Curricular Adaptations for Adult English Language Learners in the School of Literature and Language Sciences at Universidad Nacional
Volume II: Students with Attention Deficit Disorders
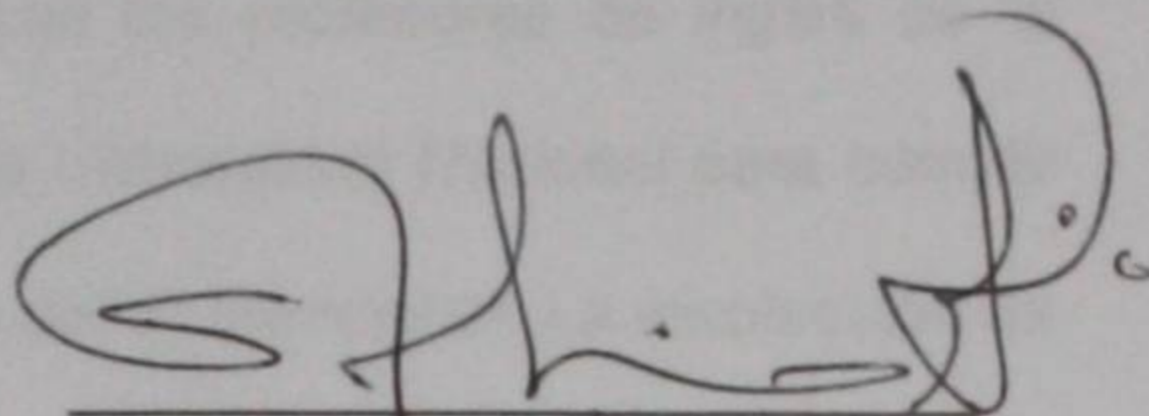
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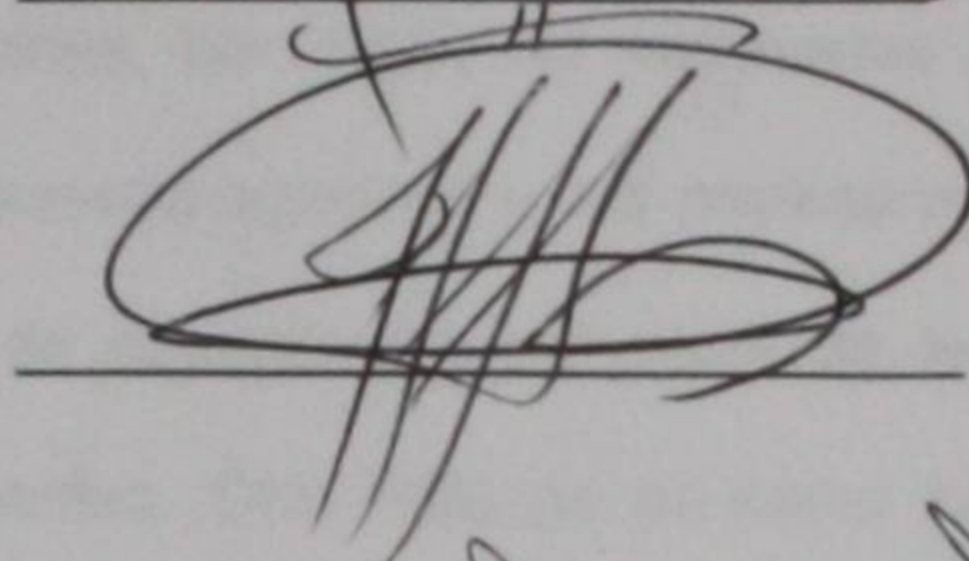
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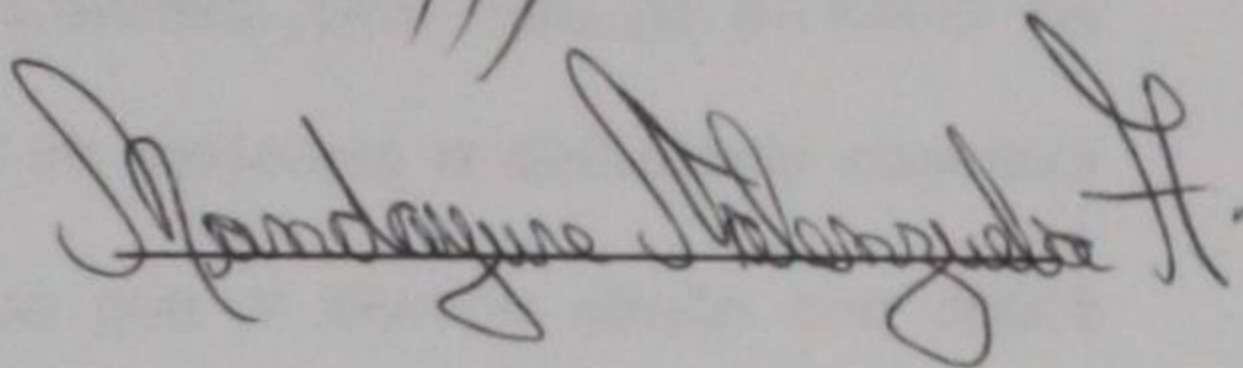
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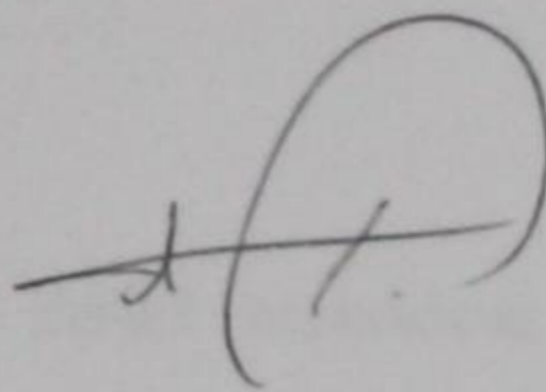Investigación en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas

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Resumen

Trabajo presentado para optar al grado de maestría en segundas lenguas y culturas con énfasis en inglés para alumnado adulto.

El siguiente trabajo de investigación fue hecho con el objetivo de obtener información acerca de cuales estrategias de enseñanza aplican los profesores de inglés de la Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje en la Universidad Nacional para cumplir con las necesidades de los estudiantes adultos con déficit atencional. La recolección de los datos se llevo a cabo por medio de observaciones, por medio de entrevistas a autoridades administrativas, y por medio de una encuesta aplicada a los profesores. Los resultados obtenidos demuestran que la falta de capacitación por parte de los profesores de inglés afecta los logros de los estudiantes. Otro hallazgo es como los procedimientos que se llevan a cabo para poner en evidencia la deficiencia cognitiva del alumno juegan un papel preponderante para que el alumno adulto con déficit atencional supere su problema.

Descriptores: déficit atencional; discapacidad; déficit atencional con hiperactividad; adecuación curricular; adecuaciones no significativas

Abstract

Research project conducted in order to obtain the degree of master in second languages and cultures with emphasis in English for adult learners.

The purpose in conducting this research project was to investigate the teaching strategies that English professors at School of Literature and Language Sciences at Universidad Nacional apply in order to cope with the curricular adaptations that English adult students with deficit attention disorders need. Data were gathered by non-participant observations, by interviewing administrative authorities, and by having professors complete a survey. Results indicate that professors' lack of training on curricular adaptations affect students' outcomes. Another finding was that disclosure procedures play an important role in how the adult learner overcomes the learning disability.

Key words: adaptation; accommodation; attention deficit disorders; ADD/ADHD; disclosure; learning disabilities

Table of Contents

I Introduction

How can an English professor assist an adult learner with a learning disability disorder when this disability is not noticeable? Does it involve magical recipes? More and more are the cases of English students who present learning difficulties at higher education. There is not doubt that there has been a need to train professors not only in recognizing the learning disability but also in knowing what types of teaching strategies are more suitable for the learners. This training implies more than just providing educators with tons of theory about the learning problems that learners may present. Professors should be immersed in different simulated situations that can help them to use different teaching strategies in order to recognize and assist adult learners with learning disabilities. Almanza has pointed out the importance of assisting disabled learners to acquire and retain knowledge (1).

For instance, Universidad Nacional has been committed to provide disable students with different tools to overcome their problems. In fact, in 1999 this institution created the project "Quality Education at UNA" which has been the entity in charge, since then, in providing adult learners at Universidad Nacional with the forms and aids that help them to be enrolled in the different majors. Besides, the members of this project send the information gathered to each of the schools of the university in order to be processed by the authorities of each school.

However, in order to collect the information, the project needs students to disclose which means to get to the project and let them know about the learning problem they have. Another way is when professors are able to detect a student with a

learning problem and they send the student to the project to be assisted. Nevertheless, it is difficult for professors to recognize students with learning disabilities and use the right teaching strategies due to the lack of information and their lack of training.

This final project intends to provide some feedback about the teaching strategies used by English professors in order to assist students with attention deficit disorders at School of Literature and Language Sciences and these students' attitudes towards the subject matter. At the same time to provide some information about methodology and the different resources that could be used in order to improve the English classes.

Statement of the Problem

Costa Rican bill 7600 requires all public and private educational institutions in the country to "guarantee access to education, from elementary to higher education levels, to all people regardless of their limitations "(Bill 7600, 1996). Nevertheless, the researchers hypothesize that some university professors are still unaware of the specific teaching techniques required to comply with the legal, ethical, and professional obligation to adjust teaching to the needs of all students, regardless of their mental and physical capacities.

Acknowledging that society is constituted by different individuals has also led to recognizing that academic groups are also built by unique and different student populations (Pazos, p.11). In every adult-education setting, we may notice unsettling behaviors of students with learning disabilities, who despite their personal efforts, do not seem to finish their work on time, hand in incomplete assignments or do not manage to comply with the learning tasks required, thus bringing along low grades and negative

emotional loads. Some professors may even have difficulties in keeping discipline in class because of the disrupting behavior of these students who also affect the concentration of their peers.

Such behaviors in the English class have often been identified by professors who regard them as inappropriate to meet the class objectives, and often scold students over their bad performance. Unfortunately, this adds frustration in those students who struggle for change with no evident results.

It is not until professors understand the nature of students learning limitations that something can be done in order to truly help learners in their language acquisition process. According to Marie Claire Vargas from the project "Quality Education at Universidad Nacional" (UNA Educación de Calidad), a disability is the loss or abnormality of a psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function of a person. (Vargas, p.159) Thus, many young adult university students with physical and cognitive limitations still go through their learning process undiagnosed and untreated by their professors.

Everyone has the right to learn and socialize without any restriction. Even so, students with learning disabilities may suffer from mistreatments caused by misunderstandings and their professors' lack of expertise on curricular adaptations. According to "Quality Education at Universidad Nacional (UNA)" (Name translated by the researchers), the institutional entity in charge of counseling students with learning disabilities at UNA, students with visual impairments and deficit attention disorders represent the two most frequent disabilities found at "Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje" (ELCL). Therefore, the researchers consider important to focus this study

on these two populations. Nevertheless, this project report is based on research conducted on students with attention deficit disorders by Alvaro Bonilla. The case of students with visual impairments can be consulted in the research report submitted by the other team member, Alina Castillo.

Significance of the study

Much information can be found about children and adolescents' learning processes, styles, handicaps, and cognitive limitations and the specific teaching strategies and techniques to deal with them, such as the official governmental document entitled "Procedures to Apply the Regulations for the Access to Education of Students with Special Educational Needs" (Titled translated by the researchers) published by the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education in 1997. On the other hand, the strategic methodological procedures to cope with curricular adaptations for adult learners have not yet been identified or established by national governmental entities.

At UNA, in 1999 professors Marie Clare Vargas Dengo, Ana Herrera Castro, and Guiselle Miranda Cervantes at CIDE (Centro de Investigación y Docencia en Educación) created the project "A Quality Education at UNA." The purpose of this project is to provide students with disabilities with the adequate tools to adapt to the university and succeed in their learning process. At the same time, the project seeks to guarantee the application of law 7600 by providing specific technological resources and materials for students with any kind of disability; for example, books, interpreters, translators, and others. At this moment, this project is the only resource about curricular adaptations and learning disabilities for professors, and for students at UNA.

In their book *Accommodations in Higher Education under the Americans with Disabilities Act*, Michael Gordon and Shelby Keiser explain the intrinsic consequences of having a national legislation about curricular accommodations in the United States: "A lesser-known but increasingly visible consequence of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) concerns the pressures it has brought to bear on institutions of higher learning and on professional testing organizations. Because the law mandates that these entities are responsible for providing accommodations to disabled individuals, institutions across the country have been scrambling to comply. They have had to develop protocols for verifying that an individual indeed suffers from a disability. They also have been forced to determine what represents fair and reasonable accommodations for each potential form of impairment." (Gordon et al, preface)

There is an urgent need to research which types of learning disabilities and physical limitations are the most representative among the English student population at ELCL. It is also relevant to describe the methodological procedures in those English courses that students with visual impairment and attention disorders are enrolled in during the second semester of the current year. According to Ileana Saborío, coordinator of the English Teaching program at ELCL, at UNA, there are no official guidelines on curricular adaptations for English professors.

The relevance of this study lies in the type of foreign language teaching strategies that English professors at School of Literature and Language Sciences should implement in order to assist learners with attention deficit disorders to acquire knowledge and perform suitably in the English classroom. Besides, it is essential to

make the administrative authorities of this university aware of the need to design and implement more specific policies regarding learning disabilities. As Dorothy Almanza et al. stated, "don't wait until you understand 'learning disabilities' before you start working with students. Get started and learn as you go (6)."

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative and inductive study is to discover, through observation of adult English as a foreign language (EFL) students at Universidad Nacional with visual impairments and attention deficit disorders, how their limitations as English language learners could be minimized through specific teaching strategies aimed at implementing curricular adaptations in their courses during the second semester of the current year. In so doing, the researchers intend to provide higher education directors and English instructors from ELCL at UNA with possible recommendations on how to manage curricular adaptations specially designed for these students. In this way, each adult educator can then be better prepared to help adult learners who may experience such disabilities.

Research Question and Sub questions

4.1 Overall Research Question

What teaching strategies can professors apply in order to assist students with deficit attention disorders at School of Literature and Language Sciences in their English classes?

4.2 Research sub-questions

1.   What teaching strategies do professors apply in order to assist students with attention disorders at School of Literature and Language Sciences in their English classes?

2.   What teaching strategies do experts recommend to be applied in classrooms for students with attention disorders in the language classrooms?

3.   What teaching strategies do students with attention disorders at School of Literature and Language Sciences consider appropriate to help them in their language learning process?

II Literature Review

Costa Rican education has integrated ideals of equity in educational opportunities since the creation of national bill 7600 in 1996. In recent years, there has been a debate regarding the degree to which the teaching practice in national adult education institutions lives up to these ideals. Paradoxically, in other parts of the world, an interest in addressing disabilities has been reflected in education literature since the 1970s and 1980s. This occurred almost thirty years before Costa Ricans even considered that adult learners with disabilities deserve to be protected by a national law in order to guarantee access and proper attention to their learning difficulties.

Surprisingly, Universidad Nacional (UNA), despite its vision of commitment with humanistic educational approaches, has not yet developed concrete official guidelines for language professors at School of Literature and Language Sciences (ELCL) in order to deal with these most necessary curricular accommodations for adult learners with disabilities in second language learning. Therefore, this study proposes to evaluate the current teaching practices as well as the strategies needed to cope with the learning requirements of the two most common types of disabilities found at UNA: visual impairments and attention disorders.

Recent literature reviewed points to three studies that represent some of the attempts made by national and international researchers in order to bring the issue of curricular accommodations in adult learning to the forefront of curricular planning, access to educational opportunities and teaching methodology implementation in the classroom.

Curricular Accommodations in Adult Learning Institutions in the USA

A research conducted by Polson & White in adult learning institutions in nine states of the United States of America concluded that one third of adult learners have some type of disability. The most frequently reported learning disabilities were mental retardation, multiple disabilities and health disabilities (Polson & White, 2001). The research reports that basic adult education centers face significant challenges in meeting the mandates established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Polson & White stated that diagnosing a disability does not guarantee that appropriate accommodations will follow the diagnosis. As a result, "the responsibility for identifying ways to help the adult with a disability learn must often be assumed by the education provider" (Polson & White, 2001, p. 16). In Kansas, one of the nine states included in the research, adult education institutions have made efforts for professional development guided by findings of this research. "Over the past four years, many Kansas adult educators have gained additional knowledge about the ADA, improved their skills in identifying and implementing appropriate accommodations and acquired more positive attitudes about providing quality services to adult learners with disabilities" (Idem).

Some of the changes made by education providers have been programmatic changes. Such changes consist on providing adult students and educators with extensive information about the Americans with Disabilities Act in their orientations for new students. This includes the rights and responsibilities of persons with a disability and the rights and responsibilities of the adult education program. Finally, another
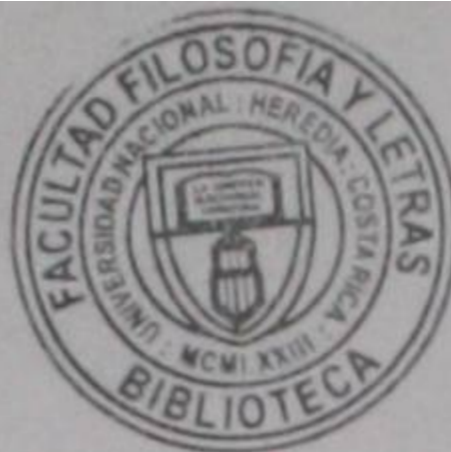
programmatic change is the commitment to identify adults with disabilities as early as possible (Polson & White, 2001).

Inclusion Process and Curricular Accommodations at UCR

The results of the Costa Rican national census of 2002 showed that eighty-seven percent of Costa Ricans with disabilities have gone through the formal educational system (cited by Gross, 2005). This means that they are able to read and write. Gross explains that enrollment of disabled students at Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) has required this institution to make important efforts into strengthening their support services for adult learners with disabilities. UCR provides these services through "Counseling and Assistance Center for Students with Disabilities" (CASED). Gross also affirms that this institution has provided support services for disabled adult learners since 1995, even before the creation of national Bill 7600 in 1996.

In order to guarantee disabled students to have access to accommodations at UCR, the institution has created administrative regulations and included guidelines for the inclusion and application of accommodations in the "Academic Policy Framework" (Gross, 2005, p. 6). For instance, in the area of attention to visually impaired students, UCR offers services such as: access to software technology (JAWS and Duxbury), administrative support, accommodations in the admission test, curricular and access accommodations, coordination with professors, oral recordings of written texts, text scanning, direct reading, orientation and mobility, support services in libraries, and Braille transcriptions.
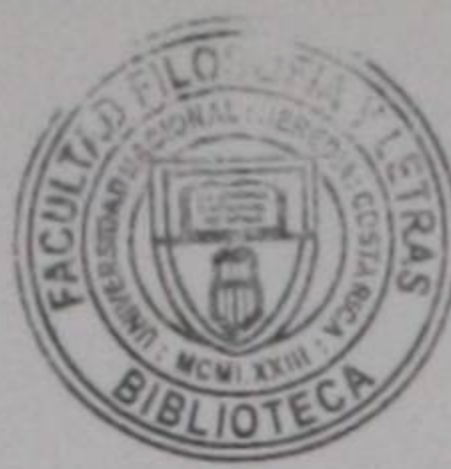
Accessibility to Educational Opportunity at UNA

  Bolaños et al. conducted the study entitled: Students' experiences with sensorial and motor impairments, in their inclusion process at Universidad Nacional, Campus Omar Dengo. This study focused on six different areas regarding adult learners with disabilities. First, they identified the student population at Universidad Nacional with learning disabilities. Second, they determined the type of support and adjustment that Universidad Nacional offered to students with learning disabilities during the admission process. As a third result, they learned about students' perception regarding policies, curriculum, student services, infrastructure, and strategies on communication and information in order to approach this type of population. They explored the type of psychological support given to students with learning disabilities. They identified the strategies that the different academic areas have used to advocate the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities. And, finally, they researched the degree of awareness on the importance of implementing inclusion policies that favor students with learning disabilities.

  The question that finally arose from the study is to what extent have students with learning disabilities been well guided through the inclusion process at Universidad Nacional. According to Bolaños et al, the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in higher education has been a very difficult process since society is reluctant to recognize learners' diversity at higher levels (Bolaños, et al. 2005, p. 8). However, higher education institutions have been making big efforts to diminish negative impacts of the inclusion process in students with special needs (Bolaños, et al. 2005, p. 8).

This study makes an in- depth analysis about the inclusion process at Universidad Nacional, and it gives very specific details on how learners with special needs have been diagnosed. Besides, it provides an exhaustive explanation about the policies applied by Universidad Nacional regarding students with learning disabilities. According to this study, the process for elaborating institutional policies regarding the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities is conducted by the project "Quality Education at UNA" which is in charge of collecting all the necessary documentation regarding learning requirements of the students; then they analyze the information gathered and diagnose the possible curricular accommodations for the students. The members of this project send the necessary documentation about the students needs to the different university departments along with the diagnosis and suggestions regarding the types of materials, and the resources available for this type of students. (Bolaños, et al. 2005.p. 23)

All literature consulted in the issue of curricular accommodations for adults with visual and attention disorders points to the need for language instructors to take an "action approach" in order to help these learners. Such approach would include a sequence of steps: first, to identify or "diagnose" those adult learners who may have a disability and cope with the learners' disclosure, which means when the disable learner talks openly about his/her learning problem; second, the instructor must be well trained on how to address these learners' needs and types of disabilities; third, it is crucial to find those precise teaching strategies that are more suitable for the type of disability of the student. Likewise, the instructor must look for the kinds of materials that will

enhance the learners' skills and accompany the proposed teaching strategies; and finally, to evaluate the teaching practice (Schwarz and Terril, 2001).

Recognizing Disability

"Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, mathematical abilities, or social skills" (National Institute for Literacy, 1995, p. 4). Even though a learning disability may occur parallel to other handicapping conditions and with socio-environmental influences, a learning disability is not the direct result of those conditions of influences (Idem). University professors should acknowledge that a visual or attention disorder is not necessarily accompanied by a learning disorder. Adult learners with visual or attention disorders may be as cognitively capable as their peers with no impairments.

Accordingly, experts' opinions and information are important in order to find the exact type of problem the learner presents. Knowing this will allow instructors to have a better probability of helping these learners to ease the language acquisition process. There are various types of learning disorders that can be found in a language class which need immediate and effective treatment from professors. The document entitled "A Qualitative Education for all Students at Universidad Nacional" states that:

"There is a special educational need when a deficiency (physical, sensorial, intellectual, emotional, and social or any combination of these) affects learning to such an extent that some special changes to the curriculum or some adaptations in the learning conditions are needed. These changes may occur at

any point of a continuum that goes from a slight change to a more severe one. They can be permanent or temporary in any phase of the development of the student.[1]" (Vargas et al., 161)

Defining Attention Deficit Disorders

What does it mean to have a student with ADD (attention deficit disorder)? Some experts have claimed that it is a hidden disorder, since its characteristics can be misinterpreted as disruptive behavior or laziness (Gordon & Keiser, 72). These characteristics make it difficult to recognize since they are common behaviors that people without any special condition present in specific situations. However, this disorder is more evident because it is present in any situation at any time. According to the project Quality Education at UNA, a student who presents this disorder is distracted very easily. The student has severe problems with attention spans because he/she gets bored all the time. The learner can present two extremes, excessive passiveness or constant movements and noises without apparent reason for doing that. Students with ADD may experience difficulties with the structured environment; therefore, they may need adjustments to the learning environment in order to be focused in the subject matter (Bramer, 27).

It is important to define and establish a difference between Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Even though they seem to be the same, there are important differences that an educator needs to know. According to the National Resource Center on AD/HD in the United States,

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[1] Translated by Bonilla & Castillo, September 2008.

the "attention deficit disorder is a condition which affects individuals 'across the lifespan.' We now know that most children and adolescents with AD/HD do not outgrow this disorder, though the symptoms in adulthood may look very different than they do in childhood and adolescence" (National Resource Center on AD/HD, 2008).The differences between these two terms lie mainly on the behaviors of the adult learner. The chart below shows the main differences between these two types of disorders:

Chart 2. Comparative Chart ADD and ADHD

Learner with ADD	Learner with ADHD
1. Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities.	1. Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
2. Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or playing activities	2. Often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected
3. Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly	3. Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)
4. Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish	4. Often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly

schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions)	
5. Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities	5. Is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor"
6. Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort	6. Often talks excessively
7. Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities	
8. Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli	
9. Is often forgetful in daily activities	

Source: USA's National Resource Center on AD/HD.

As seen in the chart above, some characteristics are present in both subjects (ADD and AD/HD); however, a person with AD/HD presents more disruptive behavior and sometimes acts in a very impulsive way. This is not the exception in a language class, and many professors at higher education level do not know how to deal with these two types of learners, and the way to approach them varies according to the training these professors have had regarding learning disabilities and the teaching strategies they use in the class.

Second Language Learning and Attention Deficit Disorders

Students with attention deficit disorders are succeeding in learning English due to intervention strategies. For example, when professors accommodate these learners according to their learning style, and they provide intervention strategies help them in the learning process. Besides, students have learned self-advocacy in requesting accommodation. They have capitalized on their strengths and built up the weaker areas of the language through compensatory strategies. These learners have overcome some learning struggles acquired from previous unsuccessful learning experiences and gained useful study skill strategies in other academic environments. Many have learned to read and write in English due to remediation efforts. What is more important, these learners have recognized that their learning disabilities are only learning differences (Gordon & Keiser, 82).

Gaddes & Edgell (1994, p. 32) reminds educators that the study of individuals with learning disabilities has been studied for many years. However, only within the past decades have learning disabilities been formally acknowledged through laws and regulations that require the provision of services to those who experience severe difficulties in learning. It is important to mention that according to the project Quality Education at UNA, learners with attention deficit disorders need specific instruction and practice because they will not make it without it, and they also need teachers who understand learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses when these students are learning a second language.

According to experts, student's academic success is often dependent on their ability to attend to tasks with minimal distractions (Schuartz, Terrill, 2). A student with

AD/HD may struggle with the typical academic environment. It was seen, through observations made to two students with attention deficit disorders at School of Literature and Language Sciences that activities associated with acquiring necessary information for completing tasks, completing assignments or participating in discussions are all activities that are problematic for the student with AD/HD. This special teaching environment makes professors to be hesitant about what are the most suitable teaching strategies to be used with students who present attention deficit disorders in order to help them to acquire the language. Then, a question arises here, what types of teaching activities can English professors use in order to assist students with ADD/HD? Quality Education at UNA, provides a short guide for professors who work with these types of students in which some suggestions are given (see annex A on page 55). Among them are: to apply techniques in which the student reinforce the material covered, constant motivation for the student, to give clear instructions for the different tasks, to give individual attention, letting the student to use dictionaries, and to extend the time when doing exams or other assignments.

Other types of strategies (so called curricular adaptations) used by the professors who were observed during classes were class arrangement (asking the student to sit in a particular place), activities in which the student with ADD is physically involved (very dynamic activities), and professors asking questions for reinforcement, among others. These teaching activities or curricular adaptations are necessary in order to help these learners to feel confident when learning English. These activities give them a sense of achievement.

Bramer acknowledges three components of intervention for adult learners with ADD or ADHD. The first is effective language instruction. The second component involves the use of behavioral interventions. The purpose of behavioral interventions in the classroom setting is to assist ADHD students in displaying the behaviors that are most helpful to their own learning and that of classmates. The third component involves physical classroom accommodations. Students with ADD/HD often have difficulty adjusting to the structured environment of a classroom, determining what is important, and focusing on their assigned work. They are easily distracted by other students or by nearby activities in the classroom. As a result, they benefit from accommodations that reduce distractions in the classroom environment and help them to stay on task (Bramer, 1996).

Choosing Curricular Accommodations

There are two traditions for treatment of disabled students in an education setting: remediation and accommodation. The remediation model has been traditionally used in the Costa Rican public education system. This model proposes not to differentiate classroom instruction for learners with disabilities; but instead, devoting extra time outside the lesson to attend the disabled learner. As said by Polson & White, this may not be appropriate or realistic for adults with disabilities because some adults, despite their willingness and commitment to this extra time may never experience success due to the nature of their disabilities (p15). For example, it may not be realistic to establish a goal of high reading proficiency for an adult with a serious reading disability, despite the amount of hours the student dedicates to the reading activity.

"The accommodation model is a way to help adults reach their goals more quickly and with less frustration than the remedial model" (Polson & White, p.15). An accommodation means that the learning activity is adjusted to the functional need and ability of the student.

> An accommodation may include use of special equipment, changes in the environments, procedures or attitudes such as: additional time to complete tasks; assistive devices; adaptive tools; taped, large print, or brailled text; readers; taped, typed or dictated answers; private work areas; calculators; note takers; repeated instructions; oral or sign language interpreters; modification of existing equipment; written instructions; changes in desk height and/or changes in lighting (Polson & White, p. 16).

The Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education (MEP) classifies curricular accommodations in three types: those oriented to facilitate physical processes "Access Accommodations;"[2] those that require mild modification of teaching activities and evaluation in order to adjust teaching and learning processes to the functional needs of the student consistent with his or her disability, called "Minor Accommodations," and those mainly for students with severe mental disabilities who require greater modification of teaching activities and evaluation. In most cases, such a modification

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[2] The terms used by MEP to describe types of curricular adaptations do not necessarily correspond to those found in studies carried out in English language. In the latter, the words "adaptations," "accommodations," and "modifications" have been identified as proper to the English language context. Please refer to the findings section for further clarification on the operationalization of these terms.

consists in the elimination of contents, themes, and topics in the program's curriculum and course syllabi. This third type is called "Major Accommodations" (Peña, 2000).

According to information provided by participants in the project "Quality Education at UNA," the most recurrent types of disabilities in students at UNA occur at the level of physical or mild cognitive, emotional or psychological disabilities. This means that Access Accommodations and Minor Accommodations are the most needed. Access Accommodations require the institution and professors to provide special infrastructure, equipment, interpreters, software and strategies to help students with audio, motor, visual, or speech impairments. On the other hand, examples of Minor Accommodations are giving extra time in tests, repeating explanations, and providing written instructions for tasks.

Although the term "accommodation" is relatively new, these helpful procedures have been intuitively adopted by many adult educators for decades. Provided the new discoveries in the fields of medicine, psychology, and cognitive learning processes, many education institutions have attempted to help their disabled students with simple but necessary adaptations such as providing learners with additional time to take a test or purchasing computer software with speech recognition capabilities.

When dealing with learning disabilities in adult language learners, there are some cases in which these learning disabilities are not evident or even present in the first language because they are hidden by compensatory strategies such as finding the meaning of words or expressions through general information and using the context. However, when the learner faces a new language, these strategies may not be available to the learner in the new language (Ganschow and Sparks, 1993). Instructors

must be informed and understand about types of disabilities, their symptoms and complexities in order to plan for curricular accommodations in second language classes.

Polson and White confirm that an accommodation may take many forms, depending on the learner and the context. It may involve a change in the environment or task that enables a disabled student to participate effectively in the learning process and gain benefits comparable to those enjoyed by adults without disabilities (2001). They also state that relying on observation and trial and error is the best way to learn whether an accommodation is suitable for a disabled student. This does not contradict the regular well-known practice of observation and trial and error to determine the effectiveness and success of one teaching activity over another among levels and groups of students.

Evaluating Accommodation Effectiveness

A study conducted in 1999 by Polson and White on nine states of the United States of America verified the effectiveness of accommodations for disabled adults. They reported that once an accommodation was selected and implemented, adult basic education providers looked for a variety of indicators to determine if they were effective. Among the factors considered were student progress and improvement, student comfort, student attitude toward learning, accommodation accessibility, and time required to use the accommodation. They found that a common indicator was that an accommodation's effectiveness depends upon whether or not the student is able to complete the task successfully, shows improvement where none was seen before, and was able to raise skills, if they are not frustrated or stressed, if they have a positive attitude and if overall it has decreased the effects of the disability (Polson & White,

2001). They concluded that the complexity of determining an effective accommodation is echoed in this response, "Does it work for the student, make a visible difference in their performance? Is the student satisfied and enjoying the accommodation? Could the teacher set the accommodations in place in a reasonable time period? What is the student's demeanor?" (2001).

Coping with Disability Disclosure

Disability disclosure stands for revealing information about a disability to another person for accommodation, for relationship development and to reduce anxiety (Rocco, p.12). However, the way the disclosure is received and perceived by the instructor can make a difference in how the adult learner will approach the learning situation. "As seen in many cases, some of these adults are reluctant to disclose because of past educational experiences, low self-esteem, undiagnosed learning disabilities, and a general lack of understanding in education programs that disabled adults are capable students" (Rocco, p.12).

Accommodation requires the education organization to provide meaningful access in consultation with the disabled individual. The process of obtaining access to accommodations at UNA requires students to checkmark a "yes" or "no" need for accommodations during the university's admission test, before formally enrolling as a student at UNA. Later on, the adult learner must provide all medical and psychological diagnostics to the institution. Once the disability has been verified, the faculty is informed about the student's condition by a letter which contains the name of the student, the courses he/she is enrolled in, and the specific disability of the student along with several suggestions on how to provide the accommodation. (see annex B on page

57). The process follows by requiring professors to fill out an initial report form and a final report form describing the methodological and evaluation accommodations applied to the disabled adult learner during the course (see annex C on page 58 and annex D on page 60). These forms will be later sent to the project "UNA Educación de Calidad," and kept in the student's file.

Disabled adult students understand their strengths and limitations better than their professor. This impersonal administrative procedure at UNA does nothing to foster discussion between the learner and instructor, which would increase understanding of the issues involved for both parties. Disclosure of disability status is unquestionably essential in order to get access to a specific learning environment or materials which will be otherwise inaccessible for the student. Nevertheless, institutional regulations at UNA do not make any provisions for training disabled adults on disclosure. Careful consideration must be given to the student's and instructor's roles in whether, when, and how to disclose.

Several factors weigh in the disabled person's decision whether or not to disclose. Some reasons why a disabled person might not disclose are a concern for a right to privacy, fear of the other person's reaction and fear of discrimination (Rocco, 2001). When disclosing a disability, the instructor may react discriminatively. Denying access to an educational program is not a legal action according to Costa Rican education laws, especially Bill 7600. Even so, discrimination from a professor or institution can take more subtle forms, like a change in attitude. In this, the disabled person may be labeled as lazy, intellectually incompetent to master the contents of the course or trying to manipulate the system.

The timing of the disclosure is crucial. If the instructor feels the timing is inappropriate, this can impact negatively on the strategies chosen for accommodation; and upon how the disabled person is perceived. When an adult student discloses disability before the language course begins, the instructor should ask the student what accommodations are needed. Some accommodations will require an adaptation of language teaching styles. For instance a student who suffers from ADD/ADHD can ask an instructor for clarification the times he considers necessary to understand the information or read aloud anything written on the board.

When a person with an invisible disability, such as ADD/ADHD, discloses after the course has started, some instructors may immediately attribute the late disclosure to a student who is trying to excuse poor performance rather than looking for other possible explanations; such as fear or shame. This fear or shame is many times caused by the incorrect belief that an accommodation provides an advantage to the student rather than leveling the field for his/her learning. On the other hand, if the disclosure occurs at the end of the course, the instructor may be uncertain as to how to handle the situation. "Accommodations are not required retroactively, but, as recommended by some experts, discussing options with the student and possibly with the institution's disabled student service providers, administrators or the student's therapist would be advisable" (Rocco, 2001, p. 12).

III. Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to find out what curricular accommodations professors applied in order to approach adult students with attention deficit disorders (ADD/ADHD) and to detect whether these accommodations worked well in ESL contexts.

This research study is qualitative in nature, since the answers for the research question and sub questions will arise through class observations, interviews and surveys applied to the subjects of the study. As Selinger and Shohamy stated, that the ultimate goal of qualitative research is to discover phenomena such as patterns of second language behavior not previously described and to understand those phenomena from the perspective of participants. (120)

Since the object of this research study is to gather specific information from the participants, the researcher must be aware of the different legal implications it can convey. It involves a social contract with those participating in the study, and informed consent is negotiated at each phase of the research when new information is needed or new areas of study are undertaken For the purposes of this study, three types of data collection procedures were conducted, non-participant observations, interviews and a survey.

Because observation of students' behavior and teaching strategies constituted at first the only source of data for teacher-student interaction during classes, the researcher considered that not only was observation important to get data but also interviews and surveys

In this way, some initial questions in the unstructured-open interview were later refined for the questionnaire. This interactive and responsive process also influences the data that are collected and analyzed throughout the study.

In order to account for validity of the study, all the data gathered is stated and analyzed in order to support the findings, conclusions, and recommendations that the researcher considers appropriate to the type of study conducted. It is important to mention that the "data analysis refers to sifting [filtering], organizing, summarizing, and synthesizing the data so as to arrive at the results. It becomes the product of all the considerations involved in the design and planning of the research" (Selinger & Shohamy, 201).

Since this is a qualitative research study, Most of the data was gathered by maintaining close contact with the subjects of study. In some cases, information can be considered too personal by the subjects and the topics covered become very intrinsic to them. In order to keep confidentiality, the names of some of the subjects of study will be erased from the observation report templates and interviews applied to them. For the purpose of this research project, the English learners being studied will be referred to as Student A and Student B. As it was mentioned before, respect for others' impressions and opinions about areas of concern are a must.

Subjects:

Two students were selected from a list kindly provided by the project "Quality Education at UNA" since they were the only two students of the current population with deficit learning disorders enrolled in the English Bachelor's programs of School of Literature and Language Sciences (ELCL) at Universidad Nacional (UNA).

Instruments and Procedures:

As a first step, classroom observations were conducted to four different English courses (linguistics, elocution, basic grammar, and pronunciation) where students with attention deficit disorders were attending. These observations were made in order to detect two important areas of concern, the behaviors students with attention deficit disorders exhibit during language classes and the curricular adaptations professors apply in order to cope with these learners' needs.

Therefore, the researcher considered necessary to conduct an interview to the representatives of the project Quality Education at UNA in order to collect information about the process that students with attention deficit disorders need to undergo at Universidad Nacional. In addition, an interview with the current director of the School of Philosophy and Letters, was conducted in order to gather information about the different procedures that the school follows in order to help students with ADD/ADHD in their language classes. Similarly, a representative from the Counseling and Service Center for Students with Disabilities (CASED) at Universidad de Costa Rica was interviewed in order to obtain information about the procedures they follow to cope with disable learners' needs. Since most interviewees did not speak English, all interviews were conducted in Spanish. In order to have more accurate information from the interviews, they were recorded with the consent of the subjects under study.

One of the objectives of this research project was to obtain information about the teaching strategies used by professors in order to assist students with ADD/ADHD and to determine whether these strategies work well with these students. Another objective was to find out about professors expertise regarding curricular adaptations for

ADD/ADHD students in the language class. In order to collect such information, the researcher surveyed the professors in order to find out the types of teaching strategies they were using in their classes to help these students. This survey focused on aspects such as training obtained in the university about curricular accommodations in higher education, disclosure procedures, curricular accommodations applied by the professor, among others. Another source of information was an open interview conducted to Student A, in which this student provided vital information on how English professors at School of Literature and Language Sciences have dealt with her learning disability. Her opinions regarding methodology and teaching strategies show the importance that student-teacher relationship has in order to overcome the student's learning problem.

IV. Findings

All data gathered through non-participant observations, as well as through unstructured and structured data collection instruments led to the following conclusions

- General behavior of students with ADD/ADHD in their English courses,

- Teaching strategies to assist students with ADD/ADHD in English classes,

- Legal and administrative procedures that authorities from the School of Literature and Language Sciences at Universidad Nacional need to comply with in order to assist those students with attention deficit disorders, and

- Disclosure procedures that students with attention deficit disorders undergo in order to have access to the different curricular accommodations that Universidad Nacional provides.

The researcher found that from all the adult ADD/ADHD symptoms stated by the USA's National Resource Center on AD/HD and the characteristics provided by the project Quality Education at UNA, the two subjects showed features of:

1. Failure to give close attention to details such as when repeatedly asking for instructions that had been already explained or excessively repeating the same words (vocabulary) in written assignments.

2. Fidget with hands or feet, twist about in their seats.

3. Difficulty with attention span during tasks and activities

4. Unable to remain seated in situations where seating is expected

5. Don't appear to listen when spoken to directly such as when being asked to respond a question.

The Case of Student A

Through the non- participant observations made in the English classes that Student A attended, one main characteristic shown is that she is always asking for reinforcement from the professor when doing a task. Expressions like "if you help me, if you guide me", "I still need a lot of practice" are common.

During classes she fidgets and plays with objects while she listens to the professor or other classmates. It was particularly noticed that even though she seemed focused (she sits quietly and paying attention to professor's explanations) she was moving things, rubbing her hands, playing with objects. When the professor asked her to answer questions about the topic she looked hesitant when answering.

Another important behavior present in Student A is that, when presenting oral presentations, she repeatedly asked for confirmation from the professor. This seems to give her some confidence.

From an unstructured interview made to Student A, important information regarding teacher-learner interaction was found. Student A mentioned that she is taking this course for the second time. She mentioned that she had some problems with the previous professor "I had problems with that professor; "I couldn't get along with him". "He didn't help me to overcome my problem". Regarding the current professor she had a different perspective. "He is very good"; "he is concerned about the way I'm learning and he is always reinforcing the information."

According to Nunan, there is a link between teachers' and students' expectations regarding language learning and students needs.

The role expectations of both teacher and learners will be conditioned by individual personality and [learning needs] such as introversion/extroversion, cognitive style, prior learning and teaching experiences, and cultural factors. (p. 156)

The role of the professor during the learning process becomes an important factor for students with ADD/ADHD, since it gives them a sense of confidence and helps them in the English learning process.

The Case of Student B

Trough the class observations made in to the different classes Student B attended, many important findings regarding learning strategies and student behavior were addressed.

This student shows different behavior patterns compared to Student A. This student is constantly disruptive during classes. He is constantly talking to his classmates, moving his hands and legs. He is touching his hair most of the time and playing with different objects.

It was particularly noticed that during classes he stood up, sang and danced. Then he sat down and continued working.

Well, this apparent disruptive behavior is consistent to the descriptors giving by experts regarding learners with ADD/ADHD disorders. According to the project Quality Education at UNA, it is difficult for students with attention deficit disorder to stay seated or without moving for long periods of time. Besides, in some cases, like student B,

excessive activity with sudden movements and noises is a characteristic of these types of learners.

Student B sits most of the time near female classmates to talk. He is always touching their hair, hugging them, among other distracting behaviors. However, it was also evident is that he likes to participate, mainly in oral tasks. He seems very confident when speaking in English and whenever he has a doubt he asks the professor for clarification. In classes where the student seems to have a close relationship with the professor, he is more spontaneous and reacts more confident when participating. On the contrary, in classes where class rules are much clearer and the teacher is more attentive to class behavior, he looks nervous, he does not stand up that much. He is always moving his head one side to the other. Some facial gestures, such as lifting his eye brows, pushing his lips out, nodding to the different tasks assigned are perceived like discontent to the class. This attitude of Student B in the different classes observed clearly shows that there is a close connection between student's behavior and his relationship with their professors.

It is important to mention that when classrooms arrangements have been established in advance, the student stays focused and he pays closely attention to instruction.

The Other Point of View: Professors

"Quality teachers are progressive, take into account students' past experiences, diagnose difficulties, permit remedial activities, and liberate learners" (Simpson qtd in Quesada, 1988, p 3). At ELCL, professors have been usually perceived as collaborative

and creative into the implementation of curricular adaptations. For instance, Fontana et al. believe that, "In ELCL we have seen very accessible professors. They even go beyond by creating brilliant adaptations. Therefore, at ELCL, they have great disposition" (2008).

The results from the survey applied to four English professors to learners with attention deficit disorders at the School of Literature and Language Sciences at UNA are the following. Table 1 displays their answers to the first part of the survey. The numbers in each column represent the number of professors who circled the option.

Table 1. Professor's Answers to Survey.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The first step in the application of a curricular accommodation is to ask the student what he/she needs.		2	2	
2. When I learned about my students' condition, I met with an expert to discuss about particular curricular accommodations.	2		1	1
3. UNA provided me with the necessary services to administer curricular accommodations for my student with physical impairment and/or learning disabilities.	2	2		
4. Adult students with physical impairments and/or learning disabilities use their condition to manipulate the educational system.	2	1	1	
5. My student with a physical impairment and/or a learning disability should seek for other most suitable job opportunities rather than becoming a language teacher.	2	1		1
6. It is the responsibility of my student to supervise the curricular accommodations I apply for him/her in the course.	1	1	1	1
7. I avoid talking to my student about his/her physical impairment and/or learning disability.	1	3		
8. I have been trained on curricular accommodations in higher education.	1	1	1	1

In the second part of the survey, professors answered open questions regarding the particular accommodations they use in their lessons and the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of such accommodations. They also stated their opinions as to whether the student with deficit attention disorders is likely to succeed in achieving course objectives and their particular needs in terms of training.

As previously stated, learners with ADD/ADHD succeed in language classes due to the intervention strategies professors apply in the class. However, professors need to be trained in order to know what teaching strategies work better according to the student's needs. The first step is to ask the student what type of curricular accommodation woks better for him/her. Two teachers agreed in asking the learner about his/her needs however the other two disagreed on that. It means that there is a tendency to think that recommendations on curricular accommodations should come from the authorities of the university. Rocco stresses that discussing options with the disable learner will help him/her to cope with the problem (12). This leads to another important aspect regarding accommodations. Once the professor knows about the learner's condition, it is advisable to meet with experts and discuss what specific accommodations are needed for language instruction.

Only one professor strongly agreed in meeting with experts and discussing about particular curricular accommodations. This confirms that the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in higher education is a difficult process since professors sometimes do not comply with disclosure as well.

Sometimes discrimination from a professor on a student with learning disabilities can take subtle forms. One professor strongly agreed to recommend the disable learner

to seek for other most suitable job rather than becoming a language teacher. Even though this does not represent the majority of the population, it gives an idea on how difficult becomes to a disable learner succeed in higher education institutions. It makes disable learners to feel less than the others, and this creates a negative atmosphere for learning.

Professors must be well trained in order to use the right teaching strategies for helping students with attention deficit disorders. When a teacher is well trained he/she is able to identify the learner who may have a disability. Then the professor addresses learner's needs and type of disability, and finally he is able to find the best teaching strategy for the type of disability of the student.

However, it is surprising to find out that there are professors who still do not have any training regarding learning disabilities, or simply answer "just common sense" when asked about evaluating the effectiveness of specific strategy for curricular accommodations.

There is no doubt that the results of this survey show important insights on how much professors now about curricular accommodations when teaching English, besides how disclosure is managed by teachers and students. Something important to address is the need that professors have regarding training on how to help students with attention deficit disorders. As stated by the current director of School of Philosophy and Letters at UNA, "I believe that more important than a regulating law, we (at UNA) need training. We must have a certain level of rigorous training so that professors can adequately respond to these students' needs" (Alfaro, 2008)

Disclosure

Disclosure of the student's condition, as previously defined, is necessary to provide adequate curricular adaptations. Disclosure has the objective of finding out about the student's condition and difficulties. It is, by no means, a type of screening of students' language competence or performance. From literature reviewed and expert's opinions, it can be concluded that a first key element in the implementation of a curricular adaptation is to ask the visually impaired student what his/her needs are, and how they should be addressed by the professor. As stated previously, some students may feel reluctant about disclosure. Therefore, an interview professor-student arises as the best possible mean to learn about this student's condition. "The instructor will need background information on the student's learning history to help determine why the student is experiencing difficulty in making progress; if at all possible, the interview should be conducted in the student's native language" (National Institute for Literacy, 1996, p2).

Nevertheless, as observed in Table 2, half of professors of the two students with attention deficit disorders observed indicated otherwise. This may hint that these professors consider other actions as more adequate to carry out as a first step in the implementation of the curricular adaptation. However, only two agreed on meeting with an expert to discuss possible curricular accommodations. Such results may seem unexpected. However, as stated by members of the project "A Quality Education at UNA," some professors go on reluctantly about consulting with the project after learning the news on the condition of their student sent to them by the corresponding documentation. At this office, they would eventually obtain essential information on

availability of assistive technology, materials, and other resources, as well as recommendations from the members of the project for the proper implementation of the curricular adaptation.

A second key element that needs to be addressed at this point is that of students' self-awareness of their disability condition. Students can play a significant role in choosing and using accommodations by providing professors with accurate information about: their condition, needs for learning, and possible strategies for accommodation. However, none of this information may seem available to the student him/herself. Thompson argues that, "for students with disabilities, understanding their disabilities and learning self-advocacy strategies are critical for success in school...Speaking out about their preferences, particularly in the presence of "authority figures," may be a new role for students, one for which they need guidance and feedback" (Thompson, An Introduction to Instructional Accommodations).

Teachers can play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in the context of choosing and using accommodations. Students need to know what accommodations are possible based on knowledge of their personal strengths and limitations. The more input students provide whether voluntarily or at the professor's request, the more adequate accommodations will be provided. In addition, as stated by Thompson, self advocacy skills become critical, "students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most helpful for them, and then they need to learn how to make sure those accommodations are provided in all of their classes" (Thompson, An Introduction to Instructional Accommodations).

At UNA, some students are surprised when they find out that the only way they can receive accommodations is by asking for them. There is no special education teacher assigned to take care of individual student needs. The project Quality Education at UNA provides the necessary services, but only for students who request them. Self-awareness on disability condition becomes essential for the college-survival of the students with attention deficit disorders, especially if confronting professors who do not understand how or why a person should be given special treatment.

Legal and Administrative Procedures

Much discussion and controversy has evolved around the terms accommodation and adaptation. Among professors and administrative personnel at UNA, informal interviews reveal that these concepts remain unclear for this educational community. It is then imperative to clarify these terms. Duvall provides a clear distinction among the terms. She states that:

> "Adaptations" are the accommodations and modifications usually identified in a student's individualized education program ... "Accommodations" are the services or supports provided to help a student access the subject matter (e.g., tape-recorded books), access the instruction (e.g., visual displays or study guides) and enable the demonstration of knowledge without compromising the validity of what the student knows (e.g., extra time to complete a test or assignment). An accommodation does not change the content of the instruction nor the performance requirements, but it may change the timeline and

sequencing as well as the method of instruction (Duvall, 2006, p 42, emphasis by Duvall).

Modifications, on the other hand, go a step further. They refer to explicit changes in content. While accommodations change *how* a student learns, modifications change *what* the student learns (Duvall, 2006, p 42). Examples of modifications are: using the same literature but providing it at an adapted or lower reading level, or having a student use a text that is several grade levels below his or her current placement.

According to an interview conducted to M.A. Jorge Alfaro current Director of the School of Philosophy and Letters, he expressed his concern about the possibility that the school may have to face such cases in the future. He expressed his concern about the possibility that the school may have to face cases in the future. He recalled a research carried out by students from CIDE in two national high schools. As Mr. Alfaro recalls, "this high school professor taught the contents from fourth grade of elementary school to a student in tenth grade of secondary school. Evidently, the professor chose an easy way out" (Alfaro, 2008, translated by Castillo). Mr. Alfaro concluded this example by posing two elemental questions: What will happen if cases like these come to our university? And what about the high performance standards required by some academic programs in the university? (Alfaro, 2008, translated by Castillo). With no official regulating laws or guidelines in terms of curricular adaptations at UNA, the scenario of a modification is not easy to foresee.

V. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to research teaching strategies applied in the implementation of curricular adaptations to EFL students with attention deficit disorders (ADD/ADHD) at the School of Literature and Language sciences at UNA. It was hoped that this exploratory study would contribute the literature on positive strategies for curricular adaptations, and help gain insight into the current experience of two individuals with such a disability enrolled English language courses at UNA in relation to supports and accommodations provided by their professors.

An additional purpose was to identify alternative strategies to provide curricular adaptations linked to language teaching. By investigating elements such as previous research and theory on curricular adaptations, learning disabilities, language acquisition, and language teaching, it was possible to report on actual classroom practices proposed by the professors and the two students' reactions to these practices.

It is important to point out here that specific and clear regulations regarding learning disabilities are a must in this university, since the lack of information or even treatment of this learning disorder would make these learners to feel frustrated or even fail because of the lack of help and appropriate treatment. Everyone has the right to learn and socialize without any restriction. However, students with this disorder (ADD/ADHD) may suffer from mistreatment caused by misunderstandings and lack of expertise in the field. This research study shows how important it is for professors to observe and analyze behaviors before, during, and after classes since they might be able to observe those aspects that may affect the learning and teaching processes, and

more important, making them feel comfortable when learning. Moore emphasized in the fact that,

"It is our responsibility as educators to guarantee that our courses contain requirements that measure material taught and retained, not a student's disability. Schools with no clear policy on accommodation must face the issue and formulate coherent, fair, and legal policies. These policies should be directed by the faculty, not legislated by the administration. Faculty members see the problem daily and are the curriculum experts in the fields." (504)

In addition, it is imperative that foreign language instructors be educated in methods based on multiple modalities. An instructor using a multiple modality approach, especially in language courses emphasizing reading, writing, listening, and speaking, will enable many disabled students to succeed. This approach is inherently a form of accommodation. As Moore stated, "not only will the special needs student achieve success in this kind of classroom, but so will the average foreign language student" (504).

One of the main conclusions of this research is that professors consciously lower performance standards and teach contents of lower grade levels to their students in order to comply with requirements and avoid legal consequences.

The researcher is most willing to share with this institution valuable findings regarding second language learning in adults with attention deficit disorders. Professors must provide to these learners the right learning strategies in order to cope

with one of this institution missions which consists in giving the opportunity to all students, no matter their learning disabilities, to get a degree.

VI. Implications

This research has been conducted around the cases of two students with attention deficit disorder. Therefore, all data gathered from observations, interviews, and surveys focused on their two particular cases, providing in-depth insight into their specific situation. Nevertheless, most of the information found in this research can be highly correlated to the macro context of the implementation of curricular adaptations and accommodations for language learners at UNA. The researcher has found that, in the first case, learning is possible thanks to the teaching strategies professors use in their language classes.

Sometimes little accommodation for learning is provided to students with attention deficit disorders because of two major problems, first most professors do not know about the institution's protocols to cope with accommodations and second they lack of teaching strategies for such accommodations.

Certainly, this situation shows that there is an urgent need to train professors and administrative authorities at UNA about how to recognize and apply curricular adaptations in the language class.

In the School of Literature and Language Sciences at Universidad Nacional there is little information on how to deal with this kind of disability in a language classroom. The researcher considers this study important as a source of information about the type of language teaching strategies that should be implemented which would in turn help these students to acquire knowledge and to meet the high academic standards of a university class. At the same time, it is important to raise awareness among administrative authorities of this university about the urgent need to

create official policies to regulate the implementation of curricular accommodations at UNA. Without these policies, neither administrative offices nor professors will ever have concrete guidelines or tools to address the issue of curricular accommodations.

Another important aspect to consider is that a legal procedure could be developed by these learners in order to sue the university in cases of discriminations among this population. However, if the different entities in charge of helping students with learning disabilities at UNA provide to these population clear and concise procedures regarding their disabilities they will feel confident and motivated without being overlooked or in disadvantage in relation to the other students.

VI. Recommendations

To the professionals at Universidad Nacional

ADD in adults is often a hidden disorder. It is not until after a person has been diagnosed with something else like anxiety or depression that professors are alerted about the situation. Thus, many students today still go undiagnosed and untreated, which may lead professors to consider these students to be lazy, immature, and in the worst cases, stupid. In some instances, these students might be labeled as disruptive without any consideration of their real situation. It is advisable to seek information about some common symptoms of ADD in adults since there may possibly be many undetected cases of ADD students at the university who are not receiving the special accommodations needed to facilitate their learning process. Additionally, it is important, for any professionals involved in educational areas, to recognize that most children diagnosed with ADHD will continue to experience at least some symptoms if not the whole syndrome into adulthood.

To professors

Adults with ADD may experience many difficulties when learning a second language. They may be unable to complete classroom tasks and activities, concentrate and stay focused in class, especially in reading and writing activities which require deep analytical skills. Also they can have a poor performance due to their problems with organization skills. In addition, teaching students with ADD can be tiresome for professors since it is difficult to cope with their accelerated rhythm. These learners can easily get bored or quit on continuing with the same activity for a long time.

A variety of classroom management techniques are found in research and literature. Conversely, as discovered in this study, most of them deal with correcting disruptive behavior. They mainly consist on taking advantage of these students' outgoing and expressive personality and using it for positive purposes. In other words, professors can take advantage of their intense physical and mental activity.

To students

Students who wish to undergo a diagnosis may consult a psychologist, a psychiatrist or any specialist in the area in order to apply an evaluation that would include complete developmental, medical, psychiatric, educational and other related tests. Then a treatment program can be implemented and any possible issues may be covered for further treatment. A comprehensive list of recommendations for coping and living with ADD/ADHD can be found in many books, magazines and internet pages.

Besides, disclosure becomes a key element in helping adult learners with ADD in higher education. When learners with this disorder get together with professors, the school authorities and the project Quality Education at UNA, better remedial procedures can be applied in order to assist them. Most of the time, the lack of information from both students and professors regarding procedures on how to deal with learners who present any type of attention disorder makes much more difficult the project's work. In addition, it is sometimes to late when the student disclose, because, according to the representatives of the project Quality education at UNA, they get there when the period is almost ending and they see that they will fail a course. This situation makes it difficult for the project and professors to help these students

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Annexes

Annex A. Guidelines for learners with attention deficit disorders

(ADD/ADHD)

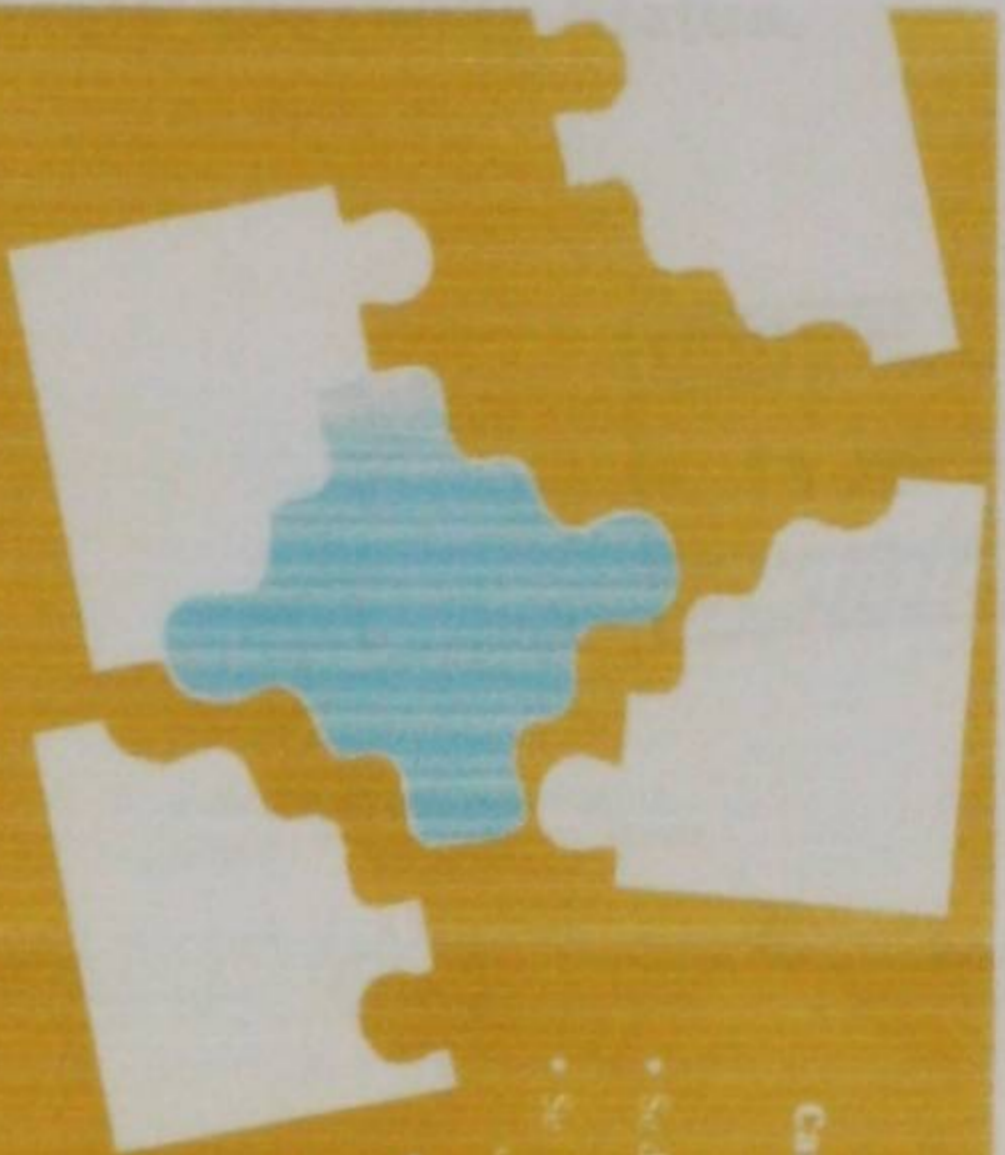**Las Personas con Déficit Atencional** en la Educación Superior

Proyecto UNA Educación de Calidad para Todos

CIDE

UNA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL

¿Desde obtener más información?

El Papel del Docente

Atención de las Personas con Déficit Atencional en la Educación Superior

¿Cuando una persona tiene Déficit Atencional?

Necesidades Educativas Especiales

Características de las personas con Déficit Atencional

Apoyos para facilitar su acceso a la Educación Superior

Los apoyos prestados a estudiantes con esta condición incluyen:

UNA
UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
COSTA RICA

Annex B. Sample Letter on Students' Disability Status.

UNA.
UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
★ 13 ABR. 2007 ★
Correspondencia Recibida
Firma

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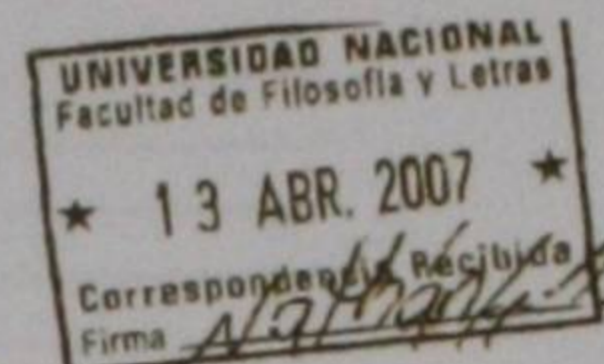
UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje
1 3 ABR. 2007
CORRESPONDENCIA RECIBIDA
Firma *Sylvia*

12 de abril del 2007
CIDE-DEB-UEC-042- 07

M.A. Jorge Alfaro Pérez
Director
Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje
Universidad Nacional

Estimado señor:

Le envío el nombre de un estudiante que recién ingresó al Proyecto UNA Educación de Calidad, el cual presenta necesidades educativas y está inscrito en la Escuela que usted dirige. Sírvase informarle al profesor respectivo, y hacer entrega del formato del Informe inicial y final de aplicación de las adecuaciones, ajustes y apoyos (I Ciclo, 2007) que se requiere los académicos completen para cada estudiante matriculado en sus cursos y envíen a la Dirección de la escuela con copia al Proyecto para consignarla en los respectivos expedientes.

Me despido esperando su colaboración y poniéndome a sus órdenes a la extensión 3479/3370 para cualquier consulta o asesoría.

Atentamente.

M.Ed. Angélica Fontana H.
Proyecto UNA educación de calidad
División de Educación Básica
CIDE
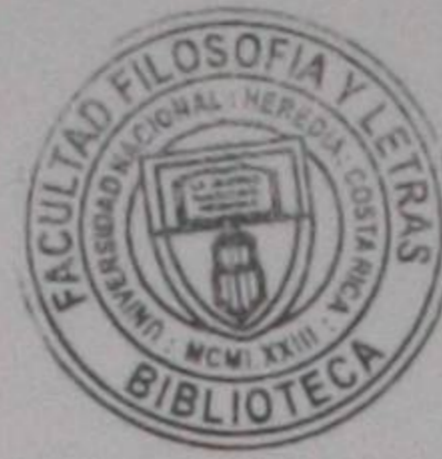
Annex C. Initial Report Form

Informe inicial de la aplicación de las adecuaciones, ajustes y apoyos
_____ciclo _____

Nombre del estudiante_____ carne_____

Nombre del docente_____

Curso_____

Carrera _____

Fecha_____

Dificultades que presenta el /la estudiante

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Adecuaciones o ajustes en la metodología del curso

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Adaptaciones o ajustes en la evaluación del curso

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Adaptaciones a los recursos didácticos y materiales del curso

_____
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Ajustes al espacio físico (solo para estudiante con discapacidad visual y física)

_____
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_____

Horario de atención y seguimiento_____

Otros aspectos (registro anecdótico, reuniones y acuerdos con el estudiante, actividades de coordinación y otras situaciones emergentes)

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_____   _____
Nombre del profesor/a   **Nombre del /la estudiante**
Cédula_____   **Cédula** _____

Annex D. Final Report Form

Informe final de la aplicación de las adecuaciones, ajustes y apoyos
_____ ciclo _____

Nombre del estudiante_____carne_____
Nombre del docente_____
Curso_____
Carrera _____
Fecha_____

Alcances logrados con la aplicación de las adecuaciones
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Limitaciones u obstáculos
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Resultados
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_____   _____
Nombre del/la profesora   **Nombre del/la estudiante**
Cédula_____   **Cédula** _____

Annex E. Survey to Professors of Students with Visual Impairment

Dear Professor,

This survey intends to gather information about curricular accommodations at Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje, UNA.

The following statements represent opinions, and your agreement or disagreement will be determined on the basis of your particular beliefs. Kindly check your position on the scale as the statement first impresses you. Indicate what you believe, rather than what you think you should believe.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The first step in the application of a curricular accommodation is to ask the student what he/she needs.	1	2	3	4
2. When I learned about my students' condition, I met with an expert to discuss about particular curricular accommodations.	1	2	3	4
3. UNA provided me with the necessary	1	2	3	4

services to administer curricular accommodations for my student with physical impairment and/or learning disabilities.

4. Adult students with physical impairments and/or learning disabilities use their condition to manipulate the educational system.

    1   2   3   4

5. My student with a physical impairment and/or a learning disability should seek for other most suitable job opportunities rather than becoming a language teacher.

    1   2   3   4

6. It is the responsibility of my student to supervise the curricular accommodations I apply for him/her in the course.

    1   2   3   4

7. I avoid talking to my student about his/her physical impairment and/or learning disability.

    1   2   3   4

8. I have been trained on curricular accommodations in higher education.

    1   2   3   4

Is your student with physical impairment and/or learning disability likely to achieve all of the learning objectives stated for the course? Why?

_____

_____

_____

What curricular accommodations have proven to be the most suitable for your student with physical impairment and/or learning disability?

_____

_____

_____

What criteria do you consider when evaluating the effectiveness of a specific strategy for curricular accommodation?

_____

_____

_____

What specific aspects of curricular accommodations would you like to receive training on?

_____

_____

_____

Please use this space to add any additional comments:

_____

_____

_____