notion, listening comprehension is the process of arriving at a reasonable interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning. This is how native speakers of the language

⁴³ Mary Underwood. Teaching Listening. Longman Inc., New York 1989 1

⁴⁴ J. Michael O'Malley, Lorraine Valdez Pierce. Authentic Assessment For English Language Learners. United States of America, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc, 1996 58-59

⁴⁵ Idem 58-59

process spoken language input. Here, listening and speaking are interdependent oral language processes, and need to be taught and assessed in an integrated manner.

c. Process

As is explained by Mary Underwood⁴⁶, the aural reception is made up of three stages:

1. the stage called 'echoic' memory, which is brief and turns sounds into meaningful units according to the knowledge the listener has.
2. the second stage which processes the information heard as quickly as possible to avoid confusion with new information.
3. the last stage when new meaningful information is transferred to or stored in the long-term memory.

Once teachers are aware of these three stages in the process of listening they can lead students to develop listening skills productively.

d. Strategies

According to Lorraine Valdez Pierce⁴⁷, understanding what listening entails leads us to select and design activities for learning, as well as to define the teacher's role in developing oral language skills. The teacher should be an exemplary listener, listening to students with understanding, tolerance and patience as well as preparing the students psychologically for the listening activity. Students must know they are not required to understand everything they hear; yet

⁴⁶ Mary Underwood. *Teaching Listening*. Longman Inc., New York 1989. 2

⁴⁷ Lorraine Valdez Pierce. *Teaching Strategies for Developing Oral Language Skills*. English Teaching Forum Jan. 1988: 14-15-

they should be invited to guess at the meaning of key words and phrases. Students have to learn how to listen just as they have to learn how to speak. Therefore they should be exposed frequently, from the earliest stages of language learning, to listening comprehension activities based on natural, authentic speech.

Listening activities should encourage students to develop tolerance and acceptance of those features of language that they do not yet comprehend and of a certain degree of ambiguity while listening to the spoken language. This will enable them to focus on anticipating what is to come and on getting the gist. (i.e. the main points, the essence) of a speaker's intended meaning or message. Developing tolerance of the unknown is not an easy task, however. This means that the teacher needs to give systematic (not sporadic) listening practice in identifying and selecting information.

2. Speaking

a. Definition

Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. There are three kinds of speaking situations in which we find ourselves: interactive, partially interactive, and non-interactive⁴⁸.

In all these situations, some aspects to be taken into consideration are micro-skills. Therefore Brown, G. and G. Yule⁴⁹ defines that the speaker has to:

- use the correct forms of words. This may mean, for example, changes in the tense, case, or gender.

⁴⁸ G Brown and G. Yule. Teaching the Spoken Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983 p. 85

⁴⁹ Idem 92

- use vocabulary appropriately.
- pronounce the distinctive sounds of a language clearly enough so that people can distinguish them. This includes making tonal distinctions.
- make the main ideas stand out from supporting ideas or information.
- make the discourse hang together so that people can follow what the speaker is saying.

According to what has been established in the National English Syllabus,⁵⁰ speaking is the ultimate goal for students learning English.

b. History

Robert Langs, M.D. is the creator of the Communicative Approach (CA). He is an American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, analytically trained in a classical Freudian psychoanalytic institute in New York City. Mr. Langs is known today as an important psychoanalytic revolutionary and revisionist. His most recent interest is "creating dramas—one and two act plays—that are effective art forms, while conveying through narrative tales the insights of the CA into the nature of emotional life"⁵¹.

The Communicative Approach appeared for the first time around the mid-1960s, Its concern is on the development of the four skills, where oral

⁵⁰ Ministerio de Educación Pública Programa de Estudios Inglés III Ciclo. San José, MEP, 2001.9
⁵¹ British Council English Teaching . Teaching Speaking Skill. Online. Yahoo. 08 Feb. 2003. 122

communication competence is crucial. Chomsky⁵² also adds that oral communication takes place in a homogenous speech community, and other factors such as grammar deviations, memorization, etc. do not affect such communicative competence.

c. Models

Chances are given to students to work on the necessary models or language input. Through speech, learners acquire the fundamentals of language pertinent to carrying out specific interaction where they have to perform some functions, using appropriate language structures in a cultural setting⁵³.

d. Process

In regards to activities, aspects such as roles are really relevant to take into account. The roles of the students, the teacher and the material are well defined in the Communicative Approach, with the learner at the center of the process, Breen and Candlin⁵⁴ explain that:

The role of the learner as negotiator –between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning –emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way.

52 Dell Hymes. On the Communicative Competence. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1972. 72.

53 Ministerio de Educación Pública Programa de Estudios Inglés III Ciclo. San José, MEP, 2001.7

54 R. Carter and M. McCarthy. Exploring Spoken English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 110

Students must be an important part of their own learning, if they are to become autonomous, and independent learners. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator and a co-participant of the learning process. He/She provides and organizes the resources, guides the classroom procedures and activities, researches and learns, and contributes to the development of students' abilities.

Richards⁵⁵ characterizes other teacher roles. As a needs analyst, the teacher assesses needs in order to assure learning goals and learning styles. As a counselor, the teacher gives students the appropriate feedback for them to get a picture of the language intention and interpretation. As a group process manager in a student centered class, the teacher monitors, encourages, and fills gaps of functional, cultural, or formal components .

Materials also play an important role since they support communicative language learning. They promote communication and influence language learning. However, materials must follow certain requirements. They have to be text-based materials, and they must include different sequential activities and provide an input for communication. Communicative lessons depart from a text, afterwards activities are followed.

Task-based materials have plenty of role plays, simulations and games. They are some tools for teachers to foster language interaction. Besides realia, "authentic materials" such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, and others are a way to engage learners with native language and authentic vocabulary⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. 76.

⁵⁶Idem. 80.

e. Strategies

There are some strategies which include aspects in the teaching setting, and indicate which techniques, and activities to use. The success of a language class lies in the activities done in class. Suitable strategies, and appropriate materials provide students with tools to be motivated enough to learn. M. Bygate⁵⁷ suggests some activities to address students language needs:

1. Transferring L1 strategies

When preparing for a speaking task, the teacher should make students aware of any relevant L1 strategies that might help them to perform the task successfully, for example, 'rephrasing' if someone does not understand what the teacher means.

2. Formal/informal language

Give students one or more short dialogs where one speaker is either too formal or too informal. Students should be able to identify formal registers and show students how disorganized informal speech is.

3. Transactional and interactional language

Raise students' awareness by using a dialog that contains both. It could be two friends chatting to each other (interactional) or ordering a meal(transactional).

4. Real interaction patterns

Teach real interaction patterns. Introduce the following basic interactional pattern: Initiate, Respond, Follow-up.

⁵⁷ M. Bygate. *Speaking*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.23

5. Understanding spoken English

After a listening exercise give students the tapescript. Using part of it, the students mark the stressed words, and put them into groups. Compare a speech with an informal conversation. In the same lesson or subsequent listening lessons the teacher can focus on reductions in spoken speech, for example, linking, elision and assimilation.

All these strategies must be put into practice in the English classroom, so the students become more competent while speaking.

f. Functions

There are some activities where functions can be fully developed. "The functional component refers to the communicative purpose for which we use the language. Language is not only forms; we have to start looking at what people do with those forms"⁵⁸. Learning activities have to engage students in meaningful and communicative competence in order to promote their language improvement as well as its internalization.

Two different aspects of Krashen's theory come into play at this point: learning a language versus acquiring a language. The first process involves a conscious process of instruction, where structures, phonetics and lexis are taught; on the other hand, acquisition requires using the language naturally for actual communication. Likewise, communicative competence in the learning process depends upon skill development, in other words, developing communicative skills.

⁵⁸Costa Rica. Ministry of Public Education. National English Syllabus for Third Cycle. San José: GPO, 2002. 13

Students are involved in activities such as simulations, and role-plays, and so on, to stimulate language learning. Situations are then created, situations based on everyday activities, routines, work competencies. A need is given to pupils to satisfy their curiosity, their necessity to find communication significant. Skills are developed according to each linguistic need. So skills are enhanced in accordance with their performance. For example, in a discussion where individuals have to talk and listen, speaking and listening are used in order to carry out such a situation. Reading and writing are necessary to fill out a job application form.

The Communicative Approach⁵⁹ deals with the following levels:

an integrative and content level;

a linguistic and instrumental level;

an affective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct;

a level of individual learning needs;

a general educational level of extra-linguistic goals.

These objectives determine the particular orientation of a course or syllabus. Specific aspects of language are reflected in the developing of listening, speaking, reading and writing, according to the students' communication needs and their proficiency level⁶⁰.

Once all language skills mentioned above are integrated, the syllabus can be constructed. The procedural syllabus becomes the one that really suits

⁵⁹ Jack C Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.56.

⁶⁰Idem 73

teaching in Costa Rica. This kind of syllabus is organized into skills and micro-skills; it also targets developing functional competence in the language and specific cognitive targets. For each skill, procedures engage learners in a process to design each objective. And finally, evaluation criteria determine how students' achievement can be reached and observed.

Among the activities that are listed in the procedural syllabus, there are two types of activities. Littlewood⁶¹, distinguishes Functional Communication and Social Interaction. Functional activities are the ones that engage students in exercises such as comparing pictures, noting similarities and differences, sequencing of events, gaps exercises, following directions, and problem solving. Social Interaction activities are discussion sessions, role plays, simulations, improvisations, dialogs, debates, and others.

3. Reading

Since the use of authentic readings is proposed in the methodological guide to develop EFL classroom activities, the reading skill plays a very important role throughout this research. In order to have a better idea about its principles and the process to develop the reading skill, the following definition is given.

a. Definition

Kenneth Goodman states that reading is:

...a receptive language process. It is a psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. There is

⁶¹Idem 77

thus an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language to thoughts⁶².

b. History

Reading research is not too old; it is no more than a hundred years old. In 1879, Emile Javal wrote the first paper on eye movements while reading. Then, in 1886, James Mckeen Cattell published a paper on seeing and naming letters versus words. This view about reading remained until 1960 when a number of scholars developed more or less formal models of the reading process.

c. Models

According to Marianne Celce-Murcia⁶³, the latest literature in first and second language discusses the reading process in terms of three reading models. These reading models are called top- down, bottom-up, and interactive. The top-down model has to do with the selection of the fewest and most productive elements from a text in order to make sense of it. The idea here is that the reader has to use minimal language cues to make hypotheses about the meaning of a text. These hypotheses are then confirmed, rejected, or modified as the selection of minimal language cues from the text continues. The idea of this model is that it is not necessary to read word by word to understand the text. Avoiding word by word reading while extracting meaning from the text, is possible, thanks to the way in which our background or world knowledge is organized in the brain. This

⁶² K. S. Goodman, 1969. Analysis of Oral Reading Miscues: Applied Psycholinguistics. Reading Researchers Quarterly. 5: 12.

⁶³ M Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second of Foreign Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991. 218

background is characterized by schema theory research as being organized into units called "schemata" or larger order mental frameworks of knowledge. During the reading process then, the reader is going to use his/her existing schemata to make predictions about what is coming next in the text, and about how some new information relates to what is already known. The bottom-up model describes reading as a process of exact identification of letters, words, and sentences by moving the eyes from left to right across the page, while building comprehension from letter to word to phrase to sentence. Both reading models have to be taken as interactive models especially for the second language learner. Eskey, quoted by Celce-Murcia, notes,

...the fact that top-down processing skills which focus primarily on meaning, rather than on form, play a major role in reading does not do away with the reader's need for simple bottom-up language processing skills. The reader must still decode the graphic forms of print and the grammatical structures, which provide textual relationships⁶⁴.

d. Process

According to Marva A. Barnett⁶⁵ the reading process can be divided into the stages at which they occur: Pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading and follow-up. The pre-reading stage consists of introducing the reader to the topic. One of the main functions of this stage is to elicit or provide appropriate background knowledge to activate the necessary schemata. The while-reading stage takes

⁶⁴ Idem 219

⁶⁵ Marva. Barnett. Foreign Language Reading Theory and Practice. Prentice Hall Regency, 1988. 10'

place when readers develop reading strategies, improve their control of the second language and decode problematic text passages. In addition, in the post-reading stage the readers' comprehension is checked, which leads them to a deeper analysis of the text. Finally, Barnett states that there is another stage called the follow-up stage that consists of taking the readers beyond the particular reading in two ways: transferring reading skills to other texts or integrating reading skills with other language skills.

e. Strategies

Four major reading strategies must be considered in the elaboration of the reading exercises: skimming, scanning, extensive reading, and intensive reading. These strategies must be integrated with the other language skills, for example:

Reading and writing, e.g., summarizing, mentioning what has read in a letter, note-taking, etc.

Reading and listening, e.g., reading the lyrics while listening to a song or recorded information to solve a written problem, matching opinions and texts, etc.

Reading and speaking, e.g., discussions, debates, etc.

Skimming

Skimming is a quick running of the eyes over a text to get the gist or global meaning of it. Skimming is a good way to get a general idea of light reading such as magazines or the sports or entertainment sections of a newspaper. Skimming is also a good way to review material we have read before. Nobody skims in the same way; when skimming the same piece of information nobody picks up exactly

the same words, but at least everybody gets a rather similar idea of what it is all about.

Scanning

Scanning is a quick overview of a text to find specific information. Scanning means to glance rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information, for example, a name, a date, or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose.

Extensive reading

Extensive reading consists of reading longer texts for one's own pleasure. Extensive reading involves global understanding of the text.

Intensive reading

Intensive reading consists of reading shorter texts to extract specific information, in other words, reading for detail. Intensive reading involves approaching the text under the close guidance of the teacher or a task which forces the student to pay great attention to the text. The aim of intensive reading is to arrive at a profound and detailed understanding of the text, not only of what it means but also of how the meaning is produced.

4. Writing

When teaching English under the principles of the Communicative Approach, it is vital to deal with the four basic skills of language. Therefore, listening, speaking, reading and writing should be treated equally, in the sense that none of these skills should be neglected in the teaching/learning process because

they all contribute to the development of communicative competence, which includes grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence⁶⁶.

In this section the writing skill is to be developed further and in detail, always keeping in mind the Communicative Approach since this is the approach suggested by the National English Advisory of the Ministry of Public Education for ninth graders in the public school system of Costa Rica.

As a point of departure, let us state that according to Olshtain, quoted by Celce-Murcia⁶⁷, the writing skill enjoys special status within the communicative approach due to the fact that through writing a person can create a variety of messages which convey his/her beliefs, feeling and ideas. In the language class environment, the writing skill should be encouraged and nurtured to help students develop this productive skill, thus contributing to the experience of learning a foreign language in an integrated way.

a. Definition

Kroll quoted by Celce-Murcia⁶⁸ states that writing is a complex and difficult skill for most learners, in both the native and the second language due to the fact that:

...writing requires simultaneous control over a number of language systems as well as an ability to factor in consideration of the ways

⁶⁶ Robin C. Scarcella. Developing Communicative Competence in a Second Language. Newbury House Publisher. N.Y. 1990. 42

⁶⁷ M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991. 235

⁶⁸ idem 261

the discourse must be shaped for a particular audience, and a particular purpose.

Writing, like the other language skills, needs to be dealt with at the particular level of linguistic and discourse proficiency which the students have reached.

According to Elite Olshtain, quoted by Celce-Murcia⁶⁹, writing is a communicative skill of great importance that allows the learner to plan and rethink the communication process. It also provides the learner the opportunity to focus on linguistic accuracy and content organization, which are crucial elements in the process of learning a language.

b. History

In the past, writing was considered the domain of the elite and well-educated, thus being neglected for some years. Nowadays writing has become an essential tool for people from all walks of life. The ability to write has become quite important in our global community, and the teaching of writing has a very special place in both second-and foreign language education. Advanced means of transportation and technology allow people from different countries and cultures worldwide to interact with one another. Communication across nations, and cultures and languages become ever more essential.

In the 1940s the teaching of writing was viewed as a product approach, since the main concern in regards to writing was the completed written product, and not with the strategies and processes involved in its production. In the mid 1960s a number of articles appeared calling for change in the way composition

⁶⁹ Idem 241

had come to be viewed and taught, starting with the call by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer⁷⁰ for teachers and researchers to examine the ways in which writing is actually produced.

This new approach shifted the teaching of first language writing, and later had an impact on the teaching of writing to ESL/EFL students. According to Barbara Kroll⁷¹, the most significant single transformation in the teaching of writing has been the shift from a focus on product to a focus on process.

The process approach provides a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (planning, rewriting, and the like), instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling and grammar). As Hairston⁷² says, "Writing is a way of discovery in which writers may develop what they say during rather than before the process of writing".

In other words, writers, in the process of writing, shape their ideas once they start creating a text – they do not remain attached to what they said before they began writing. Thus writing is an activity that evolves as it is being created; it is not a passive activity but a dynamic process.

c. Models

According to Watson-Reekie⁷³, there are different reasons for using models: First, they provide exposure to the vocabulary and structure of the language. Second, they illustrate rhetorical organization and stylistic variety; and third, they provide insight into the culture. Models are also important because they take

⁷⁰ Idem 246

⁷¹ Idem 247

⁷² idem 247

⁷³ Sandra McKay, Composing in a Second Language. Newbury House Publisher. 1984. 97

students beyond the sentence level, and as connected discourse, models are valuable resources for illustrating cohesive devices such as pronouns, articles, and conjunctions.

According to the process model, readings serve some very practical purposes in the writing class. Reading provides models of what English texts look like. Readings provide input which helps students develop awareness of English prose style. It is reading that gives the writer the "feel" for the look and texture of reader-based prose⁷⁴.

Thus, the time has come to deal with the skill of writing in the EFL classroom environment in an integrated way to help students develop the four basic skills of language and enrich their experience of learning a foreign language, in this case the English language.

d. Process

In order to develop the writing skill using the methodological guide, teachers should be aware that writers go through certain processes, which lead to successful pieces of written work. "The process of writing involves composing, communicating, crafting, improving and evaluating."⁷⁵

When one writes for real life purposes there is always a reader in mind: a friend, a relative, a colleague or an institution. Thus, teachers, must create context and provide audiences for writing, so students know what to write about and who their audience will be.

⁷⁴ Idem 98

⁷⁵ P. Hedge. Writing. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 9

The process of writing contains a number of stages⁷⁶ which should be taken into account when elaborating writing activities in the English classroom such as being motivated; getting ideas; planning and outlining; making notes; making a first draft; revising, re-planning, redrafting; editing and getting ready for publication.

Let us keep in mind that a process is the means by which a product is reached. "Correction or rewriting a draft is thus a regular, and very important, part of the whole writing process⁷⁷". In brief, "the classroom should provide an environment in which students can experience being writers, thinking about purpose and audience, drafting a piece of writing, revising it, and sharing with others⁷⁸".

e. Strategies

The strategies selected for classes will depend upon students writing needs. Students' needs should always be borne in mind when deciding what strategies to use to help them learn to write. The following strategies can be used:

Completion exercises

This type of exercise can help students learn how a particular connective indicates a particular relationship between the ideas presented.

Sentence combining

Under this strategy the students are given a pair of sentences and are asked to use a particular type of conjunction to connect both sentences.

⁷⁶ Idem 81

⁷⁷ A. Brooks, and P. Grundy. Writing for Study Purposes. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. 22

⁷⁸ P. Hedge. Writing. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 25

Longer units of discourse

Exercises should not be limited to sequences of pairs of sentences. Students should be given texts and instructed to identify the linking devices in order to determine the relationships they signal between the sections of these texts.

Brainstorming

During brainstorming students are encouraged to participate in sharing ideas about a particular subject. This technique will generate a lot of material that the teacher later writes on the board for all pupils to use in their writing.

Listing

Listing can be a quiet and essentially individual activity. Students are encouraged to produce a lengthy list of all subcategories that come to mind as they think about the topic at hand. Listing does not demand the creation of grammatically correct sentences, so that those students who are concerned about making mistakes in their writing will feel at ease.

Clustering

Clustering is a way of getting ideas across to the students quickly. Clustering begins with a key word placed in the center of a page around which the student jots down in a few minutes all of the free associations triggered by the subject matter, using simple words or short phrases. "Clustering makes silent, invisible mental processes visible and manipulable⁷⁹".

⁷⁹M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second of Foreign Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991. 253

It is important for students to put into practice all these techniques in order to realize how each one helps in the generating of a text.

G. The Cultural Component of Language Teaching

Since culture is viewed as another component in the syllabus for ninth grade, it is present in the methodological guide. Teaching culture strives for an understanding of the culture of at least one country where the target language is spoken. Knowing the features of the target culture makes it easier to understand the language itself. Some of the cultural features that should be taken into account are: values, attitudes, behavior patterns, points of view, ways of thinking, appreciation, etc.

The cultural component should always be present in the other components of language teaching both in the formal component, that refers to the grammatical structures selected according to the different functions of the language and the topics studied in the ninth grade of government schools, and, in the functional component that has to do with the purpose for which the language is used. Language and culture go together in order to communicate social meanings. This means that the language must be presented through meaningful situations in cultural contexts.

The pertinent use of the components mentioned above guarantees the required communicative competence because the linguistic and cultural tools together allow the students to complement their education and compare the contribution of the foreign language in the social, economic and technological

development of their country. This competence does not occur by itself; it is a process in which students learn and practice how to "accept and adapt themselves to constant changes"⁸⁰.

1. Definition

H. Ned Seelye identifies culture as follows:

... "patterns for living," a concept defined as "...the individual's role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them. " These patterns enable the individual to relate "the social order to which he is attached." Literature and the fine arts along with culture should be broadly samples⁸¹.

The term culture is associated with the term social, as when one talks about the "socio-cultural" factors affecting the teaching and the learning of foreign languages. Both terms "social and culture" refer to an individual's place within a social group. Culture can refer to at least two ways of defining a social community. First, it focuses on the way a social group represents itself through its material productions, works of art, literature, social institutions of every day life, and the ways they are reproduced and preserved through history. Second, education is more concerned with attitudes and beliefs, and ways of thinking, behaving and remembering that are shared by members of the community.

⁸⁰ Costa Rica. Ministry of Public Education. National English Syllabus for Third Cycle. San José: GPO, 2002. 13

⁸¹ H. Ned. Seelye. Teaching Culture. Natural textbook Company. 1993 15

Summarizing, it can be said that culture is dynamic, neither fixed or static; it is also a continuous and cumulative process learned and shared by people who exhibit certain behavior and values which become creative and meaningful to their lives. Culture is symbolically represented through language and people interacting in accordance with their thinking, feelings, and actions.

2. The importance of teaching culture in the Language Classroom.

Interest in culture in the classroom is often sparked by the teacher's curiosity. Teaching culture can be a vehicle not only for learning about another way of life but also for encouraging students to seek and pursue things about that culture.

To know and learn about culture in the field of education is important because of the many concepts that need to be defined. If teachers want to understand concepts such as: bilingual, bicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, intercultural, cross-cultural, multicultural and antiracist education, they have to start by understanding the concept of culture.

Once they have this concept clear, they will become aware of how it works in the English classroom. Teachers should remember that culture is a means of survival because the more learners know about others' culture the more they can become involved with them and understand the way they (the other people) behave, think, and act. Language teachers and learners should understand that all people are cultural beings who are affected by other people's behavior. For this reason, culture in the curriculum will help teachers prepare students to dealing effectively with the culture of their communities and of the

world. Understanding culture affects how teaching and learning are organized, how classroom rules and curricula are developed, and how teaching methods and evaluation are put into practice.

3. History

In the past, culture was taught through literature. It guided speakers of other languages to share a universal view of the world, and the technique used was the translation and explanations of texts. During the audio-lingual era, the importance of culture in language teaching was emphasized not for the study of literature but for language learning. With the growth of linguistics, this relation between culture and literature was widened and language acquisition became the acquisition of skills, which separated language teaching from the teaching of literature and the teaching of culture as well. According to Kramsch⁸² in the last 40 years "This separation has kept language teaching within strict structural and functional bounds, with culture often considered to be a fifth skill after speaking, listening, reading and writing".

In the 70's, the cultural component of language teaching was seen as pragmatic of functions and notions that were expressed through language in everyday ways of speaking and acting. As a result, the teaching of culture as a component of language teaching has tended to keep a universal sense and a cultural particularity. Teachers try to emphasize the differences between the native and the target culture without provoking conflict.

⁸² Clarie Kramsch. *The Cultural Component of Language Teaching*. Online, 1996. 12

4. Language and culture

Teaching culture means not only knowing how things are and have been but also how they could have been, or how they could be. In addition, culture means history, social science, and literature. Culture is important in education because it is a means of survival. Every person is a cultural being and needs to be aware of how culture affects people's behavior. The studying of culture enables learners to handle cultures different from their own. They learn to go beyond stereotypes to realize that people are not only the way one thought they were, but also that deep down people are all the same.

One of the main ways in which culture manifests itself is through language, which plays a crucial role in the construction of culture and the emergence of cultural change. Culture in the curriculum prepares students to deal with culture of the community and the world, because the more they become aware of others' culture, the more they are going to understand their behavior. The language teacher has to help the students to obtain a holistic view of "culture" in order to develop a clear and understandable definition.

The inclusion of culture in the foreign language classroom curriculum has become more prevailing within the syllabus prepared by the Ministry of Education⁸³, but there are still those teachers who either ignore the concept or deny its validity. The reason might be that they are not prepared to deal with the concept of culture in the language classroom; they do not know how to manipulate the differences between the native and the target culture, or maybe the problem

⁸³ Costa Rica. Ministry of Public Education. National English Syllabus for Third Cycle. San José: GPO, 2002.

for those teachers who resist teaching culture is really semantics, with a narrow view of what is meant by culture. They may think culture teaching focuses completely on the content and not on the linguistic features.

However, it is ironical to think that while they are presumably ignoring culture in their classrooms, they teach it every day because language and culture are so intimately related that one cannot exist without the other. It is self-evident; even though, not all English speakers share the same cultural behavior.

There is no way to avoid teaching culture when teaching a language. Language and culture always go together, even when teachers are not aware of it. Culture is at the forefront from the first day of the beginning class. Most second language programs begin with greetings, introductions and leave takings; no matter what method or technique is used, teachers can see the cultural nature of language when people greet each other in any place, in any language.

5. Teaching culture in the language classroom

When selecting the cultural material for a language course, it may be advantageous if teachers or the authorities in charge consider the types of classes, and the age of the students.

The foreign language student should have a wide range of texts, methods, techniques, approaches, and activities to use in learning to communicate in the language. He must get involved with other cultures to be aware of others' beliefs and attitudes in order to achieve a higher degree of tolerance. It is much more effective for the language learner if the teacher is informed about the cultural nature of what he/she is teaching. To pay attention to cultural details increases

the benefits or practical uses of a lesson, not only in adding another dimension but also in making a lesson more interesting and, of course, easier to learn. Although the kinds of cultural information that are likely to be found in a typical lesson for foreign language students in Costa Rica are to be found in lessons based on grammar, the context is expected to be clearly communicative. This is the reason why for the approaches proposed by the Ministry of Education some years ago, and the cultural points to be gleaned were abundant. Whatever the content, culture is unavoidably embedded. A simple language lesson carries much hidden information of what is really intended or recognized in regards to cultural behavior. Culture in action is found in almost in every current sample text used to teach foreign languages. Most of them are pedagogically sound or "healthy", and interesting, because they concern people and what they do. The Ministry of Education syllabus goes in this direction; it addresses the cultural component by supplying some cultural information while teaching the language. It provides the teacher with the tools to develop each cognitive target by means of activities such as listening comprehension exercises, which require speaking, as well as listening that contain grammar points and vocabulary.

Culture may be seen as a subject skipped over by the teacher because he/she has been told by the students that they do not want to learn anything about culture. They only want to learn the language; they need to communicate with others but nothing else. The teacher sometimes says: "Very well, let's leave culture aside. Let's just learn how to speak English." The Ministry of Education of Costa Rica has made an effort to offer a syllabus that includes more specific cultural contents or targets dealing with situations students will have to face in the

future. Clearly, the students need to be prepared for all that goes beyond linguistic competence. Culture taught as situational language lessons is still culture if students can function in a specific situation such as buying clothes, eating in a special restaurant, traveling, and so on. In an opportunity for cultural exchange, students can have a pleasant experience, when they have the chance to role play or dramatize in order to practice many cultural components such as ordering in a restaurant or soda, getting the check, paying for it at the table, the counter, or the cashier's counter, or going to the supermarket. Culture lessons are pretty much the same in all levels. Teachers and students share and celebrate holidays, food, music, etc. This is done because teachers are aware that language cannot be taught apart from culture and that to learn a language is to learn a culture.

To teach culture teachers may use many different techniques. For example they can use attractive photos of people from other cultures. A pre-teaching activity may be the students' discussion of different customs that they see in the pictures and their reaction to them. Then there can be a follow up-question activity in which they discuss the possible variations in language and whether or not they have experienced it.

Language and culture are inseparable. The contact between languages and cultures makes them flourish; they perish in isolation. One makes the other exist. If a language is lost, a culture is also lost. As was mentioned before, foreign language learning is comprised of several components, including grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, as well as a change in attitudes towards one's own and another culture. According to

Kramersch, what is debatable, though, is what is meant by the term "culture" and how the latter is integrated into language learning and teaching.

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them.⁸⁴

The cultural component included in the methodological guide will be developed according to the cognitive target being treated. These activities are designed to make students aware of cultural differences and similarities between the target and native cultures.

Knowing the importance of the development of the four basic skills and the cultural component within the English teaching process, it is crucial to be aware of the integration of the four skills due to the fact that the use of one skill reinforces other skills. Besides, the integration of skills is a must in the communicative approach and put into practice in every-day activities. Therefore, teachers of English should be conscious of the benefits of this integration in the English classroom.

⁸⁴ Claire Kramersch. *The Cultural Component of Language Teaching*. Online, 1996. 1

1. Introduction of the Study

The study was conducted in order to analyze the data obtained from the survey and to identify the factors that influence the behavior of the respondents. The study was conducted in a systematic and organized manner, and the results were analyzed in a thorough and objective manner. The study was conducted in a systematic and organized manner, and the results were analyzed in a thorough and objective manner. The study was conducted in a systematic and organized manner, and the results were analyzed in a thorough and objective manner.

Chapter III

Methodological Procedures

1. Introduction

The study was conducted in order to analyze the data obtained from the survey and to identify the factors that influence the behavior of the respondents. The study was conducted in a systematic and organized manner, and the results were analyzed in a thorough and objective manner. The study was conducted in a systematic and organized manner, and the results were analyzed in a thorough and objective manner. The study was conducted in a systematic and organized manner, and the results were analyzed in a thorough and objective manner.

I. Description of the Study

In order to organize and analyze the data collected, a descriptive study was carried out. According to L.R. Gay⁸⁵ descriptive statistics has to do with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, conditions and procedures. L.R. Gay also suggests that descriptive data may be gathered by means of questionnaires, surveys, interviews and observations. In this way, when samples are selected carefully differentiated conclusions can be drawn from them. Descriptive research entails the collection of data that help us design a methodological guide that enhances language competence through the integration of the main skills and the cultural component based on the National English Syllabus for ninth grade. The results derived from the investigation aim towards the description and analysis of the need for a methodological guide as supplementary material that helps teachers in the development of the foreign language classes.

II. Population

To select the population sample, the Department of Statistics of the Ministry of Public Education recommended that the number of public high schools should be selected according to the territorial division of the Ministry of Public Education. Due to the fact that this population is wide, twenty-four teachers were interviewed in three school districts from the educational region of San José.

⁸⁵L.R. Gay. Educational Research Competences for analysis and Applications. Columbus; Ohio. Merrill Publishing Company. 36

This population is presented in the following chart.

Educational Region of San José		
High Schools		
School District 1	School District 2	School District 4
Liceo de San José	Colegio Superior de Señoritas	Liceo Mauro Fernández Acuña
Liceo del Sur	Liceo de Costa Rica	Liceo Julio Fonseca Gutiérrez
		Unidad Pedagógica Cuatro Reinas
		Unidad Pedagógica de Tibás

III. Description of the Instrument

For the purpose of this research and the support of the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Public Education, a questionnaire based on closed and open-ended questions was designed to be applied to ninth grade teachers from three school districts of the educational region of San José. The questionnaire is one of the instruments mostly used for data collection since it lets the researcher limit the alternatives of choice and leads individuals to those answers⁸⁶.

The responses obtained from the questionnaire allow the researchers to determine the need of a methodological guide to help teachers enhance language competence.

⁸⁶ Roberto Hernández, et al. Metodología de la investigación. México: McGraw-Hill, 1991. 285-289..

A questionnaire was applied to the ninth grade teachers of eight high schools. It consisted of ten questions. In all questions the teachers were asked to answer yes or no for closed questions, and express their opinions for the open questions.

The questions can be described as follows:

Question one: **Do you follow the Ministry of Public Education Programa de Estudio specifically the syllabus for ninth grade?**

This question is to know whether or not the teachers follow the objectives, cognitive targets and cultural component of the national English syllabus for ninth grade.

Question two: **Do you face any difficulties in getting a textbook that integrates the development of the four language skills for ninth grade?**

This question deals with the difficulties the teachers may have in obtaining a textbook that integrates the development of the four language skills for ninth grade.

Question three: **Do you use authentic readings in the development of your class?**

This question has to do with the use of authentic readings in the development of a class.

Question four: **Do you use an appropriate textbook or methodological guide that integrates the four skills for ninth grade?**

This question tells whether or not teachers use a methodological guide that integrates the main four skills.

Question five: **Does your textbook include the teaching of the cultural component based on what the National Syllabus proposes for ninth grade ?**

This question indicates whether or not the cultural component is integrated in the teaching process.

Question six: **Which textbook do you use in your classroom?**

a) **Have Fun**

b) **Goal**

c) **Others**

This question is given to find out which book teachers use in their classes.

Question seven: **Does this textbook satisfy the students language needs in terms of:**

a) **integrating the four skills under a communicative approach?**

b) **the objectives established by the National Syllabus for ninth grade?**

c) **the students' English improvement?**

d) **the use of authentic readings in a communicative way?**

These questions indicate whether or not that textbook fulfills the students' language needs.

Question eight: **Do you have any other textbook or methodological guide that can be used to fulfill specifically the students' language needs for ninth grade?**

This question finds out if the teachers use any other textbook or methodological guide.

Question nine: **Based on the textbook(s) that you use to teach English to ninth grade students, what are the weaknesses that you have found?**

This question shows what weaknesses teachers face with their textbooks.

Question ten: **Based on the objectives that the National English Syllabus proposes for ninth grade students, and based on your professional experience and knowledge, what should a textbook have in order to fulfill the students' needs for ninth grade?**

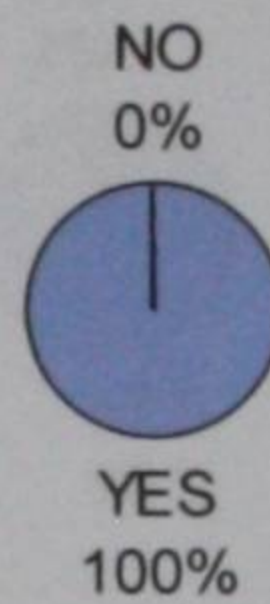
This question shows what aspects teachers are missing in the textbooks used in their classes in regards to the objectives of the National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education and their own experience.

IV. Description of the results of the field of study

The following information was gathered from 24 ninth grade teachers who answered a questionnaire. These teachers represent 100% of the population sample.

GRAPH # 1

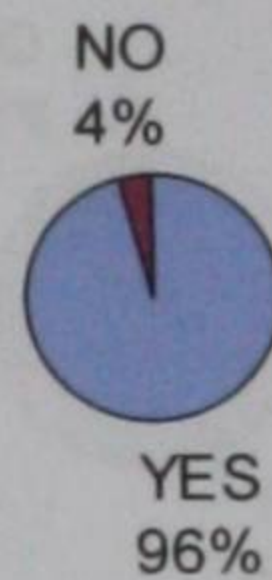
1. Do you follow the Ministry of Public Education Programa de Estudio specifically the syllabus for ninth grade?



Reading the data, graph # 1 shows that 100% of the teachers follow the Programa de Estudio from the Ministry of Public Education for ninth grade, while 0% does not.

GRAPH # 2

2. Do you face any difficulties in getting a textbook that integrates the development of the four skills for ninth grade?



The data displayed in Graph # 2 show that 96% of the teachers face difficulties getting a textbook that integrates the development of the four basic skills, while 4% does not.

GRAPH # 3

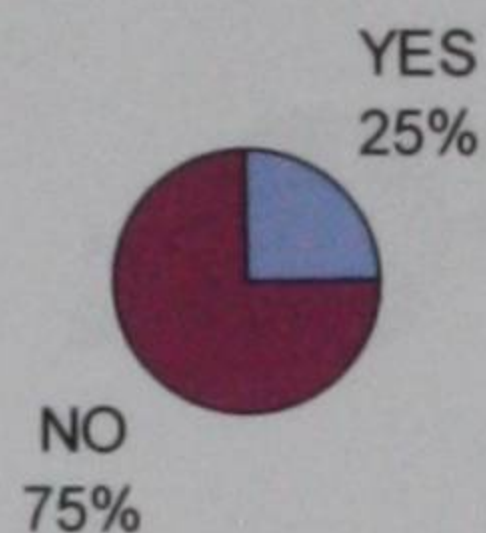
3. Do you use authentic readings in the development of your class?



Graph # 3 indicates that 83 % of the teachers use authentic readings in the development of their classes, while 17% does not.

GRAPH # 4

4. Do you use an appropriate textbook or methodological guide that integrates the four skills for ninth grade?



Graph # 4 shows that 75% of the teachers do not use an appropriate textbook or methodological guide that integrates the four basic skills while 25% does.



GRAPH # 5

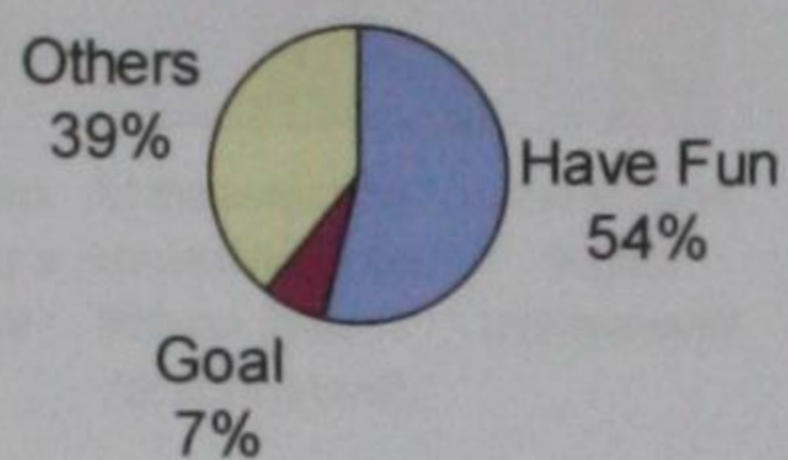
5. Does your textbook include the teaching of the cultural component based on what the National Syllabus proposes for ninth grade?



Graph # 5 shows that 58% of the teachers do not have a textbook that includes the teaching of the cultural component in their classes, while 42% have a book that includes this component.

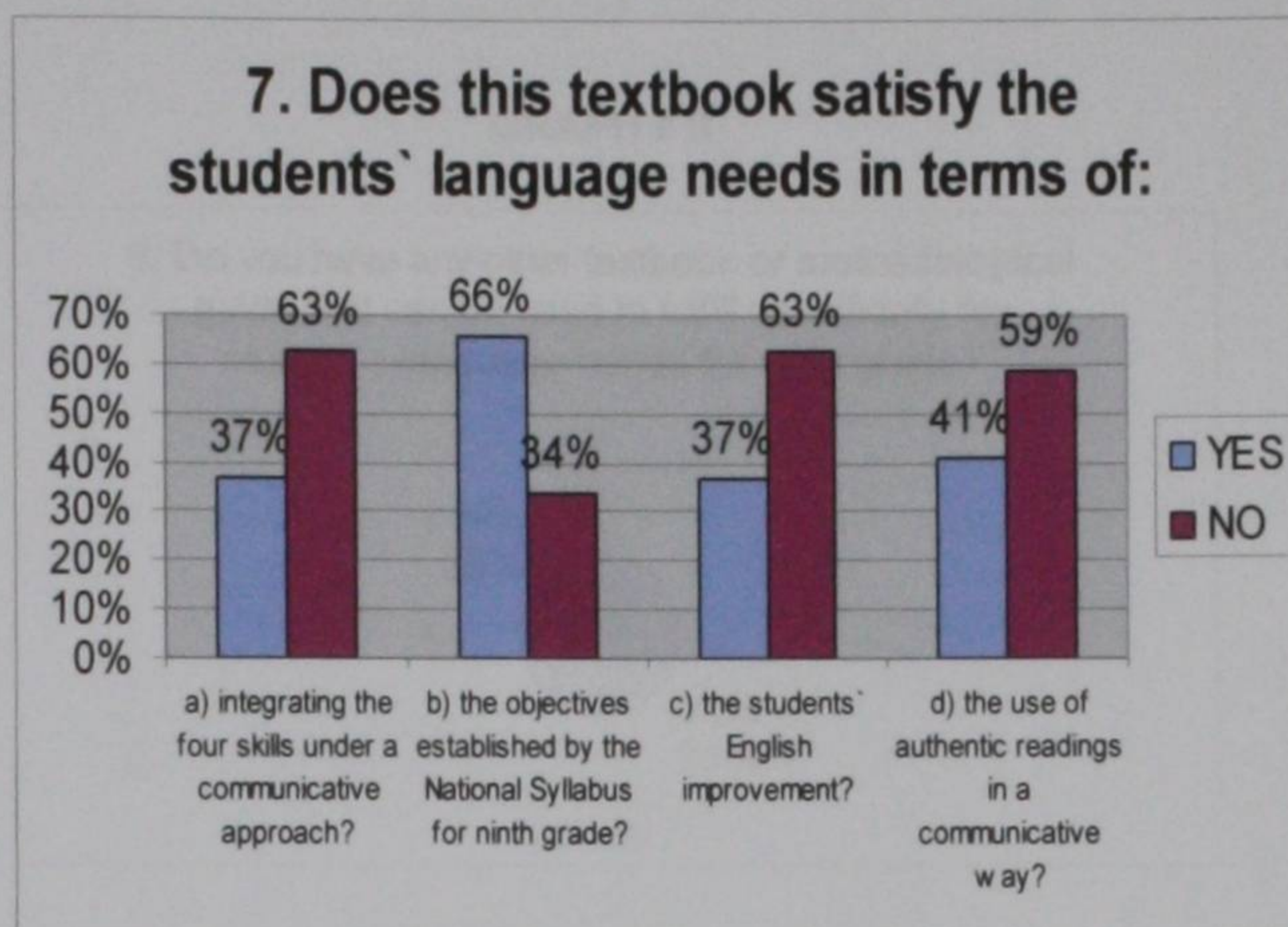
GRAPH # 6

6. Which textbook do you use in your classroom?



Graph # 6 shows that 54% of the teachers use the textbook "Have Fun" , while 39% uses other textbooks and 7% uses the textbook "Goal".

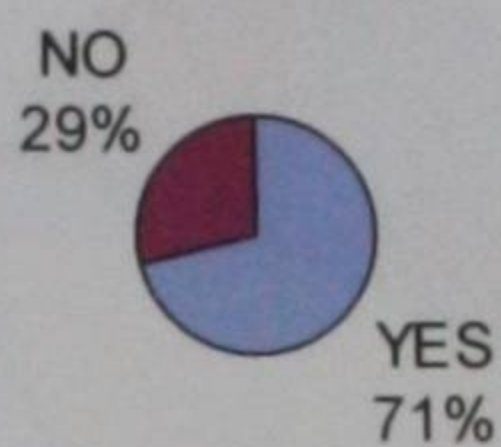
GRAPH # 7



Graph # 7 shows that 63% of the teachers do not have a book that integrates the four skills and 37% does. It also shows that 66% of the teachers have a book that follows the objectives established by the National Syllabus while 34% does not. It indicates that 63% of the teachers do not have a book that integrates the four skills, while 37% does. Finally, it shows that 59% of the teachers do not have a book that includes authentic reading in a communicative way, while 41% does.

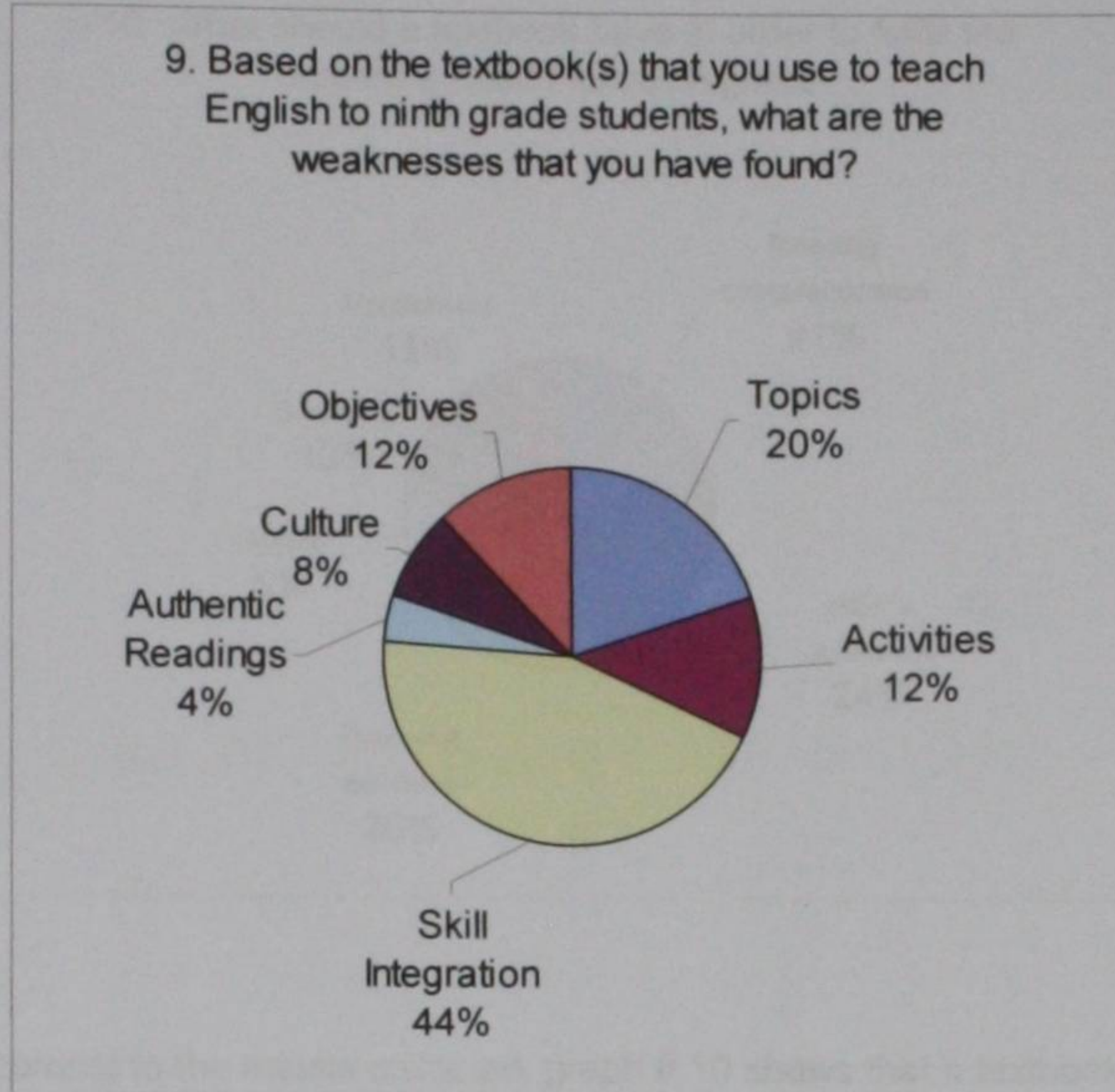
GRAPH # 8

8. Do you have any other textbook or methodological guide that can be used to fulfill specifically the student's language needs for ninth grade?



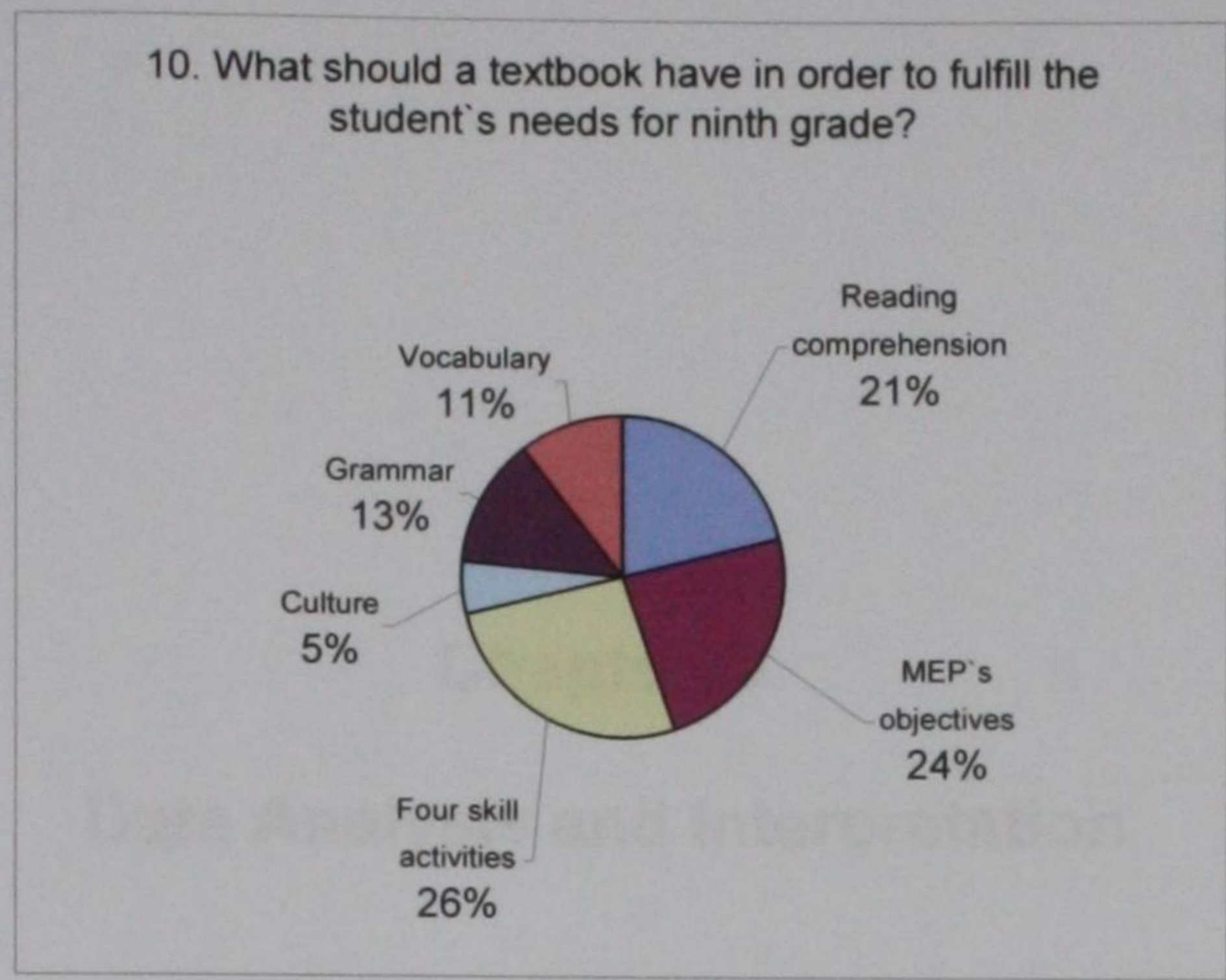
Graph # 8 shows that 71% of the teachers have another textbook or methodological guide that can be used to fulfill the students' language needs, while 29% does not.

GRAPH # 9



Among the different weaknesses teachers found in the textbook they use, the data in Graph # 9 display that 44% of the weaknesses correspond to the lack of integration of the four skills. 20% of the weaknesses correspond to the fact that the topics presented in their textbook do not correspond to the ones proposed by Ministry of Public Education. 12% of the weaknesses correspond to the fact that the activities in their textbook are not attractive for their students. 8% of the weaknesses correspond to the lack of the cultural component in their textbook. Finally 4% of the weaknesses correspond to the lack of authentic readings in the textbooks.

GRAPH # 10



According to the results collected, graph # 10 shows that a textbook should: provide activities that integrate the four skills (26%); contain the objectives proposed by Ministry of Public Education (24%); contain reading comprehension exercises (21%); include grammar explanations and exercises (13%); include vocabulary (11%) and include the cultural component (5%).

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Question one: Do you follow the Ministry of Public Education Programa de Estudio specifically the syllabus for ninth grade?

The purpose of this question is to determine whether or not teachers follow the objectives, cognitive targets, culture notions proposed by the Ministry of Public Education.

The information gathered in graph # 1 in regards to this question shows that 100 % of teachers follow the syllabus established by the Ministry of Public Education. However, graph # 7 reveals in point a) that 63% of the teachers do not have a textbook that integrates the four skills; in point c) 63% of the teachers do not have a textbook that improves the students' English competence; in point d) 59% of the teachers do not have a book that includes authentic readings in a communicative way. In graph # 10 teachers indicate that a textbook in order to fulfill the ninth graders' needs should include the Ministry of Public Education objectives. Even though in graph # 1 100% of the teachers follow the syllabus objectives, graph # 9 displays that 44% of the weaknesses in the text they use correspond to the lack of the integration of the four skills. Besides, 20% of the weaknesses correspond to the fact that the topics presented in the textbook do not correspond to the ones proposed by the Ministry of Public Education. Graph # 4 shows that 75% of the teachers do not use an appropriate textbook or methodological guide that integrates the four skills, since the integration of the four skills is a corner stone in the communicative approach and this is a must in the syllabus for ninth graders, graph # 4 indicates a great inconsistency in relation to the results of graph # 1. As this analysis has shown, there is a considerable gap between what graph # 1 reveals in comparison to what graphs #4, #7, #9, #10

indicate. Due to this inconsistency it is appropriate to consider that teachers require a methodological guide that fits the syllabus objectives.

Question two: Do you face any difficulties in getting a textbook that integrates the development of the four language skills for ninth grade?

The purpose of this question is to determine to what extent teachers find difficult to get a textbook that integrates the four skills in their classes. According to the communicative approach mentioned in Chapter II, the four skills must be taught from the beginning in an integrated way to find communication significant in accordance with students' performance. Nevertheless, graph # 2 shows that 96% of the teachers have problems getting these kinds of textbooks. On the other hand, in graph # 4, 75% of teachers say that the book they use does not integrate the four skills; and in graph # 9, the major weakness teachers find in textbooks is skill integration. Besides, in graph # 10 26% of the teachers agree that a textbook should have four skills activities. Thus, it seems not so easy to find suitable material on the market.

Question three: Do you use authentic readings in the development of your class?

In Chapter III it is mentioned that authentic readings should not be modified in any way; they should fulfill students' needs and interests. They are read for information and enjoyment. By reading carefully selected authentic materials students will certainly know how much they really understand of the target

language in written form. Furthermore, In Chapter II, Celce-Murcia⁸⁷ comments that in the communicative approach the classroom materials and activities should be authentic as often as possible to reflect real-life situations.

Some teachers are usually willing to include realia in their classes, turning to less expensive resources such as newspapers, magazines, brochures and other printed materials. The data collected in graph # 3 show that 83% of the teachers handle these kinds of materials, and authentic readings are not considered a weakness. However, in graph # 7, 59% of the teachers express that the use of authentic readings in the textbooks are not presented in a communicative way. There is an inconsistency when comparing this information with the information gathered in graph # 1,

Question four: Do you use an appropriate textbook or methodological guide that integrates the four skills for ninth grade?

The use of a textbook that integrates the four skills is essential for teachers to help students develop language competence. According to the data gathered, 75% of the teachers do not have a textbook or a methodological guide that integrates the four skills, while 25% does. Again, the information presented in the data reveals that the major weakness found in textbooks is the integration of the four skills (44% / graph # 9). Likewise, 96% of the teachers say materials integrating the four skills are difficult to obtain, (graph # 2).

⁸⁷ M. Celce-Murcia. Teaching English as a Second Language. California: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991.

Question five: Does your textbook include the teaching of the cultural component based on what the National Syllabus proposes for ninth grade?

The objective of this question is to determine whether teachers have a textbook that actually includes the cultural component. The cultural component according to the Communicative Approach⁸⁸ in Chapter I, consists of functions and notions that are expressed through language in everyday ways of speaking and acting. The National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education⁸⁹ promotes the integration of culture in every cognitive target to be developed in an English class. However, the data gathered in graph # 5 show that 58% of the teachers do not have a textbook including the cultural component, while 42% does. In addition, most of the teachers interviewed agree that the lack of cultural aspects is another weakness (8% graph # 9). This analysis shows that the teachers (58% graph # 5) do not have a textbook including the cultural component in their teaching and that only 5% (graph # 10) considers that the cultural component should be present in a textbook. These results clearly indicate the need of some resources that include the cultural component as expected in the English syllabus.

Question six: Which textbook do you use in your classroom?

1. Have Fun
2. Goal

⁸⁸ C. J. Brunfit and Johnson K. Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

⁸⁹ Costa Rica. Ministry of Public Education. National English Syllabus for Third Cycle. San José: GPO, 2002.

3. Others

The objective of this question is to determine which textbook teachers use in their classrooms. The data collected in graph # 6 show that 54% of the teachers use "Have Fun". 39% uses other textbooks and 7% uses "Goal". Most of the teachers agree upon the use of Have Fun series because, as was explained above, these three textbooks coincide with the English syllabus according to the teachers. However, in the teachers' words, it lacks the integration of the four skills. Besides according to teachers' experience, these textbooks have to be "rearranged" to follow the syllabus objectives as it is shown in graph # 7, point a). In other cases, many teachers end up preparing their own material to cope with those objectives. In short, teachers do their best to look for appropriate material but it is not an easy task.

Question seven: Does this textbook satisfy the students' language needs in terms of:

- a) integrating the four skills under a communicative approach?
- b) the objectives established by the National Syllabus for ninth grade?
- c) the students' English improvement?
- d) the use of authentic readings in a communicative way?

The purpose of this question is to determine whether the textbook they use satisfies the students' needs in terms of skills integration, the objectives of the Ministry of Public Education, the students' English improvement and the use of

readings communicatively. The data collected indicate that the textbooks used by teachers follow the syllabus objectives (graph #7, point b)), the textbook integrates the four skills (graph # 4), and also it takes into account the use of authentic readings (graph # 3); however, graph # 7 point a) shows that there is no integration of the four skills, and point d) displays that authentic readings are not presented communicatively.

Question eight: Do you have any other textbook or methodological guide that can be used to fulfill specifically the students' language needs for ninth grade?

The purpose of this question is to determine whether teachers have any other resources to fulfill their work with ninth grade students. This information shows that 71% of the teachers have some other resources to do it, while 29% does not (graph # 8). This high percentage (71%) does not fit the information already analyzed in graph # 2. In graph # 2, 96% of the teachers say that they face difficulties in getting a textbook for teaching ninth grade; and in graph # 4, 75% expresses their lack of resources.

Question nine: Based on the textbook(s) that you use to teach English to ninth grade students, what are the weaknesses that you have found?

The aim of this question is to determine some weaknesses teachers have to deal with the textbooks they use. Thus, six main weaknesses are found:

a) **Four Skills Integration:** 44%.

- b) **Topics:** 20%
- c) **Objectives:** 12%
- d) **Activities:** 12%.
- e) **Culture:** 8%
- f) **Authentic Readings:** 4%

From the information already displayed, it can be concluded that there is a gap between the Ministry of Public Education policies for teaching English and the textbooks teachers used. Therefore, as was mentioned before, the need for appropriate material to deal with the English syllabus requirements is evident.

Question ten: Based on the objectives that the National English Syllabus proposes for ninth grade students, and based on your professional experience and knowledge, what should a textbook have in order to fulfill the students' needs for ninth grade?

This question deals with aspects a textbook should have in order to fulfill the students' needs for ninth grade. According to teachers a textbook must have:

- a) **Activities that integrates the four skills:** 26%
- b) **A textbook based on the objectives of the Ministry of Public Education:** 24%.
- c) **Reading comprehension focus:** 21%.
- d) **Grammar exercises:** 13%.
- e) **Vocabulary:** 11%
- f) **Cultural Component:** 5%

Once again, the above information reveals the need teachers have for an instrument to help them perform well.

From the study above it seems that teachers follow the English syllabus principles (graph # 1); they have different textbooks in order to satisfy the students' language needs (graph #8); they use authentic readings (graph #2). Nevertheless, graph # 2 shows that the teachers face difficulties in getting a textbook that integrates the development of the four skills and graph # 7 point d) indicates that the textbook they use do not satisfy the students needs in regards to the use of authentic readings in a communicative way. In addition, teachers express in graph # 2 their lack of supplementary material that involves the integration of the four skills and the cultural component in order to improve students' communication.

Therefore, based on these results and analysis of the data collected, the researchers of this work have found the need to accessible supplementary material for ninth grade teachers based on the English syllabus guidelines, using authentic readings to perform activities that integrate the four skills and the cultural component in order to improve ninth grade students' English competence.

Chapter V

Using Authentic Readings in the Ninth Grade in
the Public School System of Costa Rica, to
Develop EFL Classroom Activities to Enhance
Students' Competence

I. The Methodological Guide

A. Introduction

The purpose of this methodological guide is to offer to ninth grade teachers of the public school system a tool, based on the curriculum established by the National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education, which will help teachers enhance their students' language competence by using authentic readings to develop EFL classroom activities integrating the four basic language skills.

Due to the fact that teachers follow the syllabus, they are familiar with the cognitive targets to be developed in their classroom. These cognitive targets allow teachers to create real contexts where the language takes place. The National English Syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education proposes the following cognitive targets for the ninth grade:

Sports and leisure activities

The lives and achievements of famous athletes and musicians

The operation of electrical appliances

Roots, suffixes, affixes and prefixes

Transportation, quality, affordability and use

Computers in everyday life

Natural resources and the promotion of conservation

Specific information of words in a given context

Causes and effects of pollution and preservation of the environment.

For the purpose of the present work, three cognitive targets were chosen as samples: Sports and leisure activities; the operation of electrical appliances; and specific information of words in a given context. This methodological guide develops these three cognitive targets using authentic readings with different activities; these three units are to be used as a model to develop the other cognitive targets. Each unit represents a cognitive target from which the activities are designed to integrate the different language skills. In addition, the linguistic objectives as well as the functions of the language are also presented in this work.

Thus, these three sample units include the instructions, the type of activities and the evaluation, all explained in classroom language level (See annex 1). Finally, the approach used in this methodological guide is the Communicative Approach.

It is hoped that this instrument works as a model for teachers to create their own teaching activities according to their needs.

B. Structure of the units

The following aspects are considered for every unit.

Cognitive Target

Contexts in which topics, grammar structures and culture notions are to be taught in public high schools.

Authentic reading

Texts that provide models of natural language and which have not been adapted or modified for pedagogical purposes. They are taken from newspapers, magazines, menus, articles, journals and so on.

Cultural activity

Since culture is an important part of language, it is included in this methodological guide as another language skill. The cultural activity consists of presenting the language in meaningful situations according to the appropriate cultural contexts, in which students compare and contrast the native with the target culture.

Listening activity

In this section, the students deal with listening comprehension practices. A reading is presented as a point of departure because there is a relationship between reading and listening. Thus, teachers read some of the texts aloud in order to provide phonological information, have the students repeat troublesome words and clarify new vocabulary. Before reading, teachers elicit students' previous knowledge about the topic. While reading takes place students perform some tasks to show their understanding. A final activity links the whole process to the other skills.

Speaking activity

This part introduces the students to speaking skill activities, so that the pupils can practice pronunciation, language registers, lexicon, structures as well as extra-linguistic elements. This can be done through different activities, the students go around the class, in pairs or groups to collect information to accomplish a task involving the use of the language as the means of communicating a message, discussions, debates and improvisations. Also, the students are involved in simulations such as role-plays or dramatizations based on

everyday situations such as listening to a dialog, reading a passage, a dialog or a conversation. Another aspect to take into account is that the students can identify inappropriate, formal or informal language through the exposure to different dialogs.

Reading activity

This activity corresponds to what is known as reading comprehension. The purpose of this section is to prepare the students to answer information questions, yes/no questions, oral or written and also to put into practice skimming, scanning, intensive reading and extensive reading skills.

Writing activity

Writing is the last activity the students go through. It consists of composing sentences, paragraphs, or short compositions derived from information already processed during the other activities. Writing represents an expansion or reinforcement of the other skills. The authentic readings are used as springboards for the students' own pieces of writing.

Each of these activities includes: objectives, functions, instructions and evaluation.

C. Types of activities and exercises

answer questions

complete the sentences

match

play board games

select information

solving problems

D. Strategies

The strategies used in the methodological guide are the same strategies mentioned under the heading for each of the skills in the theoretical framework. Moreover, the strategy corresponding to each activity is indicated in the teachers' instructions.

E. Evaluation

The National Educational Policy towards the 21st century says that teachers should provide an active and stimulating atmosphere for their students in the EFL class as well as when assessing. Thus, when teachers plan classroom assessment or student's self-assessment, they should follow the principles for assessing presented by the National English Syllabus for each of the four basic linguistic skills.

When evaluating communicatively, teachers not only take into account students' accuracy but also their fluency. Moreover, evaluation takes place when teachers advise or communicate. During assessment the students' errors are seen as a natural outcome of the learning process. In regards to the present work each activity proposed is evaluated following the Ministry of Public Education Syllabus criteria.

Culture: Comparison and contrast of native and target cultures.

Listening: Identification of details, understanding of oral procedures; prediction of context in a text; summary of information heard.

Speaking: Explanations of information; discussion of possible solutions.

Reading: Demonstration of knowledge of the language.

Writing: Application of written language to transfer information; completion of procedures and information; representation of written works dealing with the topic.

Chapter VI

Conclusions and Suggestions

Chapter VI

Conclusions and Suggestions

I. Conclusions

As was mentioned in chapter I, the English teaching and learning process officially changed in Costa Rica in 1991, due to the elaboration of a syllabus by the Ministry of Education under supervision of the National English Advisory. This syllabus was named Programa de Inglés, which made official the implementation of the Communicative Approach.

According to the national syllabus from the Ministry of Education, English should be taught in an integrated way taking into account the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing along with cultural components.

Part of the bibliographical research on English classroom activities and communicative competence mentioned in chapter II shows that the integration of the four basic language skills should be fully implemented. However, the data analyzed in chapter IV reflect that the reality of the classroom do not agree with such theory, because 75% of the teachers lack an instrument that integrates the four skills; 96% of the teachers estimate that such textbook is quite difficult to find. Therefore, a methodological guide based on authentic reading has been proposed to help teachers.

Besides, in terms of English improvement, the data show that 63% of the teachers says the textbook they use does not improve their students' English level. When it comes to the cultural component, the communicative approach claims that it consists of pragmatic functions and notions that are expressed through language in everyday ways of speaking and acting. By the same token, the national syllabus proposes the integration of culture in every cognitive target to

be developed. However, only 42% of the teachers use a textbook that integrates the cultural component. The availability of the methodological guide could benefit the teachers by showing them how to integrate the cultural component along with the four skills.

Another issue is weaknesses teachers find in the textbooks they use in their classrooms. The textbooks do not integrate the four skills; the topics most textbooks present do not correspond to the ones proposed by the Ministry of Public Education; the activities presented in the textbooks do not reflect the objectives of the National English Syllabus; the textbooks used do not include culture notions from the Programa de Estudio nor authentic readings.

To sum up, it can be concluded that based on the bibliographical research carried out from the present work certain conditions are required for the implementation of the communicative approach in the teaching and learning process. Due to the limitations drawn from the research, the design of a methodological guide is proposed to enrich the teaching experience in the language class environment.

II. Suggestions

The need of a methodological guide is evident. Teachers are in need of authentic resources, cultural notions, and classroom activities integrating the four skills in order to meet the objectives proposed by the National English Syllabus for ninth grade. The methodological guide suggests the use of authentic readings that are available at a low price, such as newspapers, magazines, brochures and others.

This study reveals that teachers of English for the ninth grade in public schools lack a textbook that complies with the objectives and the topics established by the Programa de Estudio. Furthermore, the textbook they use does not integrate the four skills, does not improve the students' English, and does not include authentic readings and culture notions in a communicative way.

Due to the findings drawn from this research, training sessions on the integrations of the four skills and the introduction of the cultural component should be developed to help teachers be more successful with their language classes. Finally, there should be coherence between the syllabus and the innumerable contexts and settings in which teachers of English perform.

III. Limitations of the Study

- a) There is not enough research on this topic that can be used as a reference.
- b) This study was carried out in three districts of the Educational Region of San José. This chosen population represents 100% of the target districts.
- c) The methodological guide will be only useful for ninth grade teachers in public schools, because it is based on the National English syllabus of the Ministry of Public Education.
- d) Since this study is based on the syllabus for ninth grade adopted by the Ministry of Public Education in 1991, any future changes to this syllabus might invalidate the findings.
- e) The cultural aspects stated in the National Syllabus by the Ministry of Education differ from the point of view of teaching the target culture

presented in the literature review in Chapter II. The Ministry of Public Education deals with culture comparing and contrasting native culture with the target culture. However, this is not the way scholars, in this field, present the teaching of culture in the foreign language classroom environment.

IV. Scope

- a) The methodological guide will be useful to ninth grade teachers of public high schools around the country.
- b) It will also contribute to the National English Advisory of the Ministry of Public Education with supplementary material for the Regional Advisors.
- c) This study will benefit university students who might be interested in doing similar research, as well as a reference for those students who want to go beyond this study.
- d) The remaining units will be designed to be shared with the English Regional Advisors. Thus, they will provide ninth grade teachers with supplementary material.

Chapter VII
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Glossary

Activity	A situation in which a classroom task is focused in order to achieve a particular purpose.
Authentic readings	Texts that provide models of natural language and which have not been adapted or modified for pedagogical purposes. They are taken from newspapers, magazines, menus, articles, journals and so on.
Cognitive targets	Contexts in which topics, grammar structures and culture notions are to be taught in public high schools.
Communicative competence	The ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language but also to know when and where to use these structures, and with whom, in order to accomplish communicative purposes.
English as a foreign language	English taught in a country where it is not the native language.

English as a second language	English taught in a country where English has the status of a native language of some part of the population.
National English syllabus	An inventory that contains the approach, policies, objectives, language content, procedures, values, attitudes, culture and evaluation criteria to be used in public high schools.
Four basic language skills	Listening, speaking, reading and writing.
Functions of the language	Functions are the purposes the language is used for.
Integrated view	An approach to language learning in which social, educational and cultural aspects are taken into account.
Listening	An active and receptive process of perceiving and decoding a message from a stream of sounds.

Methodology	The way a subject is taught, including activities, tasks and evaluations.
Multi-media devices	Electronic devices to be used for educational purposes such as TV, VCR, DVD, tape recorders, and so on.
Reading	An active and a receptive skill, which involves guessing, predicting, and asking questions.
Speaking	Communicating orally to express feelings, ideas and beliefs and to share information.
Teaching lessons	Forty-minute periods used in public schools for teaching.
Third Cycle	Seventh, eight and ninth grades in secondary school.
Writing	A skill in which a person expresses his/her thoughts formally or informally using graphic symbols.

Annexes

Annex 1

Methodological Guide

Unit: 1

Cognitive Target: Sports and Leisure Activities

1. Cultural Activity

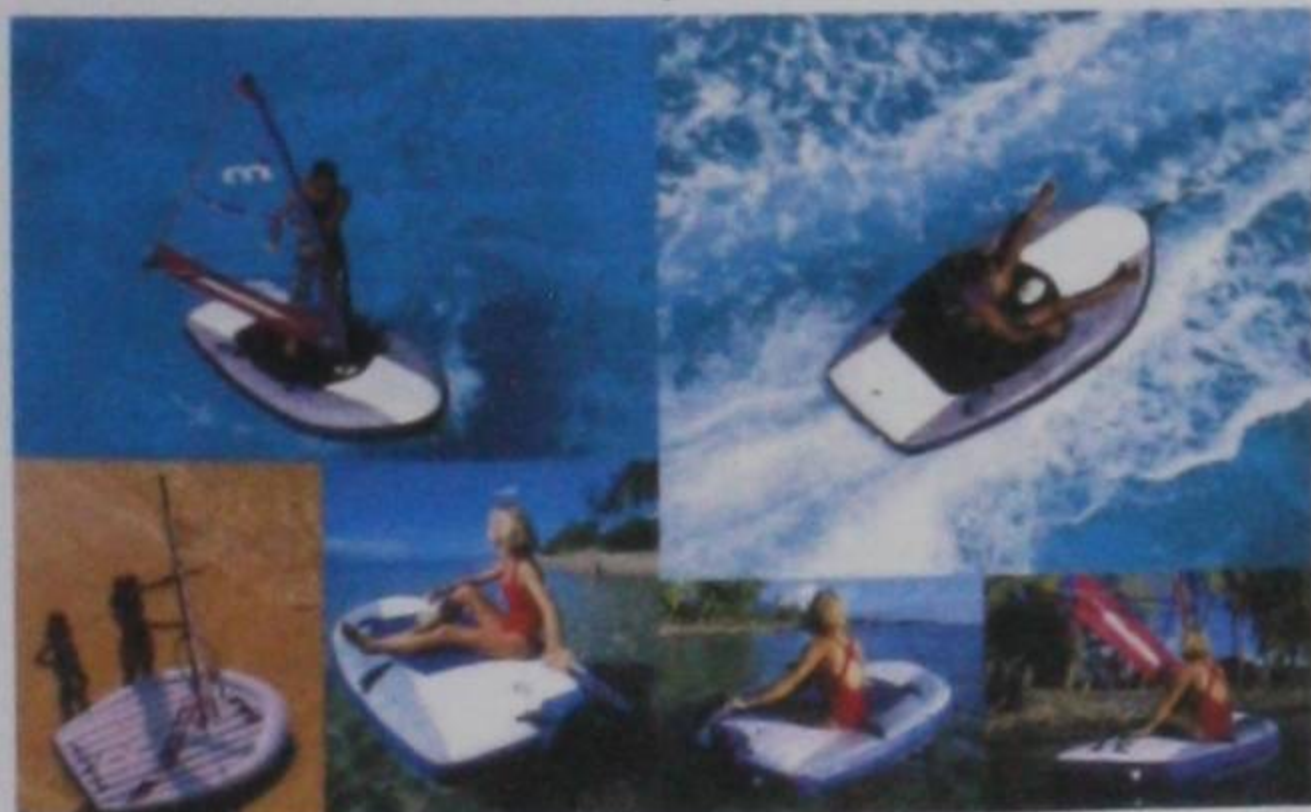
Instructions



Look at the pictures and talk about differences and similarities concerning water activities in Costa Rica and the United States.



Mal País beach, Costa Rica



USA, beaches

OBJECTIVE: Expressing ideas, interests, feelings, concerns (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Discussing differences and similarities in the United States and Costa Rica concerning water sports and other outdoor activities.

FUNCTION: Sharing information about leisure activities, sports that young people and adults enjoy in Costa Rica and in English speaking countries.

Instructions for the activity



Have students look at the pictures and talk about differences and similarities concerning leisure time activities. Have students share previous knowledge about surfing and other activities in Costa Rica. Elicit relevant information through questions.

To develop the activity you might use the following questions:

- 1) Have you practiced any sports at the beach?
- 2) What kind of sports are they practicing?
- 3) What activities do you see?
- 4) Are there any differences in swimming wear?
- 5) What are your favorite beach sports?

Suggestion: If you have extra time, discuss about other water activities such as swimming, surfing, water skiing, snorkelling, and the like.

2. Listening Activity

Instructions

Listen to the reading and fill in the blanks using the words from the box below.

Swells – South Africa – Open and Junior – Higher – Offshore -

1. Costa Rica surfing is getting _____.
2. Tico surfers have traveled to _____.
3. _____ divisions are part of the local competitions.
4. The Guanacaste coast offers more consistent _____.
5. There are very good _____ from the southwest and the northwest.

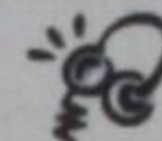
OBJECTIVE: Identifying main points and specific details including opinions (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Identifying key words by listening to a passage.

FUNCTION: describing sports.

STRATEGY: Identifying information .

Instructions for the activity



Explain the meaning of the words given in the box for the activity. Have students listen to the reading on page 114 and complete the sentences using the vocabulary.

ANSWERS

1. Higher.
2. South Africa
3. Open and Junior
4. Offshore
5. Swells

3. Speaking Activity

Instructions

Sit in groups of four. Take turns to throw the dice and then perform the corresponding task depending on the square you land in.

S t a r t	What sport is practiced on the beach? 1	What are two kinds of divisions? 2	(Forfeit) Surf around the class!! 3	Mention three places to practice surf. 4	
				When is it the right time to practice surf? 5	
	(Forfeit) Go to number 10. 14	Finish		(Forfeit) Go back to number 1. 6	
	Where does the Division take place? 13				What's the e-mail for surfers? 7
	What's a Limon beach like? 12	Go to the Finish square. 11	Is the level of surfing in CR high or low? 10	(Forfeit) Go to the door and mime swimming. 9	a) 65 % b) 60 % c) 1,4 million People visit us. 8

OBJECTIVE: Using descriptive language to make sentences about sports, equipment, and places (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Looking for information from the reading.

FUNCTION: Asking for and giving information.

STRATEGY: Real interaction patterns.

Instructions for the activity 

Once the students are familiar with the reading and vocabulary on page 114, have them sit in groups of four and play the game. Have each student throw dice and answer the questions in the square he/she lands. The student who finishes first is the winner.

Suggestion: Model a question for students to know how the game is played.

4. Reading Activity

Instructions



Do the reading silently, then match the letters on the right column with the parenthesis on the left column presented on the next page.

C.R. SURF GOES WORLD-CLASS. The great outdoors: Surf Report. Greg Gordon.

(Taken from the Tico Times)

The level of surfing in Costa Rica just keeps getting higher. Some Tico surfers have joined the ranks of the World Qualifying Series. So far they have traveled to California, Brazil, Australia, The Maldiv Islands, South Africa and Europe to represent Costa Rica.

In local competitions, the Open and Junior Divisions of the Circuito Nacional de Surf on the Central Pacific Coast on different beaches, offer quite big opportunities to participate. Good waves are easy to catch on weekends and surfers win the judges over with their smooth style and lots of spray.

For more surfing information on schedules and finalists, visit www.surfingcr.com.

In other surfing news, it is time for more consistent off shores - especially on the Guanacaste coast. Some nice swells have already arrived from the southwest and northwest, pushing in surf up to double -overhead. The Caribbean has yet to produce any major waves, but December through April are the best month for hitting Salsa Brava and nearby beaches. Many hotels have seen the increase in surfing travelers during those months.

I hope businesses now realize how important clean and safe oceans and beaches are to the tourism industry, as more than 65% of the 1.4 million tourists who come to Costa Rica come to play on the coasts. Hotels can promote their establishments as eco-friendly through Costa Rica's Tourism Board by completing a survey that measures how well they protect the environment.

You can visit www.tourismosostenible.co.cr to find out more on this project to see what is measured and find out which hotels are doing the most to protect nature. You can also e-mail info@surfridercostarica.org to get involved with beach cleanups and ocean-related campaigns.

*General Ideas**Supporting Details*

- | | | |
|--|-----|---|
| 1. The Level of Surfing in Costa Rica just keeps getting high. | () | a. More than 65% of the 1.4 million tourists who come to Costa Rica come to play on the coasts. |
| 2. In local competitions | () | b. Some nice swells have already arrived from the southwest and northwest, pushing in surf up into double-overhead. |
| 3. It is time for more consistent off shores. | () | c. Some tico surfers have joined the ranks of the world qualifying series, they have travelled to California, Brazil, Australia, The Maldiv Islands, South Africa and Europe to represent Costa Rica. |
| 4. It is important to keep oceans and beaches clean and safe for the tourism industry. | () | d. The Open and Junior Divisions of the Circuito Nacional de Surf on different beaches on the Central Pacific coast offer quite big opportunities to participate. |

OBJECTIVE: Identifying, classifying, describing and analyzing sports (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Scanning information from the reading.

FUNCTION: Identifying details of factual texts. Asking for and giving information.

STRATEGY: Scanning.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students match the following general ideas with the supporting details. Have them write the correct letter on the corresponding parenthesis.

ANSWERS

1. c
2. d
3. b
4. a

Suggestion:
You might have students check answers orally.

5. Writing Activity

Instructions



Write four sentences that show how the level of surfing keeps getting higher in Costa Rica.



OBJECTIVE: Writing a short paragraph (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Writing sentences in paragraph form.

FUNCTION: identifying sports.

STRATEGY: Clustering.

Instructions for the activity



Have students do the reading in order to write four sentences that show how the level of surfing in Costa Rica keeps getting higher.

Suggestion:
If you have time, have students share the sentences with their peers.

ANSWERS

Will vary.

Unit: 2



Cognitive Target: Operation of Electrical Appliances

1. Cultural Activity

Instructions



Get in groups of four. Look at the manuals provided by the teacher, and identify differences and similarities in the way instructions are given in English and Spanish.

Follow the following procedure if you have difficulties when accessing the site.

1. Verify browser version and configuration.

Internet Explorer should be at least version 5.5. Version 6.0 is recommended.

To verify the version:

*In Internet Explorer click **Help** and **About Internet Explorer***

2. Clear your Internet Temporary files and Cookies.

Close the browser and open it again.

** This procedure is recommended every time you change any browser configuration settings.*

3. Configure the browser.

*Browser configuration is performed in the **Tools – Internet Options** menu.*

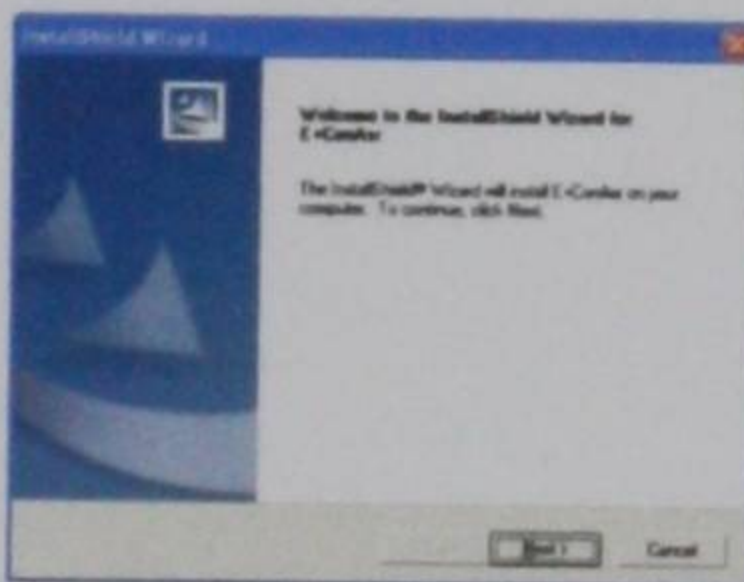
In version 5.5:

*Set **Security** to Medium*

In version 6.0:

Siga las siguientes instrucciones si tiene dificultades cuando accede al sitio.

*Todas estas aplicaciones son seguras y no contienen virus, por lo que siempre se deben brindar respuestas afirmativas en las pantallas de instalación de cada aplicación, **OK, ACEPTAR, SIGUIENTE, NEXT, FINALIZAR, FINISH, REINICIAR, RESTART.***



Por ejemplo:

*Para volver al menú principal presione el botón **BACK MAIN MENU.***

OBJECTIVE:

Initiating/responding in familiar exchanges introducing some variants, transferring the information (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:

Discussing differences and similarities concerning instructions given in English and Spanish.

FUNCTION: Identifying inventions, places of origin, use of electrical appliances in Costa Rica and in English speaking countries.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students identify differences and similarities in the instructions that appear in manuals to operate electrical appliances provided by the teacher.

Note: some differences may be:

- 1) Ask students to bring to class some manuals in English and Spanish.
- 2) Instructions in English are more specific, more detailed, and more accurate.
- 3) Some Spanish speakers might consider that instructions in English give a lot of unnecessary information.

2. Listening Activity

Instructions

Listen to the text and select the best option for each statement according to the corresponding paragraph.

First paragraph

1. The paragraph is about a:

- a. drier.
- b. dishwasher.
- c. microwave oven.
- d. washing machine.

Second paragraph

2. Appliances more than 10 years old are:

- a. easier to sell.
- b. cheaper to fix.
- c. easier to repair.
- d. cheaper to replace.

Fourth paragraph

3. To keep the mineral deposits from building up. Add

- a. vinegar.
- b. detergent.
- c. soda water.
- d. lemon juice.

OBJECTIVE: Transferring the information heard to visual or written form (MEP objective)..

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:

Identifying the correct option by listening to a passage.

STRATEGY:

Getting the gist of a passage.

- **FUNCTION:** Identifying and describing electrical appliances.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students listen to some paragraphs from the reading on page 120 and have them choose the best option.

ANSWERS:

- 1. b
- 2. d
- 3. d

Suggestion:

You may have students check answers orally.

3. Speaking Activity

Instructions



Choose one of the electrical appliances from the chart and create a dialog between a salesperson and a customer, and perform it before the class.



OBJECTIVE: performing simple familiar tasks which require some elementary linking and structuring of ideas (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Role-playing a salesperson and a customer at a store.

FUNCTION: giving instructions.

STRATEGY:
Real interactions patterns.

Instructions for the activity



Have students in pairs choose an electrical appliance from the chart given and create a dialog between a salesperson and a customer

Suggestion:
Provide a model for students to create the dialog.

4. Reading Activity

Instructions



Read the selection quickly without using your dictionary. Then read the statements on next page, and choose the best answer.

By Dwight Barnett

Scripps Howard News Service

Question: I have a dishwasher that isn't really that old, but it no longer cleans the dishes. The plates have food stuck to them and the glasses have water spots. When the unit is operating there is a smell like plastic burning, which I think is the heater. There are no leaks and the motor sounds just fine. Do I need to replace the dishwasher, or can it be fixed? – P.P., Indiana

Answer: Can an appliance be fixed? Yes. Do you need a new one? Probably!

Appliances more than 10 years old may be cheaper to replace than to repair when you consider the total life expectancy of the unit. Newer models use less energy and less water, so in the life of the super-duper newer models you may break even. But, if you're like most homeowners, you can't go out and purchase a new appliance just because the older one is broke.

You say the motor's fine and the unit's not leaking and there's a smell of hot plastic. Sounds like the unit is low on water when washing. The hot smell is probably the heater in the unit being exposed to low water levels. Low water also reduces the effectiveness of the sprayer and the dishes will come out dirty and spotty.

The water supply to your home comes from either the municipal water supply or from a well. Either way there are dissolved minerals in the water that will, over time, clog the filters, pumps or valves inside your appliances. The water supply valve can be replaced by a technician or by a handy homeowner with lots of tools.

Once the water supply is restored, keep the mineral deposits from building up by adding orange juice or lemon juice to the dishwasher from time to time. The acidity of the juices will dissolve the minerals. DO NOT use chemicals that can remain on the dishes or vinegar that can damage plastic parts inside the unit.

With the dishwasher empty, close the door and start the fill cycle. When you hear the sprayer start to turn, stop the unit and add the juice. Let the water and juice mixture rest for about an hour, then turn the unit back on and let it run through the rest of the cycle. The dishwasher is then ready to be used.

Other victims of hard water and mineral deposits are the icemaker, coffee maker and sink faucet. You can eliminate hard-water minerals by installing a water softener on the water supply pipe to the home between the water meter or well pump and the water heater. Mineral deposits also form inside the water heater and cause excessive wear and added expenses in operating the heater.

(Taken from the Scripps Howard News Service)

1. Appliances more than 10 years old may be cheaper to _____.

- a. sell
- b. repair
- c. replace
- d. clean the filters

2. When the water supply valve contains dissolved minerals it can be replaced by a _____.

- a. mechanic.
- b. electrician.
- c. computer programmer.
- d. technician or handy homeowner.

3. Once the water supply is restored you can keep the mineral deposits from building up by adding _____.

- a. alcohol.
- b. vinegar.
- c. chemicals.
- d. orange or lemon juice.

4. You can eliminate hard-water minerals by installing a _____.

- a. filter.
- b. dishwasher.
- c. piece of cloth.
- d. water softener.

OBJECTIVE: identifying and describing electrical appliances, making suggestions and giving instructions (*MEP objective*).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:
Skimming information from a passage.

STRATEGY:
Skimming.

FUNCTION: asking for information

Instructions for the activity



Have the students read the selection quickly without using their dictionaries. When students finish reading, tell them to do the exercise below. Then elicit the students' responses orally.

ANSWERS

- 1. c
- 2. d
- 3. d
- 4. d

5. Writing Activity

Instructions



Choose an electrical appliance and write a six sentence paragraph on how to use it. Use sequence words such as first, second, third, fourth and finally.

Iron - Discman - Coffeemaker - Television set

Cam recorder - Cell phone - Play Station



OBJECTIVE: identifying and describing electrical appliances, making suggestions and giving instructions (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: describing how an electrical appliance works.

STRATEGY:
Clustering.

FUNCTION: asking for information.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students choose an electrical appliance to write a six sentence paragraph on how to use it. Ask students to use sequence words such as first, second, third, fourth and finally.

Suggestions:

If you have time, ask students to share the information in small groups.



Unit: 3

Cognitive Target: Specific Information of Words in a Given Context

1. Cultural Activity

Instructions



You have a set of cards, either a set of cards with idiomatic expressions and a set of cards with meanings of the idioms. Match your set of cards with your classmates'. The first group that correctly matches the cards wins.

Take a rain check	Organize your time
Turn into	Before you know it
Get over with	To postpone something
Make time	Take a different way
Change your mind	Become

OBJECTIVE: Using reference materials to extend their range of language (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Getting familiar with idiomatic expressions.

FUNCTION: Understanding style and register.

Instructions for the activity



Do the reading on page 126 and explain the idiomatic expressions and their meanings on the board. Divide the class in two teams. Give each team a set of cards with some idiomatic expressions and a set of cards with the meaning of such expressions. Ask the teams to match the cards. The first team that matches all the cards correctly wins.

Note: Idiomatic expressions, also known as idioms, are phrases that cannot be understood literally.

Suggestion:

When preparing the sets of cards you might take into account the idiomatic expressions included in the reading and other idioms.

2. Listening Activity

Instructions

Listen to the idioms and match them with the definitions given under column B. Do not repeat letters.

Column A	Column B
1. ()	a. organize your time
2. ()	b. before you know it
3. ()	c. to postpone something
4. ()	d. take a different way
5. ()	e. become
	f. finish

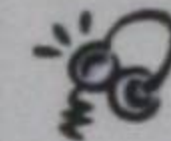
OBJECTIVE: Using reference materials to extend the students' range of language (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Identifying the meaning of some idioms.

STRATEGY: Guessing the meaning of key words.

FUNCTION: Understanding style and register.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students listen to the idiomatic expressions, and then have them match the idiomatic expressions with their corresponding meaning.

Expressions:

1. Change your mind
2. Got over with
3. Turn into
4. Make time
5. Take a rain check

ANSWERS:

1. d
2. f
3. e
4. a
5. c

3. Speaking Activity

Instructions



Invitations

Look at the pictures and choose an idiomatic expression from the reading that best fits each situation.

I'll rest a while.



I change my opinion!



Alright, I accept.



I finished!



Next time, I have to work.



OBJECTIVE: Using reference material to extend the students' range of language and improve accuracy (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Using idioms in real life situations.

FUNCTION: Expressing idioms.

STRATEGY: Formal/informal language.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students look at the pictures and choose an idiomatic expression from the reading that best describes each situation.

ANSWERS:

1. Take time off
2. Change your mind
3. Talk me into it
4. Go over with
5. Take a rain check

Suggestion

Have the students choose one of the pictures and make a short dialog using the expression.

4. Reading Activity

Instructions



Read the selection quickly without using the dictionary.

Then circle the correct option for each expression.

Rosemary: Hello

Frank: Hi, Rosemary. This is Frank. How are you doing?

Rosemary: Ok, but busy.

Frank: Can you make time to go to a movie this afternoon?

Rosemary: I wish I could, but I have a lot of homework. I'll have to take a rain check.

Frank: Come on, take some time off. You're always studying. You're going to turn into a robot before you know it.

Rosemary: Well, I have a lot to do. Don't you have work to do?

Frank: I did, but I got it over with so I can leave early. Listen, it's my birthday.

Rosemary: Really? I didn't know! Happy birthday!

Frank: Thanks. I wanted to celebrate it with you.

Rosemary: Well, when you put it that way, how can I refuse? You talked me into it.

Frank: Great! You don't know how glad I am that you changed your mind.



(Dialog taken from All Clear, Idioms in Context)

1. Can you make time? means :

- a) What time is it?
- b) Do you have time?
- c) Do you spend time?
- d) Do you enjoy your free time?

2. I'll have to take a raincheck means :

- a) I will accept next time.
- b) I will have to check the rain.
- c) I will have to take a raincoat.
- d) I will have to get some money.

3. Take some time off means :

- a) Plan your time.
- b) I do not have time.
- c) Do not waste your time.
- d) Give yourself some free time.

4. Change your mind means :

- a) You did not forget it.
- b) You change your opinion.
- c) You change your clothes.
- d) You change your personality.

OBJECTIVE: Using reference material to extend their range of language and improve accuracy (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE: Skimming information from a passage.

STRATEGY: Skimming.

FUNCTION: Understanding style and register.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students read the selection quickly without using their dictionaries. When the students finish reading, ask them to circle the correct option.

ANSWERS

- 1. a
- 2. a
- 3. d
- 4. b

5. Writing Activity

Instructions



Read the following idiomatic expressions and write a sentence using them.

- Make time to go

_____.

- Take a rain check

_____.

- Take time off

_____.

- Change your mind

_____.

OBJECTIVE: using reference material to extend the students' range of language and improve accuracy (MEP objective).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:
Applying idioms in written form.

STRATEGY:
Clustering.

FUNCTION: Understanding style and register.

Instructions for the activity



Have the students identify the idioms in the text and then ask them to write a sentence using them in a different context.



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