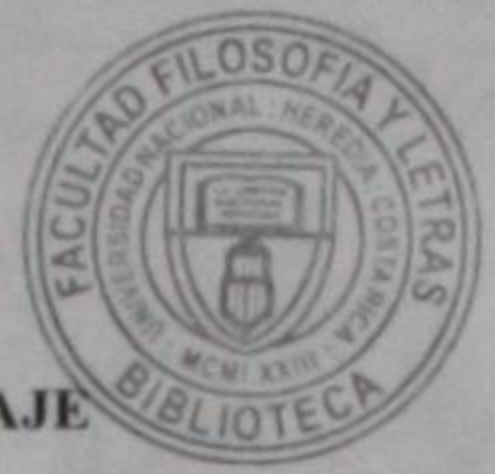


UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS
ESCUELA DE LITERATURA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE
SISTEMA DE ESTUDIOS DE POSGRADO



MAESTRÍA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS
CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO

The Mixed-proficiency Language Class
in the Associate's Program in English at UNASRB:
The Consequences for Students, Teachers and the Institution.

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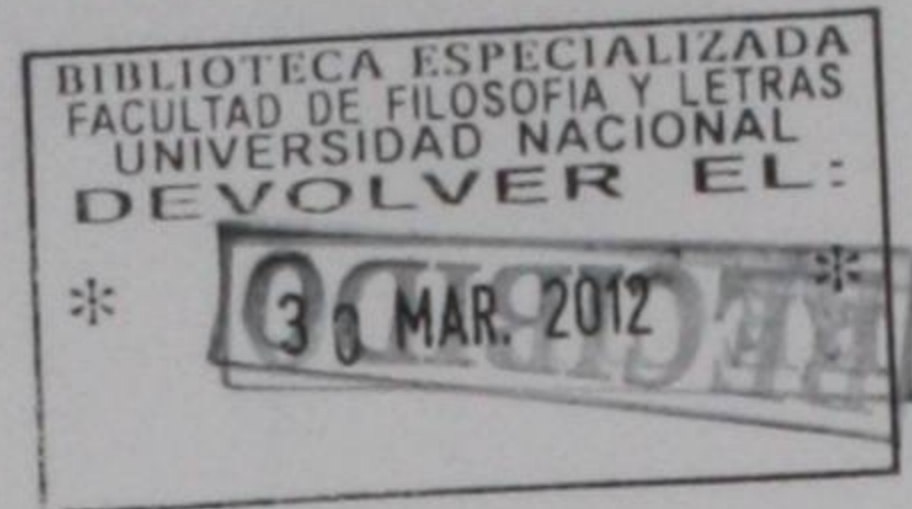


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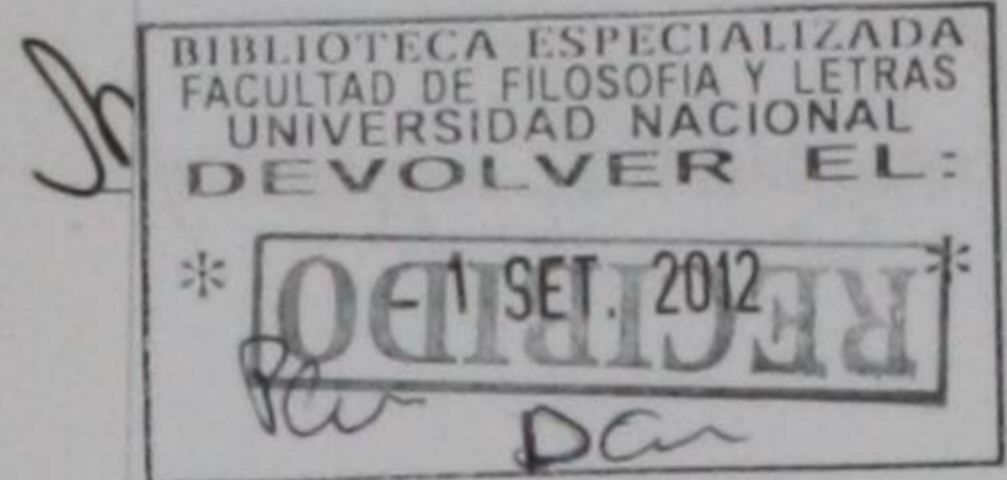
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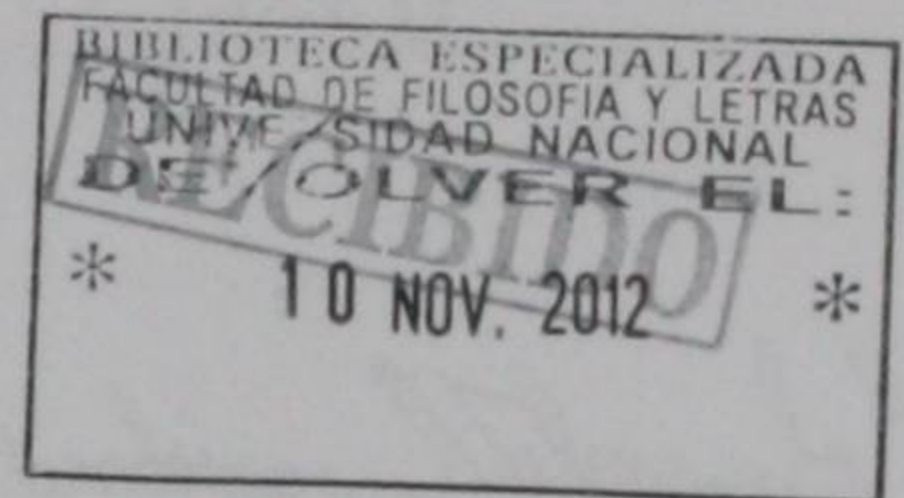


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I benefited from the expertise and support of M.A. Christian Fallas Escobar, his direction was particularly valuable in the development of this graduation project. I would like to thank him for making this experience very pleasant, and giving me everlasting, wonderful memories and knowledge. I would also like to thank all my professors in this master's program for leaving an unforgettable print in my life. Their expertise and support made a difference in my personal and professional life.

I want to thank ...

my Lord for keeping his promise throughout this master's program.

"And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you, He will be with you, He will not leave you not forsake you, Do not fear nor be dismayed."

Deuteronomy 31,8

my husband for being always there to support my decisions, and for being still by my side at the end of this journey.

my children. Alejandro for being so many nights by my side, and Mariana for so many weekends apart.

my parents for they taught me the importance of studying no matter what.

all collaborative teachers who made my research possible.

Resumen

Este estudio de caso se llevó a cabo con estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera del programa de Diplomado en Inglés de la Universidad Nacional Sede Regional Brunca. El propósito de esta investigación era evidenciar las consecuencias de mezclar estudiantes con diferentes niveles lingüísticos en una sola clase y sus efectos en la participación, progreso y retención de los estudiantes y el desarrollo de la clase para lo cual se tomó como referencia las perspectivas de los estudiantes y profesores. Además se investigó las consecuencias sociales y económicas para la universidad y la comunidad. El agrupar estudiantes con diferente nivel lingüístico reta al profesor a enseñar en un ambiente complejo ya que es difícil proveer las mismas oportunidades de aprendizaje a todos los discentes. La información para este estudio se recolectó a través de grupos focales, entrevistas, cuestionarios, observaciones estructuradas y artefactos. Este trabajo es presentado para optar por el grado de Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto, según los establece el Sistema de Estudios de Postgrado de la Universidad Nacional. Heredia, Costa Rica.

Palabras claves: estudio de caso, inglés como lengua extranjera, nivel lingüístico, clase con dominio mixto del idioma

Abstract

This case study was conducted with EFL students in the Associate's Program in English at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus. The purpose of this investigation was to unveil the consequences that the *mixed-proficiency language class* may have on student participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention by introspecting students' and teacher's perspectives and to identify the social and economic consequences that this phenomenon may have on the university and the community. The *mixed-proficiency language class* takes place when students with different proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) are arbitrary placed into the same group to receive English instruction. This situation triggers teachers in a complex scenario since providing all learners with equal opportunities for learning is a hard endeavor. Data were collected by focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, structured observations and artifacts. This paper is presented as a requirement to obtain the Master's Degree in Second Languages and Cultures with an emphasis in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language to adult learners, in the fulfillment of the bylaws and regulations established by the Graduate Program at Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica.

Keywords: case study, English as a foreign language, linguistic proficiency, mixed-proficiency language class

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Abbreviations

APE: Associate's Program in English

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

MPLC: Mixed- proficiency language Class

UNASRB: Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus

Introduction

In spite of the positive efforts to make learners communicatively competent, many challenges emerge in an English as a foreign language class. One of these challenges is the mixed-proficiency language class (MPLC), which refers to the situation faced when students with different language proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced)¹ are put into the same group to receive language instruction. In this type of group, some of the students have a beginner level with very little ability to communicate while advanced students are able to handle almost any communicative situation they are required to perform in class. In the middle of those opposite extremes, there are intermediate language proficiency students whose linguistic proficiency allows them to engage in basic communicative situations, understand main ideas and have short fluent interactions. In such complex scenario, teachers become jugglers moving pieces harmoniously and smartly to accomplish successful instruction that provide all the students equal opportunities for learning.

This pressing reality highlights the need for research to be carried out so as to better understand the challenges that both teachers and students are faced with in the MPLC. Undoubtedly, those challenges may have serious consequences at an individual and social level. At the individual level, when students' language needs and goals are not met, student dropout and disappointment may cause program failure. This in turn may have social consequences as program disqualification may fail to satisfy the needs of the community for bilingual professionals. It is for this reason that this research project aims at exploring and describing the consequences of placing students with remarkable differences in language proficiency in one classroom in the Associate's Program in English (APE) at the Universidad Nacional, Brunca

¹ Read page 8 for a wider description of systems that label proficiency levels.

campus. The ultimate goal of this inspection is to support the teachers, the learners and the institution in the endeavor of the mixed language proficiency class by providing an action plan.

This paper consists of six chapters that comprise the main aspects involved in this case study. The first chapter presents the research problem itself. It also states the relevance of the study as well as its general and specific objectives. The second chapter, Framework of References, provides a discussion of theoretical assumptions already existing in the field of mixed-language proficiency class teaching and learning. Chapter three outlines the type of study chosen for this research with a detailed description of the procedures carried out to collect data. Chapter four constitutes the presentation and analysis of results, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first one scrutinizes the consequences of the MPLC on students' participation, classroom management, progression and retention based on students' perspectives. The second section examines the same constructs, but from the teacher's perspectives. The last section inspects social and economic consequences of the MPLC. Finally, chapters four and five present conclusions and recommendations respectively. The last part of this report, which is the appendixes, embraces the data collection instruments and some raw data.

I. The Problem and Its Importance

The APE at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus (UNASRB) started in 2008 with an enrollment list of two-hundred and nine students. However, during the following years, enrollment increased mainly because of the program's schedule, which is from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday, which allows students to work and study at the same time. In addition, the program's short duration – in comparison with other academic programs offered at

the campus² – makes it an attractive option to students. The noticeable increase of students interested in the APE during the application process – conducted by the registrar's office – can be seen in the chart³ below.

	2008	2011
Number of applicants to the program	209	345

The previous chart reveals that from 2008 to 2011 the number of applicants to this language program has increased by one-hundred and thirty-six students. This statistical account makes evident the pressing need of members of the community to develop competence in the English language, which in turn should serve as a wake-up call to the necessity to pay closer attention to the issues involved in the success of an academic program of such demand as is the Associate's Program in English.

The MPLC has been a phenomenon in the APE since 2008 – when it started as a regular program at UNASRB – due to the different linguistic backgrounds of those students who enroll in the program. Such a reality would call for the administration of a placement test so as to assign students into groups that are homogeneous in linguistic ability. However, due to budgetary issues, the UNA has never administered such placement test, which is precisely what has brought the MPLC into the target classroom. The instructors, unfortunately, are never ready to face this complex phenomenon. In fact, it is not until the first week of classes that the professors and the learners realize about the vast range of students' linguistic levels present in the same classroom. Once in the classroom, a process of adjustment emerges, in which both high

²It takes two years while other programs take four.

³ This information was provided by the Registrar's office from this institution.

and low language proficiency students are at a disadvantage because their prior knowledge of the target language comes into play when following instructions, doing homework, answering questions, participating in class and taking tests. On the one hand, the limited prior knowledge of the target language of beginner students turns into a stumbling block. On the other hand, advanced students may lose interest if the class pace is too slow for their proficiency level. The truth is that when learners are not challenged, they may feel that their linguistic needs are not being met.

All aspects considered, it must not go unsaid that this mixed-proficiency language nature of the target group may have serious consequences on teaching and learning for the students, the teachers and the institution. Regarding students, being in a class where language proficiency levels are so different may affect their participation, which in turn, may affect their progression in the course. With regard to the teachers, the development of the lesson may become a nearly impossible task for they have to try and find a middle point from which to teach. However, focusing on this middle point, although well intended, may discourage those learners whose linguistic competence is too far away from it. Alongside, students whose linguistic levels and learning needs are not addressed appropriately may end up dropping out, which is an issue of concern to the whole institution.

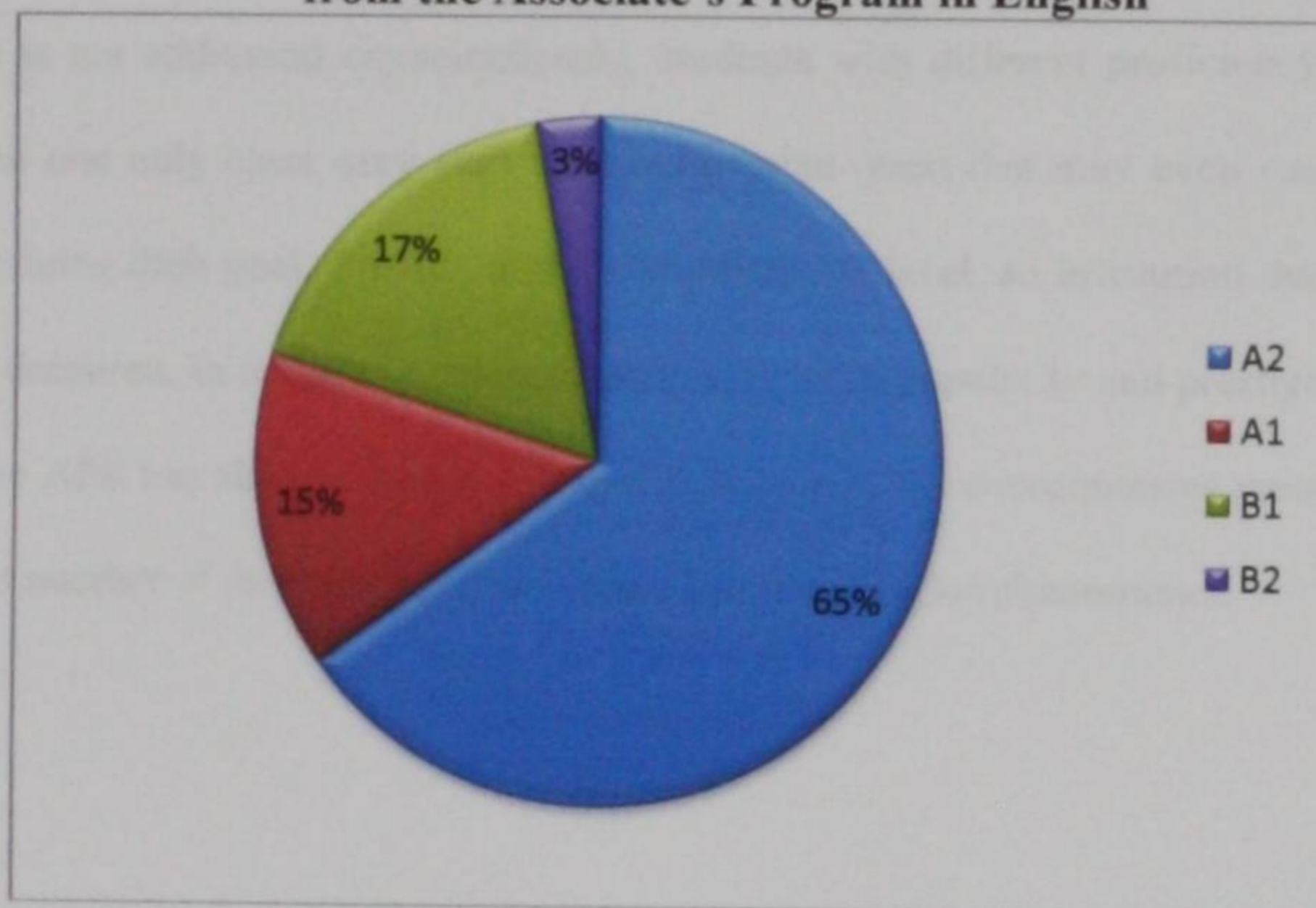
For the purpose of gathering evidence about the differing linguistic levels first-year students at the APE have, a proficiency test⁴ was administered in February 2011 to thirty-three

⁴ The proficiency test administered was a Mock TOEIC (a simulation of a Test of English for International Communication) which is a two-hour, paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice test that consists of 200 questions divided into two separately-timed sections. Listening and reading skills were tested as well as pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar micro-skills. Test-takers answered the test in the language laboratory and used an answer sheet. This test uses a score conversion chart that places students into a six-level scale which are A1 – A2 (Basic User), B1 – B2 (Independent User) and C1 – C2 (Proficient User). These categories are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This test was designed by ETS (Educational Testing Service) which is a non-profit education organization in the United States.

students as a diagnostic procedure for this research. Students' proficiency levels were identified by using the guidelines designed by The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which allows placing students under four main categories. The number of right answers provided by students is converted by using a scale that goes from 10 to 990. The categories depend on results, so students who score from 0 to 220 points are under the A1 category, students who score from 225 to 545 points are placed under A2, students who score from 550 to 745 are placed under B1, students who score from 750 to 845 are placed under B2, and finally students who score from 850 to 990 are placed in C1. The next exhibit reveals key results from the diagnostic test administered to the informants.

Exhibit #1

Results from the Proficiency Test Administered to First-year Students from the Associate's Program in English



Source: Diagnostic test, February 2011.

The previous exhibit shows the percentage of students in each linguistic proficiency level and reveals that a surprising majority, 65%, are placed into A2. In addition, 17% percent of students are in B1 while 15% of the subjects are A1. A small number of students are 2. It is also important to consider that even though students in level A2 are many, their scores range from 225 to 545⁵ points which means that there might be remarkable linguistic differences among them. These results only reveal that the Associate's Program is not exempted from the pressing reality of the mixed-proficiency language class.

The mixed-proficiency language class is a reality that deserves attention because despite the efforts made by the teachers to cater effectively to the learning needs of all the students along the linguistic continuum, there may still be consequences that affect learners, teachers and the institution. Addressing the diverse linguistic needs of students in a language program that does not properly place students into groups according to their language proficiency is an unreasonable endeavor that may lead both the teachers to emotional and physical exhaustion. If this issue is not addressed conscientiously, students with different proficiency levels who are grouped in one only class may start an unachievable quest that may even cause them to quit before attaining their goal. Finally, at the administrative level, an institution that does not make informed decisions, in favor of academic success, risks its popularity and prestige.

The APE has already started to experience one of the consequences mentioned above: a significant number of dropouts. The next chart summarizes this phenomenon:

⁵ A list of students' specific test scores is provided in the appendixes as well as a Can-do Table that helps understand the listening and reading competence reflected by the corresponding scores.

2008		2009		2010	
Number of students who started the program	Number of students who graduated	Number of students who started the program	Number of students who graduated	Number of students who started the program	Number of students who graduated
43	10	37	7	40	10

In 2008, there were forty-three students enrolled in the program, of which only ten graduated by 2009. In the same way, in 2009, thirty-seven students enrolled the program and only seven graduated in 2010. Currently, there are only fifteen students who will be able to graduate next year from an original group of thirty-seven.

The importance of this research lies on the fact that it may serve to identify the consequences of disregarding the learners' linguistic level when grouping them in the APE program. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide an action plan for authorities so that the effects of the MPLC are less disadvantageous for teachers and students.

Objectives

General Objective

To unravel the consequences that placing students with different linguistic proficiency in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus in order to provide the institution with an action plan to treat the phenomenon under study.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the consequences that the mixed-proficiency language class may have on student participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention by introspecting students' perspectives.
2. To identify the consequences that the mixed-proficiency language class may have on student participation, classroom management, student retention and student progression by introspecting teachers' perspectives.
3. To identify the social and economic consequences that the mixed-proficiency language class may have on the university and the community.

Theoretical and Practical Background

Important contributions to the MPLC phenomenon are found in journals, teacher's guides and books. For instance, Mathews-Aydinli and Van Horne discuss the diverse needs and explain the demands and implications of this phenomenon by outlining the urge for specific training, experience, extra time for preparing lessons, materials, teacher collaboration and program support. They also provide readers with instructional strategies that promote success (2006, 2). To show that mixed-proficiency EFL classes require specialized treatment, Ainslie explores the issue by delineating the urgency for needs' analysis and teaching strategies (1994, 1-46). The journal *Connections*⁶ published an issue with twelve articles written by teachers who have investigated various aspects of this topic in their own classrooms. Moreover, *The Internet ESL Journal* published an article that reveals the benefits and limitations as well as the best practices when dealing with the MPLC. Moreover, other journals such as the TESL Canada, English Teaching and the Asian EFL have published articles about the connection between various language proficiency levels and different aspects of the teaching and learning of languages such as reticence, effects of corrective feedback, language learning strategies and strategies for teachers.

Teaching this type of population is considered, by many, one of the most demanding challenges in language instruction. By underlining steps to take, experts have attempted to ease the harsh difficulties that arise when focal attention is on the negative constraints of this type of class. Hess, in his book *Teaching Large Multilevel Classes*, gives some principles to cope with

⁶Connections is a journal focused on Adult Literacy.

this phenomenon. His contribution encompasses elements such as variety, pace, interest, collaboration, individualization and personalization.

It is worth stating at this point that there is no report of any academic research on this issue at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus. There is only record of a previous ethnographic study that was conducted in 2010 by Lenna Barrantes (a professor at UNA, SRB) with first-year students in this same program. This study was a requirement for completing the course *Ethnographic Research in the Classroom* – which belongs to the Master's in Second Languages and Cultures program at UNA. In this study, the mixed-ability reality of the target group was one of the findings identified during the four-month period of classroom observation carried for the purpose of this ethnographic study.

II. Framework of References

This chapter presents some theoretical derivations that throw light into the complexity of teaching English as a foreign language to a group of adults having mixed language proficiency levels. The different theoretical contributions explore student participation, classroom management, learners' and learning differences, learning strategies in the mixed-level class, and students' progression and retention.

Socioeconomic Situation in the Southern Region

Pérez Zeledón has experienced a radical change in its socio-economic direction. The principal driver of this transformation has been tourism, which substituted agricultural activities. Perhaps no other single variable is correlated more closely with this economic reorientation than the ecological direction of tourism in the region. As Arce illustrates, tourism has displaced agricultural activities such as coffee and grains to a certain degree (2006, 186). In like manner, popular tourist attractions such as Chirripó National Park and its hot springs, Manuel Antonio National Park, Marino-Ballena Biological Park, Del Caño Island, Corcovado National Park and beaches throughout the Pacific coast have turned this area of the country into a paradise for national and international tourists. In fact, Sánchez, explains that there are still more attractive prospective rural places that could be used as a means to better the quality of life of people in the region. In addition, he added that tourism is one of the mayor topics of interest in Pérez Zeledón (2008, 30). Under those economic circumstances, the labor market of this region is shaped by a demanding reality of effective communication skills, establishing the English language as a priority.

The Brunca region, as many other regions in the country, has suffered an employment crisis in which job cuts and lay-offs have become a common reality. According to El Estado de La Nación, a gradual decrease in the regional employment rate has taken place. For example, in 2007, there were 128 898 citizens with a job, this number diminished to 122 781 in 2008. The last report given stated that in 2009 there were only 121.921 people who participated in the laboring force (2010, 306). This situation has led citizens to pursuit high levels of specialization and competitiveness by obtaining effective tools to be considered potential employees who deserve a job position. Based on the tourist employment needs of this region, people are required to learn English so that international incomes increase.

To accomplish this, people must consider efficient English programs offered in the community. With this in mind, it is mandatory to know that there are three state universities in the Southern region of the country which offer high quality and accessible education. They are: Universidad Nacional in Pérez Zeledón and Ciudad Neilly, Universidad Estatal a Distancia in Pérez Zeledón, San Vito, Ciudad Neilly, Osa, Puerto Jiménez and Quepos, and Universidad de Costa Rica in Golfito. However, only Universidad Nacional in Pérez Zeledón offers an Associate's Program in English in contrast with other universities which have an English Teaching Major. The Associate's Program in English has attractive characteristics that make it a viable option for those community members who require a specialized and competitive profile to meet the labor market's needs of the region. Two of these features are its night schedule and duration since it takes two years only.

How does the Mixed-proficiency Language Class Emerge?

Language educational institutions differ in registration procedures; each one having its own decisions, actions and requirements to follow. Even though some of these institutions have made great efforts to group into the same class students who share similar linguistic needs at the beginning of a program, there is always the chance to run into a class in which students with notably different linguistic proficiency are put together. To avoid this, some institutions administer a placement test so that students are grouped with peers who share similar language skills. As Coombe explains "the primary aim [of a placement test] is to create groups of learners that are homogenous in level" (2010, xvi). However, this attempt is not always successful since many institutions use tests that do not fit the particular needs of their context and the particularities of their language programs. To avoid any negative backwash effect Hughes suggests, "The placement tests that are more successful are those constructed for particular situations. They depend on the identification of the key features at different levels of teaching in the institution. They are tailor-made rather than bought off the peg" (2003, 17). The information gained in this type of tests is crucial to provide students with remediation and particular instruction.

Additionally, there are other reasons why the MPLC emerges. Scrivener claims that grouping students by age, using ineffective placement procedures and putting the learners into a single group because the school has insufficient levels may cause the MPLC phenomenon to arise (2005, 67-68). Unfortunately, not all institutions count on the budget or institutional support to use the appropriate placement/grouping procedures. As Mathews-Aydinli and Van Horne illustrate "Small, often rural, programs may find it necessary to place learners of different levels in a single class in order to serve small numbers of students" (2006, 1). That is the case of

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the institution in which this research is conducted and whose consequences on the teachers and the learners are put in evidence in this report.

The Need for Identifying Different Proficiency Levels

When faced with the MPLC, teachers should identify the students' language proficiency as a first step. For this purpose, they can implement a diagnosis activity, administer a placement test or just carry out thorough observation.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)⁷ gives a systematic proficiency guideline in order to place learners according to their proficiency level. These guidelines are commonly used by language schools and universities worldwide due to their extensive and detailed descriptors. On its website, the council provides teachers or evaluators with a scale for each linguistic skill. In each scale, ten main descriptors are listed: superior, advanced-high, advanced-mid, advanced-low, intermediate-high, intermediate-mid, intermediate-low, novice-high, novice-mid and novice-low. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)⁸ Guidelines are also a useful tool for teachers who intend to place their students into the corresponding language proficiency. This system has three main categories which are proficient user, independent user and basic user. Two more subcategories are described for each. They are C2, C1, B2, B1, A2 and A1, C2 being the highest score and A1 the lowest. This scale is named the Common Reference Levels: Global Scale.

⁷ACTFL is an American organization dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of languages.

⁸CEFR is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and other countries. It was put together by the Council of Europe, and its main aim is to provide a method of assessing and teaching.

Once instructors identify their learners' proficiency level, they face the challenge of addressing the classroom experience by means of differentiating instruction. There is an underlying need in any language program to identify the linguistic competence of learners since it becomes the basis for the effective and successful implementation of language curriculum. If specific learners' needs are not identified, teaching may lack the instructional components necessary for learners to succeed in the learning of the language.

Why Is the Placement Test the Most Viable Option?

The importance of administering placement tests is undeniable. Placement tests measure the people's linguistic ability; they are "intended to provide information that will help to place students at the stage (or in the part) of the teaching programme most appropriate to their abilities. Typically, they are used to assign students to classes at different levels" (Hughes: 2003, 16). Administering a placement test gives students and teachers of English as a foreign language a tool for obtaining an approximation of the knowledge and competence that the students have in the target language. If administered during the beginning levels of learning, this type of test can provide the opportunity to approach each student's needs appropriately. A sound placement test should cover as many linguistic areas as possible, ranging from the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to the micro-skills (pronunciation, grammar and spelling). Depending on the institution's needs and profile, a placement test may delineate enrollment lists and class arrangement.

Not implementing this type of test may provoke negative effects in the students and the language program. First, low-proficient students who enroll in a language program that drives high-level proficiency instruction struggle with high demanding learning experiences whereas

high-proficient students who enroll in a program that is too basic for their linguistic and communicative competence might not have the chance to be challenged and there is not may not be much significant improvement. As the University of Wisconsin-Madison Office of Testing and Evaluation Services affirms, "Student misplacement has serious ramifications for the students, the department, and the institution. Research by the Center on the placement test has repeatedly demonstrated that students who enroll in a course that develops high-proficiency language skills are far less likely to be successful than students who enroll in the appropriate level course" (n.p). Second, the institution can also suffer the consequences of not placing learners according to their linguistic level. For instance, mixed- proficiency language classes are more demanding, and place a burden on teachers no matter their expertise and dedication. This may lead to unsuccessful academic outcomes that result in disappointment from students and program disqualification. In addition, administration issues come into light given that there is inconsistency in the registration process since not all students are enrolled in courses with the same level of instruction. Also, a high number of dropouts caused by inappropriate placement and instruction can lead the language program to lose prestige. As the Office of Testing and Evaluation states "Misplacement is also costly for the academic department, and not just in terms of added paperwork or time spent adding and dropping students" (n.p). Finally, not valuing the role of a placement test in an institution promotes levels of student dissatisfaction and institutional inefficiencies.

Learning in an MPLC

Each human being is gifted with distinguishing traits that make him/her an individual able to contribute to society in a particular way. Language teachers identify these individual

differences when teaching students with very different socializing and learning capacities in the same class. Some of these differences are: language aptitude, motivation, and age. These individual differences can make the MPLC a more dramatic disparity.

Those differences are rooted in the fact that all students in a classroom do not have the same language background and progress rate. Hence, language teachers cannot assume that their students have the same proficiency, motivation, language aptitude or age.

Language aptitude explains why some students are able to grasp ideas with just short explanations, others memorize large lists of words with no big effort, and still some others are able to interpret pictures to convey meaning in a short period of time. In contrast with these examples, there are other kinds of students who, in spite of having a strong desire to learn a new language, cannot internalize key concepts or ideas. According to Byram, aptitude refers to “cognitive abilities rather than attitudes and affective dimensions of learning” (1998, 37). It means that learners have less control over this ability. Tricia Hedge, in her book *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom* makes reference to this issue. She says, “It is common to hear people say ‘She has a flair for languages’, or even, more specifically, ‘He has a good ear for languages’, and there is a body of research evidence to suggest that some people do indeed have a particular aptitude for language learning” (2000, 17). Hence, in every class teachers are challenged to address students with different rates of linguistic aptitude. Furthermore, aptitude encompasses different mental processes. As Woltz explains “Implicit learning and memory processes represent an intriguing class of cognitive mechanisms that have received relatively little attention in aptitude theory compared to attention-related and general intellectual ability constructs” (2003, 102). The general implication of language aptitude is that teachers and students must be aware of the fact that not all students who want to learn English are likely to be

successful in learning this foreign language. The MPLC is already a challenge and if there are found learners with an aptitude problem, the negative effects will be more dramatic since it will put an extra burden into both teachers and students' shoulders.

Motivation also takes a central role when identifying learners' differences in the MPLC since it can get directly affected. Due to the disparity in language proficiency, it is easy for students to get frustrated in a MPLC for high-proficient students may feel held back and low-proficient students may feel pushed to follow a fast flow. Additionally, not all students in a classroom have the same type of motivation. Students have different reasons for being in a language class. For instance, some may be there because their parents or the educational system say so, like in the case of children and teenagers in school or university students taking required courses for a degree. However, other learners are committed to learning a foreign language for other reasons such as better job opportunities and social prestige. As Hedge explains, "Adult learners returning to study may regard language learning as hobby or cultural pursuit worthy of the educated person" (2000, 22). Susan Ainslie explores the concept of instrumental motivation by establishing it as "a practical reason for learning" (1994, 3). A high standard of living for ones' family and job opportunities are some of the demands faced by adult learners. In addition to these contributions, Norton gives a more detailed conception of motivation by defining instrumental motivation as a determiner of students' success. Learning investment is delineated as a possible generator of students' interest in getting access to resources that privilege language speakers have (1995, 17). She expands this idea by adding:

The conception of instrumental motivation generally presupposes a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner who desires access to material resources that are the privilege of target language speakers. In this view, motivation is a property of the

language learner-fixed personality trait. The notion of investment, on the other hand, attempts to capture the relationship of the language learner to the changing social world. (1995, 17)

Motivation is a complex area for teachers since teaching choices weigh heavily on their shoulders. Perhaps the most useful course of action is to identify what is behind each student to focus on providing enhancing experiences.

When considering learners' differences in a MPLC, age plays a determining role since adding an extra noticeable difference among students can make the classroom a harsh environment to learn. There is a difference in the way teenagers and adults perceive and value education that is why grouping students with both linguistic and age differences can have serious consequences. In addition, age determines the type of methodology to be implemented in a classroom. Teaching children, teenagers and adults implies different procedures. Each context represents a different challenge for the teacher as well; hence, discriminating what action to take in each case is mandatory. In his book *Teaching by Principles*, Douglas Brown makes reference to what he titles, "Learner Variables I: Teaching across Age Levels." He explores the learner variable of age by dividing it into three main contexts: children, teenagers and adults. He compares and contrasts their differences when learning a language. Teaching adults is of particular interest for this review. He mentions significant cognitive and affective characteristics like adults' ability to handle abstract rules and concepts, adults' longer attention span (longer than children and teenagers), their appeal to multiple senses, their self-confidence identified as global self-esteem, and due to their developed abstract thinking ability, they can understand context-reduced segments of language better (2000, 86-91). Anna Turula reinforces adult learners' cognitive maturity through the following recommendation, "Adult learners need to

know-and it is the task of the teacher to tell them how particular activities and exercises help them achieve their overall learning aims, and therefore, why they need to do them" (2002, 32). Certainly, students' needs vary along a number of dimensions, and the idea that age is a determining learning difference that should determine classroom instruction places a heavier burden on the teachers who face mixed-linguistic proficiency classes.

Crookes and Chaudron in Celce-Murcia contribute to language teaching by labeling adults' particular traits. They state, "A prime characteristic of adulthood is the need and capacity to be self-directing. In other words, adults will to some extent, 'direct' their own learning agendas" (2001, 386). Age differences are an issue to be borne in mind when deciding techniques, management of the classroom, topics and teacher-student relationship. Effective instruction is determined to the extent that language teachers consider all of the learning differences addressed previously. Language instructors should never overlook the influence learners' differences have on the teaching and learning process.

The MPLC demands that students be aware of the active role they play and how they can make use of language strategies to enhance their active and self-directed involvement in the learning process. Students in a MPLC must be conscious of the importance of using language strategies as tools to backup and reinforce knowledge they gained from the class to become independent learners.

If this awareness is combined with effective instruction, students could optimize the control they have over their learning process. Students can accomplish this control by using learning strategies. In this regard, adopting learning strategies can make a difference. Rebecca Oxford states that learning strategies are the "steps taken by students to enhance their own

learning” (1990, 1). A wider definition establishes that learning strategies are “any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information (Rubin: 1987, 19). Oxford’s classification is broader and is geared toward the development of communicative competence. She divides strategies into two main classes, Direct and Indirect, which are subdivided into three groups each.

According to Oxford, students can take control over their learning process by implementing indirect learning strategies in everyday experiences. She gives an insightful description in her book *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. The scholar states:

Indirect strategies are divided into metacognitive, affective, and social. Metacognitive strategies allow learners to control their own cognition. Affective strategies help to regulate emotions, motivations, and attitudes. Social strategies help students learn through interaction with others. All these strategies are called “indirect” because they support and manage language learning without (in many instances) directly involving the target language. (1990, 135)

As explained by Oxford in the last line, learners can make use of these strategies since the beginning stages of language training. Some of these are to pay attention, to ask questions to teachers and peers, to take risks, to set goals and to become aware of feelings. Apprentices can develop language learning strategies inside and outside the classroom.

Both, teachers and students, share responsibility in the language teaching and learning process. The MPLC is not an exception; on the contrary, it is a more demanding setting that

requires learners to be active participants by taking full advantage of the strategies that might maximize their performance.

Student Participation

Participation in the classroom is directly linked to students' engagement in activities. This aspect is commonly graded in language courses due to the positive outcomes that student participation has on their learning of the language. A participative student is one who is asking and answering questions, solving exercises as requested and taking part in discussions. In other words, he or she is actively working towards achieving his/her learning outcomes. Students who participate in class tend to be more aware of the learning process while internalizing linguistic knowledge. This positive attitude toward learning is defined as engagement. According to Krause, this type of engagement refers to "the time, energy and resources students devote to activities designed to enhance learning" (2005, 3). Foreign language teachers must promote class participation by giving students the opportunity to be active builders of their own learning and at the same time recognize wide scope of participation. A fundamental concern in participation is that the language proficiency of learners determines classroom involvement. In a MPLC, students face a disparity in quality and quantity of participation. Students with a higher proficiency level may take an active role since they have the skills to express their opinions and solve exercises more easily and faster. On the contrary, students with a low language level may display passive behavior that limits in-class engagement and consequently language progression.

There are different types of classroom participation. As Jones explains, students' participation deserves critical review; that is why he defines different types of participation. He starts mentioning *Initiate-Respond-Evaluate* (IRE) which is a teacher-centered discussion in

which the teacher posts a question and students are directed toward a conclusion. Then, this scholar adds *cold-calling* in which students are called at random to report or give information about a topic. This is done one student at a time which means that the teachers must organize time effectively. *Open and structured talking* is a type of participation that evokes a thoughtful interplay between the teacher and the students. Brainstorming is also a type of participation that is loosely structured and that gives students the chance to take an active role in the class (2008, 60-61). Students with a low-language proficiency level may face difficulties to talk openly or brainstorm since their lack of vocabulary and fluency limit their production. On the contrary, once more, language proficient learners may take control over these types of activities causing a gap between them and those students with low linguistic proficiency.

In his article "The Why of Classroom Participation?" Jones outlines different types of participation. He states that in-class participation can also be divided according to the learners' initiative. *Volunteered participation* refers to students who take the initiative to speak, comment or answer a question while *elicited participation* is lead by the teacher. This type of volunteered participation is mainly performed by risk-takers, extroversive or knowledgeable students. Hence, the teacher has to combine both types involve those students who prefer to observe and remain passive.

Non-participative students, on the contrary, may have a hard time in any language program since they are exposed to classroom tasks that will challenge this pattern of behavior. Miranda refers to these passive students by saying that they "...are inactive in class neither because they consciously choose to be uninvolved nor [sic] because being shy is a consistent and deeply embedded personality trait. They are silent because they are afraid to participate in class in a way that exposes them to possible criticism" (2008, 12). Consequently, language instructors

should take an active role in identifying those students and promoting equal rate of participation in the class. Put differently, participation can vary in quantity and quality, which can reveal evidence of the students' knowledge and commitment. A one-word answer can be the result of lack of linguistic competence. Students with a low proficiency level may fall into this practice due to their limited linguistic tools to communicate. However, one-word can also be an answer from a student who is not involved in the classroom dynamics. On the other hand, high proficient students tend to be more active since their linguistic knowledge enables them to elaborate lengthy response.

It is really important that the teacher find out why students do not participate since there are serious consequences for those students who do not do so. By not having the chance to participate, students are depriving themselves from learning opportunities and progression. This takes more importance in the MPLC in which there is a notorious disadvantage because of the linguistic disparity. When students do not participate and remain passive observers, they are limiting their possibilities to learn. On the contrary, active participants are benefited from others' quietness since these active learners have more chances to practice. As Weaver and Qi state, "Students who actively participate in the learning process learn more than those who don't" (2005, 570). Students must be aware of the value of their participation in language learning. Teachers must also promote a challenging and suitable environment for students to pursue successful academic progression that will lead them to effective mastery of a foreign language. Despite the many efforts teachers can make to minimize the effect of the MPLC in classroom participation, there will always be serious inconsistent patterns among students. These inconsistencies are the result of not providing students with equal opportunities to learn by not grouping them according to similar language proficiency characteristics.

Classroom Management

Language instructors teaching in a class with students showing contrastive linguistic levels face laborious challenges. There is an erroneous attempt to see all learners in one class as having a particular language proficiency level, and management of the class is inaccurately homogenized, to which teachers respond by attempting to homogenize the management of the class. By doing this, teachers fall into the habit of following the same classroom procedures regardless of students' linguistic proficiency level. This homogenization is done to three main elements of the language class: material, error correction and evaluation.

Instructional material is a key element in the classroom because it is the base of instruction. That is to say, classroom material can promote meaningful and efficient learning if it is properly designed. By and large, this material is the backbone of the class from which many of the classroom procedures and dynamics are derived. That is why the design and use of classroom material should be given careful consideration. Regarding this, Tomlinson states that the material should "Provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communication...Achieve impact in the sense that they arouse and sustain the learners' curiosity and attention" (1998, 15). None of these two principles are addressed when textbooks, printed copies, videos, songs and any other source are used as a "one-size tool" tool to cater to all linguistic needs in the MPLC. What is more, students may either lose their interest because those materials are way below their language proficiency or get frustrated because they just cannot keep up with the flow of the class. Language instructors teaching in a MPLC must devote time to choosing wisely the type of material to be used since their decisions affect classroom development directly. In a desperate attempt to address the different proficiency levels in one group, some teachers resort to using a variety of materials so that they approach all students'

needs in one activity. To do this, language instructors can select different materials for the different language proficiency levels or select the materials and set different teaching/learning strategies to work with the demands and needs of each linguistic level. Additionally, teachers can make use of what Hess explains as *individualization* where the teacher supplies students with the chance to “approach it (class activity) on several different levels” (2001, 131). However, this is a time-consuming effort since teachers need to plan the strategies to do this in-advance, pilot them and monitor them while in practice which can be a risky endeavor, especially when there are too many different language proficiency levels in class and when there are too many students in one class.

In addition, material design and use, error correction is an issue of concern for every EFL teacher since key considerations such as what, how and when to correct students to avoid discouragement is not an easy task. In fact, claims about the value of error correction have changed in perspective moving from an aesthetic position that prevented and punished errors to a flexible one that according to Hedge views them as part of “a creative construction process” (2000, 15). In like manner, Hedge argues that “the treatment of error requires consideration of many issues. Whether or not to perform the role of diagnoser and corrector of errors is only the first. If we decide to undertake this role, we will need a careful policy for making decisions about what, when and how to correct” (2000, 15). With this argument in mind, one can conclude that in a MLPC class learners produce a wide range of errors. Thus, teachers must be selective in deciding what to correct from learners since low-proficient students cannot be corrected the same way high-proficient ones are, though they need to be pushed more than the rest. In the long run, language instructors teaching students with different proficiency levels in one class have a huge responsibility on their shoulders.

Evaluation in the MPLC

It is particularly important to recognize that evaluation in an MPLC is truly challenging. Evaluation in language instruction can be divided into testing and assessment. A test is, according to Brown, "a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given domain" (2000, 384). It has a summative component that focuses on the overall level of achievement or product and a formative one that refers to "a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability or achievement" (Coombe et al, 2007, xv). As opposed to testing, assessment centers on a formative level of achievement that values progress rather than product. Teachers in an MPLC are confronted with a dilemma which is not easy, and very much dependent upon the flexibility of the curriculum. This dilemma makes teachers reflect on whether or not to measure the students' progress by administering tests that abide by the course objectives. If they do so, students with a low-proficiency level will be at a disadvantage since they are set up for failure by not providing them with differentiated testing procedures to satisfy their particular learning needs. Conversely, if teachers resort to utilizing differentiated testing that considers the students' individual progress, a serious consequence arises: the gap of language proficiency among students will continue to exist in one only classroom.

Student Progression

Student progression in the language classroom can take two forms: a quantitative or a qualitative one. Quantitative progression is measured by good grades in tests, quizzes and assignments, high scores in courses, competitive scores in standardized tests and successful completion of an academic program. A qualitative view of progression takes into consideration the students' capacity to reach communicative goals inside and outside the classroom setting.

There are many factors that can influence effective academic performance like an effective curriculum, the teacher's and students' involvement and engagement in their learning process. Student progression in the MPLC is linked to success in learning the language. Learners who thrive to make progress are the ones who are able not only to obtain good grades but also to show linguistic improvement in classroom performance.

Educational institutions pursue prestige and success which are measured by students' successful achievement. Establishing an effective curriculum with suitable conditions for learners and teachers is a key factor. Curriculum developers have gained awareness by highlighting the importance of addressing the many factors that come into play when designing and implementing a language program. Jack Richards, in his book *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*, acknowledges the implications of institutional, teacher, teaching and learner factors (2001, 198). If institutions are committed to success, learners will benefit from it directly. Adequate budget, time and resources can lead to remarkable outcomes. In light of this point of action, institutions must ensure that learners are achieving the expected outcomes since their progress reflect the effectiveness of the program in question. On the contrary, institutional neglects can become stumbling blocks which are put in the way to success.

Student Retention

In order to achieve student retention, faculty members and authorities must be truly committed to success of programs. The administrative authorities of the institution need to be engaged in ongoing curriculum evaluation, which is "a systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum and assess its

effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved" (Brown: 1995, 218). If authorities ensure that the learning process is successful, a high student retention rate is guaranteed.

There are certain conditions that promote student retention. One of these conditions is, according to Tinto (a professor and researcher at the Syracuse University), that "students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that provide clear and consistent information about institutional requirements" (2001, 2). Faculties must delineate which are the conditions in which the learning process will take place so that learners can move on and finish programs successfully. On the contrary, if there are no linguistic requisites established since the entry process, students may develop a sense of strangeness which may result in attrition. That is to say, if there is no institutional commitment, and learners are discouraged by rough conditions that do not foster academic integration, dropout decisions can be made. A consistent high dropout rate has dangerous consequences in any language program. Authorities cannot leave attrition unresolved; otherwise, programs can be closed and the institution's prestige can end up in crisis.

III. Methodology

This fundamental chapter aims at explaining key features of the nature of this study and the different steps involved. Below, the type of research is outlined, including a description of the data gathering instruments and the subjects of study. The research questions are listed in this section as well.

Type of Research

The examination of the phenomenon in question calls for the blending of both the qualitative and the quantitative paradigms so as to better nurture the case-study nature of this investigation. The rationale behind the selection of the collective case study method for this inquiry is that the researcher seeks to look into the possible consequences that the mixed-language proficiency nature of the target group may have on teaching and learning a foreign language, which requires an in-depth study of the participants (students and teachers). As Blatter defines, a case study is a research approach in which one or few issues of a phenomenon are studied in-depth (qtd in Hernández et al: 2010, 2, CD-ROM,). In particular, the selection of a mixed approach to the development of this case study is grounded in its intended outcomes. On the one hand, this study intends to document the behaviors and attitudes of the participants in the natural setting in which they interact (the MPLC). According to Yin, this description of a case study is also explained by Yin who envisions that this type of research is an empiric inquiry that inspects a phenomenon inside its real life context (qtd in Hernandez, Fernandez and Baptista, 2010, 2, CD-ROM). One should note here that due to the timeframe of this project, this study is addressed as *temporary* since it was developed in less than a year. Moreover, because of the complexity of documenting behaviors and attitudes, elements of the quantitative paradigm are

used; namely, a placement test, different questionnaires and structured observations. Second, the researcher seeks to interpret the behaviors and attitudes recorded vis-à-vis the participants' perceptions regarding the phenomenon under study, which requires the use of qualitative-based data collection instruments such as interviews and focus groups. By and large, the information collected by these means will shed light into the consequences that the mixed-proficiency language class may have on teaching and learning, specifically, student participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention.

Research Questions:

1. Which are the students' perspectives regarding the consequences that the mixed-proficiency language class may have on student participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention?
2. Which are the teachers' perspectives regarding the consequences that the mixed-proficiency language class may have on student participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention?
3. Which are the social and economic consequences that the mixed-proficiency language class may have on the university and the community?

The Research Setting

Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus (UNASRB) – a branch of this university – is the setting where this research was conducted. This university has become a prestigious one because of the high-quality programs it offers and the large numbers of scholarships it grants

to students from low-income families. This branch – founded in 1976 – is located in San Isidro de El General, the main district of Pérez Zeledón⁹ county, in the southern region of Costa Rica (see figure 1). It was founded in 1976. This site also has a smaller campus (Sede Coto) in Ciudad Neilly.¹⁰ There are 790 students registered at UNASRB in 2011. This university provides students with a quiet and spacious building due to its location. This campus hosts two main projects of UNASRB, they are Escuela Científica and Colegio Científico de Pérez Zeledón. Currently, the majors offered are Librarianship, English Teaching Major, Associate's Program in English and Computer Science. There are some graduate programs for Counseling, Education, Business Administration and Computer Engineering.



Figure 1. Location of San Isidro del General, web source.



Figure 2. UNASRB main entrance, photograph by LennaBarrantes.

The next figures are photographs of the rooms where the subjects of this research attended classes. Subjects enrolled in the course Integrated English 1 do not have access to language laboratory because their schedule was set up after the organization of the laboratory's schedule. On the contrary, students taking Integrated English 2 used the laboratory two times a week.

⁹Pérez Zeledón is the 19th county of the province of San José.

¹⁰Ciudad Neilly is the capital city of Corredores county in Puntarenas province.

Room A2 was equipped with four fans, a TV set, a whiteboard, one desk for the teacher and enough chairs and desks for students. The language laboratory was equipped with a console, thirty booths for students, a TV set, air-conditioning, two speakers, two projectors, two CD players and one laptop.



Figure 3. Room A2, photograph by Lenna Barrantes

Figure 4. Language laboratory, photograph by Lenna Barrantes.

The Researcher Status

The researcher of this study is Lenna Barrantes Elizondo, a professor in the English Department at the Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus. In 1996, she registered in the English Teaching Major at this same university, and she got her bachelor's degree in the year 2000. Five years later, she got her licentiate's degree in Applied Linguistics at Universidad Nacional in Heredia. She is currently registered in the master's program Second Languages and Cultures, at the same university. She has worked as an EFL teacher for the last eleven years. During those years, she has worked with the Ministry of Public Education and higher education institutions simultaneously. She was granted tenure in a public primary school in 2001 in her hometown. In 2000, she started working at Universidad Latina de Costa Rica in San Isidro de El General in the English Teaching Major Program. In addition, since 2004 she has worked as an assistant

professor at UNASRB in the English Teaching Major and Associate's Program in English. Furthermore, from 2008 to 2010 she worked for CONARE-MEP¹¹ Academic Committee¹² training English primary and high school teachers. Currently, she is not working for the Ministry of Public Education, but she is teaching full time at UNASRB.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher used various instruments to collect data, but had a non-participative role during the observation stage. The main purpose of this non-existent participation was to record informants' behaviors as naturally as possible and to avoid any disruption. Following this further, the emic view of the researcher is defined by her status as a professor at the educational institution where this research was conducted. This condition provided the informants and the researcher with familiarity about the learning processes and school life. Meanwhile, the etic view was consistent with the non-participative immersion of the researcher since she always kept distance and behaved as an outsider in search for information.

The role of the researcher in this study was dynamic since she moved from teacher/scholar to acquaintance. During the first stages of this project, the researcher followed a teacher/scholar role so that the application of the data collection instruments was unobtrusive. She conducted interviews with professors, asked informants to answer questionnaires, carried out non-participant observations and collected artifacts. However, it was in the last instrument, the focus group, in which she asked informants to share their feelings, expectations and fears so that

¹¹ CONARE stands for Comisión Nacional de Rectores.

¹² CONARE-MEP Academic Committee is a group of experts leading the academic organization of a training program for teachers working for the Ministry of Public Education.

deeper insights about the group under research were gathered, which is a key feature of a case study.

The Subjects of the Study

There are two main target subjects in this study; the students and the teachers from the only first-year group of the Associate's Program in English, which is a two-year program that is directed to a working population. It is precisely for this reason that this program has an evening-only schedule. Additionally, the head of the Foreign Languages Department and the Academic Director were also sources of valuable information. First-year students are the sample population for this research, and includes students registered in the courses Integrated English 1 and Integrated English 2. For the purpose of this investigation, the former is addressed as Group B (students with a low-proficiency level) while the latter as Group A (students with a high proficiency level). In group A, there are fifteen students enrolled whose ages range from seventeen to twenty-three, being nineteen the mean and eighteen the mode. Seven students come from rural communities like Rivas, San Pedro, Cajón and Páramo while the rest of the informants live in downtown San Isidro. None of them is currently working or studying a different major which means they are full-time students. The informants were asked to share the reasons why they enrolled this program. They gave four main reasons which are: they like English, speaking English provides good job opportunities – this program is short and they like learning languages. In Group B there are ten students who are the focus of attention in this study. They all are taking this course for the second time since they failed in the first semester. They come from San Isidro, Rivas, Daniel Flores and Golfito. Only one of them is currently working.

Three English language instructors in this program were informants as well. Professor A has worked as a language teacher for seven years. She is currently working as a primary school teacher in a public institution. She is a co-founder of the outreach program CI-UNA which offers English conversational courses for the community. This professor holds a bachelor's degree in Education, a bachelor's degree in English Teaching and a master's degree in Second Languages and Cultures from Universidad Nacional. Professor B has worked for UNASRB for six years; he has worked in the English Teaching Major, the Associate's Program in English and in the Tourism Major. He is also a teacher at Colegio Científico de Pérez Zeledón. This professor holds a bachelor's degree in English Teaching from Universidad Nacional. Finally, professor C has worked as a language teacher for nine years and holds a Master's degree in Education Administration from Universidad Nacional. She also works for the Ministry of Public Education as a kindergarten teacher since she also holds a preschool degree. Professor C is currently working in the Tourism Major and CI-UNA.

Data Collection Instruments

Different steps were taken throughout this research project. The entry process was initiated by sending letters to the collaborative teachers and the head of the Foreign Languages Department. Following, the data collection instruments – which were applied by the researcher herself – were piloted before their application. A schedule of observations was designed by the researcher, and it was given to the collaborative teachers. Specific dates for the application of instruments were scheduled. The course “Integrated English” was the target of analysis for three main reasons. First, professors teaching this course agreed to participate in this research. Second, this course encloses different linguistic skills which are grammar, writing, listening, speaking

and reading which provides an opportunity to observe a wider range of learning and teaching behavior. Third, this course is taught three times a week which provides plenty of opportunities for the researcher to access the informants. It is worth mentioning that this class is taught by two different professors, one of them is in charge of teaching grammar and writing (from 7:00 p.m. to 8:40 p.m.) while the other teaches speaking, reading and listening (from 5:00 p.m. to 8:40). Next there is a description of the instruments used to gather the necessary data.

Diagnostic Test

Subjects of the study were requested to take a placement test in order to establish their current proficiency level. This instrument was administered at the beginning stage of the research in February 2010. Students solved a Mock TOEIC. This is a simulation of the *Test of English for International Communication* which is a two-hour, paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice evaluation that consists of 200 questions divided into two separately-timed sections. This test measures listening, reading comprehension and grammar. The test-takers answered the test in the language laboratory and used an answer sheet. This test uses a score conversion chart that places students into a six-level scale which are A1-A2 (Basic User), B1-B2 (Independent User) and C1-C2 (Proficient User). These categories are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This test was designed by ETS (Educational Testing Service) which is a non-profit education organization in the United States.

Non-participant Structured Observation

One observation scale was designed to gather specific information regarding classroom dynamics. The main purpose was to record the behavior of students and teachers. This observation scale was divided into three sections: participation, classroom management and

students' responses/behaviors/reactions. These observations were carried out in the corresponding schedule of the course Integrated English 1 and 2. Most of the time, classes took one hour and forty minutes. The number and organization of observations can be seen in the next chart.

Class	Time	Number of observations
	5:00 p.m. - 6:40 p.m.	9
Integrated English 1	7:00 p.m.-8:40 p.m.	
	5:00 p.m. - 6:40 p.m.	9
Integrated English 2	7:00 p.m.-8:40 p.m.	

Questionnaire for Students #1

A questionnaire was designed to gather personal information for the diagnostic stage of this research. This questionnaire consists of two main sections. The first one includes personal information questions like age, gender, residence and workplace. The second section inquires about students' linguistic instruction. The informants were asked to answer this questionnaire individually. In order to avoid any communication mismatch, this instrument was designed and instructions for it were given in the informants' mother tongue.

Questionnaire for Teachers #1

The main aim of this questionnaire was to collect personal information about the professors teaching the target course in order to design their profile. Close-ended questions were included as well as a checklist that revealed key personal characteristics.

Questionnaire for Teachers #2

In order to gather teachers' perceptions about the consequences of the MPLC, this questionnaire was applied. It included ten multiple-choice questions; however, an open-ended section was provided in each question, so that the informants' extra comments were recorded.

Questionnaire for Students #2

This questionnaire was designed to obtain data about the students' perceptions regarding the challenges that the mixed-proficiency nature of the target group poses for participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention. This record consists of twenty-five statements with a Likert scale with the phrases *never or almost never true of me, usually not true of me, usually true of me and always or almost always true of me* as options to choose from. This instrument was designed in Spanish, which is the students' native language, so that the data provided were not hindered due to language constraints.

Key-informant Questionnaire

In order to garner information from authorities about the MPLC, the head of the English Department and the Academic Director were asked to answer a questionnaire. They provided the researcher with key data regarding the admission process for the university, the role of a placement test in the language programs in this institution, the consequences of the MPLC and the APE program.

Structured Interview with the Teachers

The three collaborative teachers were interviewed in order to verify their perspectives regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The interview followed a structured format in

which predetermined questions were outlined. However, additional follow up questions were spontaneously devised to obtain further information from the informants. After the information gathered from this interview was analyzed, an in-depth interview was designed.

Collaborative teacher	Date	Duration
Teacher A	August, 2011	8 minutes
Teacher B	August, 2011	13 minutes
Teacher C	September, 2011	7 minutes

Follow-up Interview with the Teachers

In order to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic, a follow up interview was conducted. Through this instrument, the research aims at gaining insights on how the teachers feel about the issue under scrutiny. An interview guide with anticipated questions was designed. The interviews took place at the university library which is a quiet space.

Collaborative teacher	Date	Duration
Teacher A	August, 2011	20 minutes
Teacher C	September, 2011	10 minutes

Focus Group

This instrument recorded the students' insights about the research topic in-depth. These focus groups were carried out in Spanish, which is the informants' mother tongue, to avoid any communication mismatch and to provide them with a full understanding of the events and topics discussed. For this purpose, two different focus groups were conducted. They were organized according to students' proficiency level. To do this, their scores obtained in the placement test-

which was administered during the diagnostic stage of this research— were used as reference. The next chart shows the organization.

Group	Proficiency level	Number of participants	Duration	Date
1	A1(novice) A2(beginner)	6	50 minutes	September 28 th , 2011
2	B1-B2 (intermediate)	6	50 minutes	September 28 th , 2011

Each of the two focus groups followed the same procedures, topic and material. The SWOT¹³ analysis method was used so that the researcher could identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research topic as well as the opportunities and threats of the students enrolled in this program. Activity one in the **individual work** section captured the strengths and weaknesses of the mixed-language proficiency class by asking students to identify the challenges, advantages, disadvantages of the MPLC. In the same way, activity five in this same section garnered data about the opportunities and threats of learners who face the MPLC. In this activity, informants listed on the cardboards the consequences of placing students with different proficiency levels in one group. They referred to specific threats and opportunities on participation, progression, class management and retention.

Artifact Collection

Artifacts became a really significant data gathering instrument in this research. Their collection constitutes the gathering of physical elements surrounding the population under investigation. Artifacts in this research are: the Associate's Program in English curriculum, the

¹³SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is a strategic method used to assess these previous concepts.

outline of the course Integrated English, a document provided by the registrar's office and the teachers' records. Information gathered from these artifacts is tandem with other data collected.

Data Collection Procedures

Entry process: The entry process did not face any constraints because the researcher is a professor at the university where the study was conducted. Still, a negotiation letter was submitted to the head of the Foreign Languages department and each collaborative teacher. Previous to this, the researcher and the informants came to an oral agreement.

Administration of Instruments: due to the collaborative teachers' willingness to cooperate, the instruments were administered whenever the researcher required. There were no conditions imposed on the part of collaborative teachers and authorities. Students were also likely to collaborate; no one refused to answer when required by the researcher.

Constraints

Four main constraints could obscure the research. They were limited time, students' and teachers' absenteeism, lack of sufficient data and reactivity from subjects; however, those limitations were treated in advance to diminish the negative effect on the research process. Even though, this research was carried out in a limited time period, a timetable helped to organize and schedule steps in advance. Teachers and students' absenteeism and participation in extra-curricular activities could have affected the quantity of observations. For this reason, eighteen observations were scheduled in the research process. To avoid reactivity from students

during the observations two phases were established. First, a participative phase occurred when the researcher introduced herself to the informants and explained her presence. Second, a non participant phase took place in which the researcher played an unobtrusive role to record details. Another possible constraint could have been the lack of accessibility to necessary administrative documentation. However, the researcher contacted different sources of information to obtain the required data; some of these sources were the academic department office, the registrar's office, the UNASRB webpage and teachers' records.

IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Heterogeneous class grouping has provoked the MPLC to be a common reality in many EFL settings. This phenomenon has turned to be a challenge for the students and teachers who face basic, independent and proficient users of the language in one only class. In language programs where the main goal is that learners develop communicative skills (as in the case of the APE at UNA, SRB), this phenomenon becomes a stumbling block for the participants involved. In approaching this issue, teachers find themselves in chaotic and hectic classrooms where scaffolding, a great deal of planning, designing and implementing of a large variety of material and providing specialized instruction are necessary to address the particular needs of the learners. This pressing reality affects the learners as well because students who find themselves in classrooms where their classmates have drastically different levels from their own may react in various ways. By and large, the students in these classes may display contrastive effects ranging from negative feelings of frustration, discouragement and boredom to empathy and cooperation.

This chapter outlines the results obtained from the study that was conducted in the target classes. The triangulation of the different data collection instruments that were used – questionnaires, interviews, observations, artifact collection and focus groups – served to unveil the consequences of placing students that have different language proficiency levels into the same class. For the purpose of clarity, the results were divided into three subsections: the consequences of the MPLC on the learners, the consequences of the MPLC on the teachers and finally on the consequences of this phenomenon on the institution.

The Mixed-proficiency Language Nature of the Target Groups: Opinion or Fact?

It is worth noting that in order to verify the MPLC nature of the target group, different instruments were applied. The first one was the administration of a diagnostic proficiency test (described on page 8 in this same document). The results of this test put in evidence that in the target group students do have notably different proficiency levels ranging from Basic User to Independent User. This reality was further verified during the focus groups and teachers interviews, in which both agreed that there is linguistic gap¹⁴. Teacher A illustrated the situation clearly when she said that “Some of them were really behind in terms of level. They could not catch up with the others. This group showed this huge gap, half of the class was showing serious problems and the other half were better” (Interview 1, August 2011).

To sum up, after analyzing all this information, the MPLC must be accepted as a reality in the Associate’s Program of English. Therefore, a closer look into its consequences on participation, classroom management and progression is put in evidence next.

Teachers’ Perspectives

Interviews, a questionnaire, and class observation were the three instruments used to gather the information that supports the results displayed in this section. The constructs discussed here are: participation, classroom management, student retention and progression.

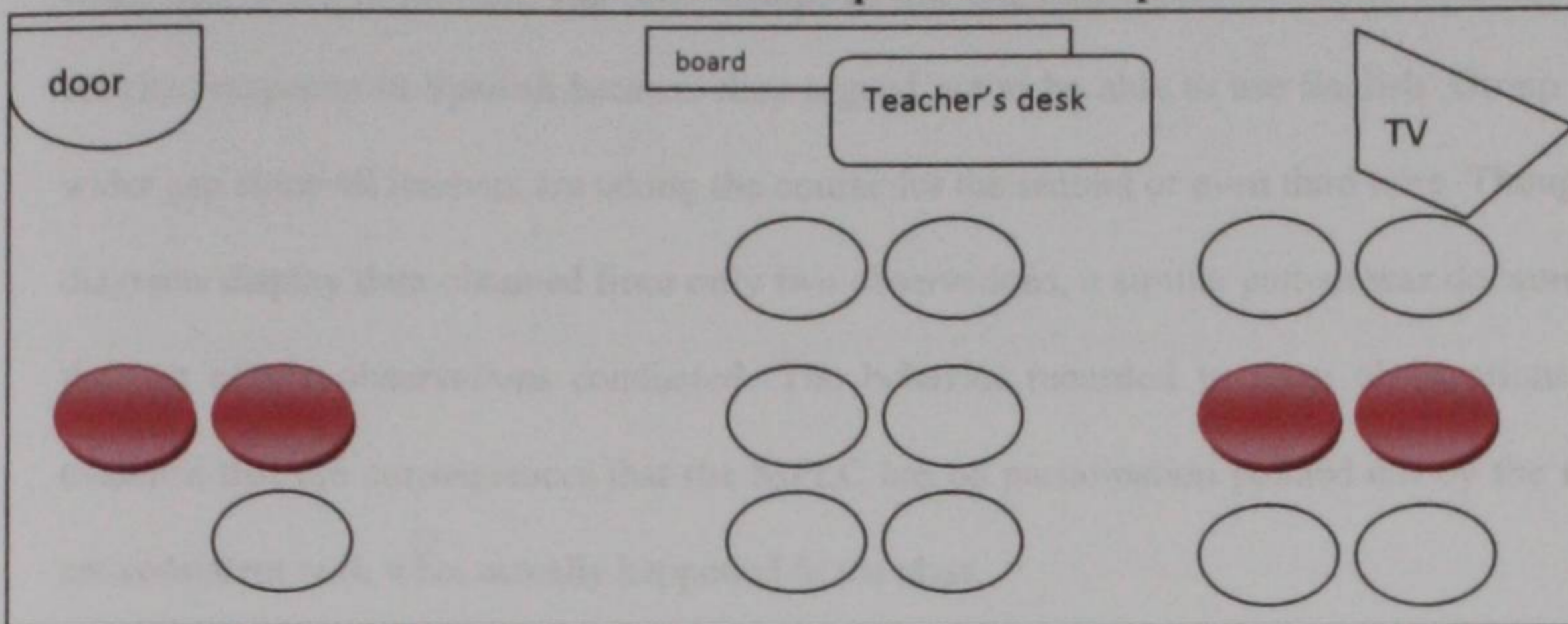
¹⁴ See video 1 and 3.

Consequences of the MPLC on Participation

According to the teachers who participated in this research, participation is highly hindered by the learners' linguistic gap. In the interviews conducted, these language instructors argued that students who have a high linguistic level tend to take participation in class and have no problem expressing or communicating ideas. In fact, one teacher explained that sometimes she even requested a student to stop participating so that other students had a chance to take part in the class. In contrast with high achievers, the in-class contribution of low proficient students is also hindered. Teacher A explained that in her group, there are three students who lack vocabulary and consequently just did not say a word.

A similar situation was explained by Teacher C who stated that low-proficient students shield themselves behind the ones who participate. More specifically, she explained that in group activities, learners always pick the same person to present the ideas discussed (Interview 1, September 2011). Similarly, in the questionnaires, all teachers gave the same answers regarding the disparity in quantity and quality of participation. They all pointed out that *The same students (the ones with a higher level) always participate and that low proficient students participate only when it is requested.* In fact, regarding this previous response, during the observation stage of this research, it was noticeable that certain students participated only when requested by the teacher and that the responses of these students were limited to single words. The next diagram illustrates this gap.

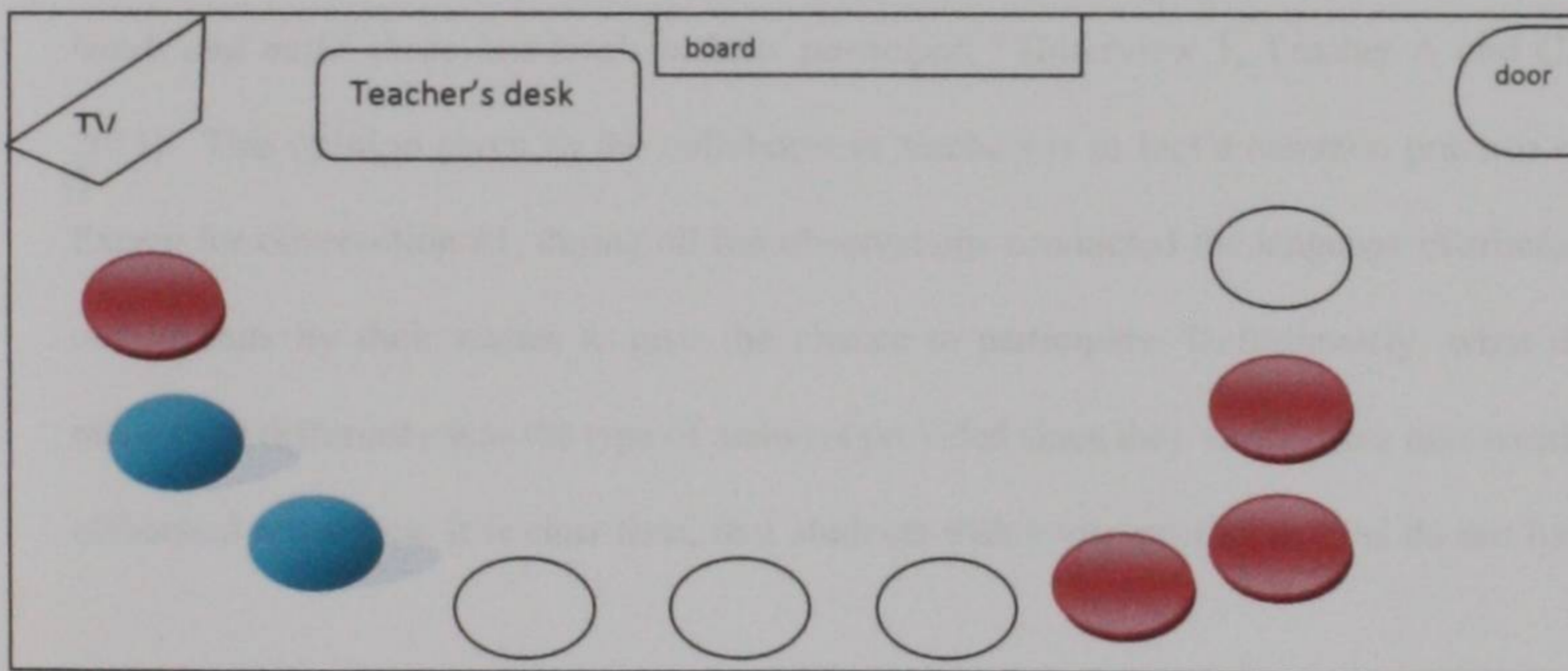
Exhibit #2
Classroom Participation in Group 1



Source: Observation conducted on August 24th, 2011.

This diagram represents behavior in group 1 (Integrated English 2). In here, the circles represent pupils; white circles represent students who volunteered to participate while red circles represent pupils who spoke in English only when it was solicited by the teacher. It is worth mentioning that the latter group of students also provided a limited response which is also an evidence of their linguistic limitation and not one of personality. A similar situation was noticed in group 2 in which the same diagram was used to trace pupils' participation.

Exhibit #3
Classroom Participation in Group 2



Source: Observation conducted on September 28th, 2011.

During the observations conducted, it was noticeable that four students participated only when they were requested. The blue circles in this diagram represent pupils who answered a solicited response in Spanish because they argued not to be able to use English. Group 2 has a wider gap since all learners are taking the course for the second or even third time. Though these diagrams display data obtained from only two observations, a similar pattern was documented in the rest of the observations conducted. The behavior recorded in these observations put in evidence that the consequences that the MPLC has on participation pointed out by the teachers are consistent with what actually happened in the class.

Teachers also provided some of the expressions and responses students usually give when they asked them to participate. They said that they usually answered "I don't know," "I can't," "I don't understand." Teacher A shared that, at the beginning of the course, she pushed students to participate, but their lack of knowledge made it impossible. In addition, teachers tended to push students to participate in an attempt to make them produce by asking the students direct oral questions. They called out pupils' by their names so that they could provide an opinion or answer. As teacher A and C shared in the interview respectively, "*I never ask students to volunteer when I ask a question, I always ask the ones I know lack, what we can call, a good level,*" "*in those cases [when students do not participate] you have to take matters in your own hands and make those low-level students participate*" (Interview 1, Teacher A and C, August 2011). This opinion given by the collaborative teachers is in fact a common practice recorded. Except for observation #1, during all the observations conducted the language instructors called out students by their names to give the chance to participate. Unfortunately, what definitely made a big difference was the type of answers provided since they varied from one-word to more elaborated responses. It is clear then, that students with a low-proficient level do not have equal

opportunities to participate since high-proficient students took control of the class while these low proficient students remained silent or provided limited responses. This can actually lead to more serious effects on the learning process.

Consequences of the MPLC on Classroom Management

In terms of classroom management, teachers' perspectives were recorded in the questionnaires. They all argued that students with a high-proficiency level usually affect the lesson by answering without being requested or by not giving the rest of their classmates a chance to prepare an answer or a comment. Teacher C mentioned in interview 1 that during the class they usually even have to continue to work with exercises that were to be done in the next class. In contrast, teachers during the interviews remarked that low-proficient students usually take more time to solve exercises. This situation makes time management a difficult endeavor. Another teacher stressed that the book is too complex for the low-proficient students in the class. This idea is supported by Teacher B who commented that one of the main weaknesses in this program is the book (Interview 1, Teacher B, August 2011). Teacher A emphasized time management problems because low-proficient students took much more time to develop activities; she said "they took a lot of time to do a ten-minute activity, they took like thirty minutes" (Interview 1, Teacher A, August 2011).

Another aspect regarding classroom management is that the repetition of explanations can be boring for high proficient learners. This situation causes teachers to be in the middle of both types of students. As Teacher C noted "it is really hard to make them [low-proficient students] follow the other ones [high-proficient students] because it is hard to decide ...Do I go back? Or

do I continue? That is where you have a lot of decisions to make as a teacher” (Follow-up interview September, 2011). While observing group B, it was evident that the instructor was constantly resorting to slow speech pace, she replaced words and paused to give learners time to think. However, in spite of her efforts, some students could not give the information requested, and when they did, their answers were limited in comparison to those provided by the high proficient learners.

Teaching a MPLC is a demanding task that requires special treatment and careful planning. As teachers mentioned, they have to be alert to avoid students working with the same classmates only. As a consequence, grouping strategies deserve attention. Teacher C stated “I used all different types [grouping]...sometimes I assign the group...I think they always sit in the same place, with the same people, so if I always have those people together they are going to get used to one action” (Interview 1, September 2011). When referring to the same issue, Teacher A said “I don’t like them to be participating with the same people over and over... sometimes depending on the activity I give them a number and group them that a way” (Interview 1, Teacher A, August 2011). This information was proved to be true since during six observations the teacher resorted to a specific grouping technique in which she chose the members for each group.

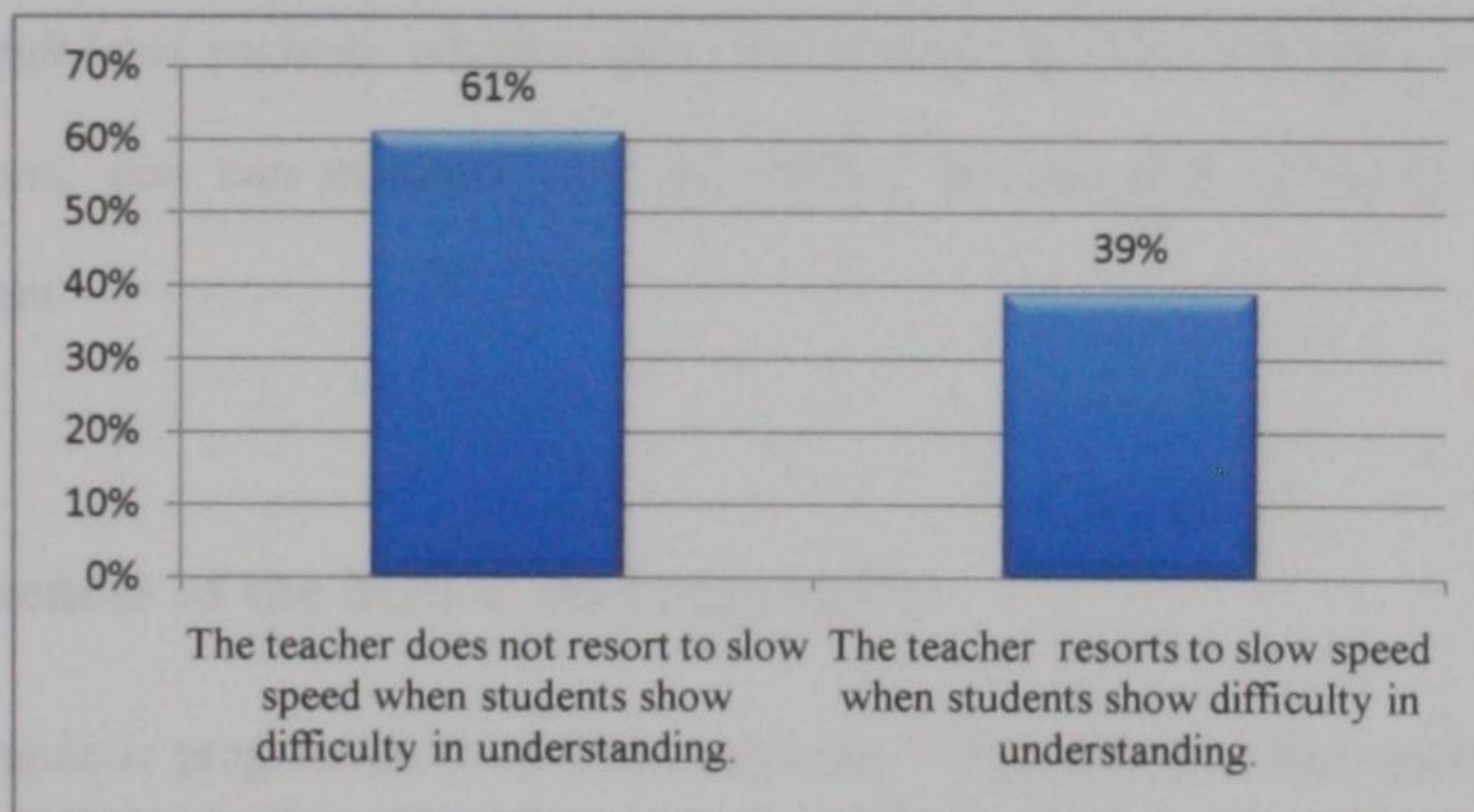
Teacher A said to have discipline management problems with the students at the beginning of the year. The linguistic gap contributed to this problem, as she said “it was hard to manage the group in terms of discipline as well as their level” (Interview 1, Teacher A, August 2011). Then, in the follow-up interview, she said that “*it was a really mixed group, different kinds of groups, discipline was the major issue for me.*” During the observations, it was noticed that students in Integrated English 2 are always on-task while students in Integrated English 1 are

usually off-task. It was recorded that those students talked in Spanish with their classmates and text-messaged from the beginning to the end of the class.

Regarding error analysis, through the classroom observations carried out it was noticed that teachers do not devote a lot of time to correcting students' mistakes. However, in observations 2, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15 the teacher corrected the students directly while the students paid attention but did not repeat. One main reason for this to happen is that time is not enough. In these cases, teachers cannot devote enough time to focus on giving feedback while students are being deprived from the benefits of correcting and improving their errors. This pattern observed also revealed that pupils did not pay attention to the benefits of this type of feedback since they did not repeat the correct forms.

With attention to teacher's speech pace when the students showed difficulties understanding, a particular practice was recorded. The next graph illustrates the frequency of use of this classroom practice.

Exhibit # 4
Teacher's Language Speed



Source: structured observations, August to October, 2011.

It was noticed through the observations that the teachers do not usually resort to slower speech pace when students show difficulty in understanding. In fact, only during 39% of the classes observed, that is five out of the eighteen, the language instructor resorted to this strategy to cater to students' linguistic needs. Meanwhile, in 69% of the classes (11 observations) the teacher spoke at a fast or normal speed. For this reason, students were constantly asking classmates for clarification. In group B, pupils did so by speaking Spanish in contrast with Group A in which the students spoke in English. Few times, students asked the teacher for clarification, and the same pattern regarding the use of the mother tongue was observed. Not understanding classroom instructions or explanations caused pupils to be distracted. This practice puts students with a low-proficiency level at a disadvantage since they must struggle to get meaning to solve simple and more elaborated classroom tasks.

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked the degree to which classroom management was affected by the mixed-level nature of the group. They all agreed that *low-proficient students take more time to solve exercises while high achievers are faster* which leads to time management issues. Additionally, they believed that *error correction must be addressed differently in both low and high level students*, which is also time consuming. After analyzing teachers' comments and answers, one can conclude that the MPLC has tangible consequences in classroom management.

Consequences of the MPLC on Progression

Linguistic progression in an EFL classroom is determined to the extent to which students can attain the course or program's objectives. In the same way, scores are usually used as

reference to measure pupils' achievement. Monitoring students' progress helps teachers and authorities to identify those who are struggling for the purpose of offering appropriate help and guidance as well. At the same time, high scores in tests can be a good predictor of language improvement. That is why an analysis of students' scores is included in this section. Artifacts, which were provided by the collaborative teachers, were the main source of data. To complement this analysis, teachers' perspectives were also recorded by means of interviews and questionnaires. A connection between scores and proficiency level is displayed in the next tables. Both groups of students are included in this analysis. Color coding is used to focus the patterns found, that is yellow for low and green for high scores. The passing grade for this and any other course in this Associate's Program in English is 70.

Exhibit #5
Students' Progression Group 2

	Quiz 1	Quiz 2
St 1. A1	62	60
St 2. A1	53	60
St 3. A1	57	60
St 4. A2	59	63
St 5. A2	68	100
St 6. A2	66	75
St 7. A2	68	75
St 8. A2	68	93
St 9. A2	67	100
St 10. A2	76	97
St 11. A1	63	65

Source: Artifacts, Teachers' records.

This table shows that students with a low proficiency level, that is the ones who were placed under A1 category in the diagnosis test, face serious progression problems. The grades

they have obtained in the second semester are below the average. The data in this chart also shows that there is no trace of successful achievement since high grades (that is above the passing grade) are not present except for student 10. In this particular case, it can be concluded that pupils with low proficiency are not progressing as expected and that their summative achievement could limit their chance to pass the course. As an illustration, Teacher C stated that those students who do not participate in class are the ones who are getting low scores (Follow-up Interview, September 2011). Coupled with this finding, Teacher A stressed out that students who sit far away from her and who are really quiet got very low grades in the speaking, reading and listening quizzes (Follow-up Interview, August 2011). Additionally, this informant warned that having a lower level has negative consequences since “it [the linguistic disparity] affects them a lot because they get held back.” She even asserted that “they want to give their best and they want to think that they can make it, but I don’t think they are going to make it” (Followed-up Interview, September 2011).

In contrast with the consequences found in low-proficient students, high achievers show a distinct reality. This information is presented in exhibit #3.

Exhibit #6
Students' Progression Group 1

		Quiz 1	Quiz 2
St. 1.	B2	80	87
St 2.	A2	55	45
St 3.	A2	85	67
St 5. (Repeating the course)	Did not take the diagnostic test	75	52
St 6.	A2	75	55
St 7.	A2	---	52
St 8.	A2	85	70
St 9.	B1	80	95
St 10.	A2	85	---
St 11.	B1	80	90
St 12.	B1	85	77
St 13.	A2	65	52
St 14.	A2	80	77
St 15.	A2	75	70
St 16.	B1	85	90

Source: Artifacts, Teachers' records.

The careful examination of these grades reveals that there is a gap in progression; there are eight students whose grades in the quizzes are above the passing grade; those who were placed in the intermediate level in the diagnosis test. This may lead to interpret that those students have been able to meet the course objectives and make progress in the learning of the language. However, there is a group of six students whose linguistic level was diagnosed as low and whose grades are below 70. They have shown not to be able to meet the course objectives, which in consequence is an obstacle for progression. Moreover, teachers' perspectives are a key aspect that supports this finding. In the questionnaires, they all agreed that "*Students do not advance much because they are not provided with equal opportunities for learning*", and that

“Low proficient students’ progress, but a lower rate.” To emphasize her concern, Teacher C added that keeping unbalanced progression affects the teachers and the students since both hold responsibility for the pupils’ learning of the language.

Consequences on Retention

When it comes to identifying the consequences on student retention in the Associate’s Program in English, teacher A has a clear perspective. Her insights are significant for this research because she started teaching the group under investigation in February and she is still teaching half of this population. She has experienced the MPLC for a longer period of time. In the follow-up interview, she was asked if she knew the reason why group B came down to half of the population in the second semester. She shared valuable information. She said that *“they [the twenty-one students who failed the course] didn’t catch up with the speed of the activities...some of them were behind and the group was really, really big. They have to master the language really quick. I have to rush them because of the two-year program.”* From this insight, it can be interpreted that students with a low proficiency level were at a disadvantage; their linguistic needs cannot be fostered. They did not have the chance to move on at their own pace. Furthermore, she insisted that students who failed the course will not be able to overcome their limitations. She said *“...even if they repeat the course I would say that they are going to find a lot of difficulties in order to master the language.”*

The most compelling evidence about the negative consequence on retention derived from the MPLC was extracted from the artifacts. The researcher compared the students’ lists¹⁵ in

¹⁵ See appendix 11, Artifacts.

group A in the first semester (Integrated English 1) to that of the second semester (Integrated English 2). Surprisingly, in the first semester there were thirty-seven students registered, but in the second semester there were only fifteen. A dramatic diminishing of the population is put in evidence. Due to the copious number of students that failed, the authorities in charge of the program decided to offer the course *Integrated English 1* in the second semester, which according to information provided by the head of the English department, had never done before. However, out of the twenty-two students who could register in the course to continue with this language program, only eleven did it. Under those circumstances, it is more than evident that there is a high rate of drop outs.

Students' Perspectives

The MPLC affects not only the teachers, but also the learners. That is why their opinions and perceptions are a vital component in the identification of consequences. In order to accomplish this task, a questionnaire, a focus group and class observation are the three instruments that support the results displayed in this section.

Consequences of the MPLC on Participation

According to students' insights about the consequences of MPLC on classroom participation, they strongly agreed that negative effects are present. The next graph summarizes the students' opinions about the effects of the MPLC on participation.

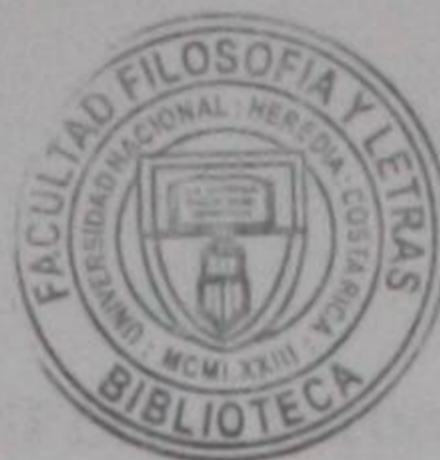
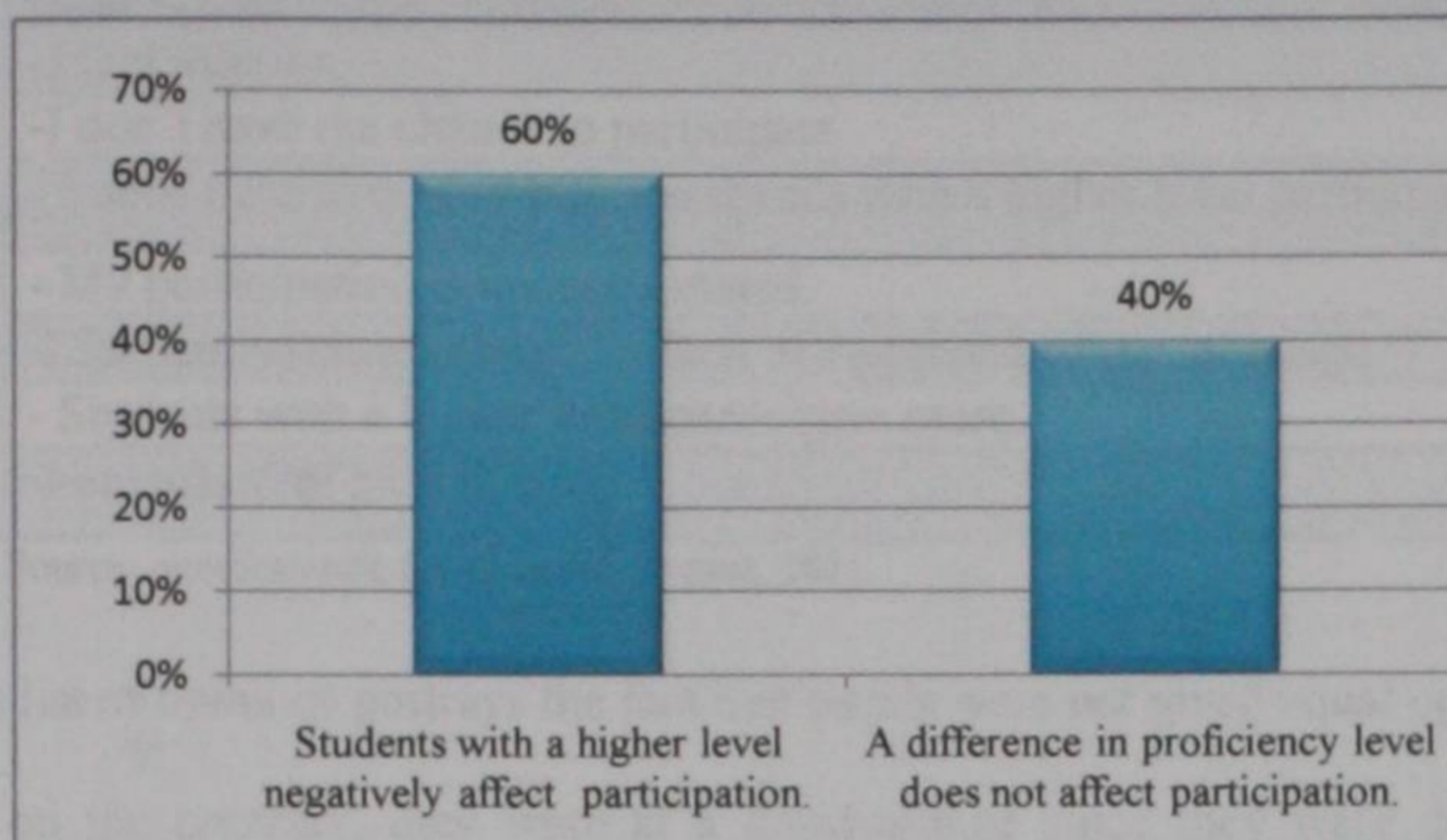


Exhibit # 7

The Consequences of MPLC on Participation



Source: Questionnaire for students, August, 2011.

As it is illustrated 60% of the students, which corresponds to the majority of students, believed that grouping students with different proficiency levels in one classroom has consequences since students who have higher performance affect participation negatively. On the contrary, the rest of the informants, that is 40 %, said that this difference in proficiency does not affect this category of analysis. In this same questionnaire, they were asked to provide additional comments to justify their perception. The negative consequences are listed in the next table.

Exhibit # 8**Negative Consequences of the MPLC on Participation**

The MLPC negatively affects participation because ...
-I feel inferior.
-I don't have the chance to participate.
- I need time to think while classmates with a higher level participate faster.
- My participation is underestimated.
-I feel embarrassed about my lack of command of the language.
- Students with a higher level participate more.
-I am afraid of participating.

Source: questionnaire for students, August, 2011.

This list of opinions portrays the fact that pupils were not given equal opportunities in the classroom; on the contrary, they were at a disadvantage since they were deprived from the chance to participate and, thus, to receive feedback from the professor. They could not contribute to the class since they did not have the chance to do so due to different circumstances brought about by the MPLC. Though the causes are many –lack of knowledge about the topic under discussion, lack of self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation and comparison with other peers, knowledge of peers and class time – the bottom line is undoubtedly the difference in students' linguistic proficiency. A serious finding is that students' affective and social needs are neglected; seeing that their self-esteem is being shaped by feelings of inferiority, embarrassment and fear. Distress in the classroom can promote social barriers as well as students tend to group only with peers who have their same linguistic characteristics and, by doing this, they are denying themselves the opportunity to get valuable input and feedback from other classmates.

At this point, it is necessary to continue analyzing the pupils' insights. To do this, the data gathered from the focus group will be interpreted. This instrument allowed the researcher to interact with the informants so that valuable input was gained. For the purpose of the focus

groups, students with a low proficiency level¹⁶ were grouped together in *focus group 1*, while students with a high proficiency level¹⁷ were asked to participate in *focus group 2*. In order to establish a comparison between students' perspectives, the next table summarizes the most significant contributions recorded. Column A displays information given during the implementation of the focus group 1 and Column B exhibits data garnered thorough the focus group 2.

Exhibit # 9

Students' Opinions about Participation in a MPLC

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
Regarding participation, honestly, we limit ourselves a lot. It is like we can never participate because we do not have enough command of the language in comparison to other classmates.	The linguistic proficiency and the number of students in the class make it difficult for everyone to participate.
Only the same people are the ones who always participate.	The ones who know more have to participate more because the others do not participate at all.
The ones who know more are the ones who always participate and the teachers do not take us into account.	The teacher asks questions and since no one responds, I have to answer.
We are afraid to speak.	We could participate, but not much because students who knew less required a lot of attention.
Our learning is affected and motivation as well which leads us to stop participating.	There is less participation.

Source: Focus group 1 and 2, September, 2011.

Based on the opinions above, it is feasible to say that there are congruent ideas between what students in group 1 and 2 believed. They all agreed that participation varies depending on the linguistic proficiency of the student. They argued that the pupils with higher language proficiency have more opportunities to participate. Together with lack of knowledge of the language, lack of motivation limits low- proficient students to take a more active role in the class. On the contrary, high achievers participate more because they feel certain responsibility and possess language proficiency to do so.

¹⁶ These students were placed under A1 category in the diagnosis test, and they are taking *Integrated English 1* again because they failed in the first semester.

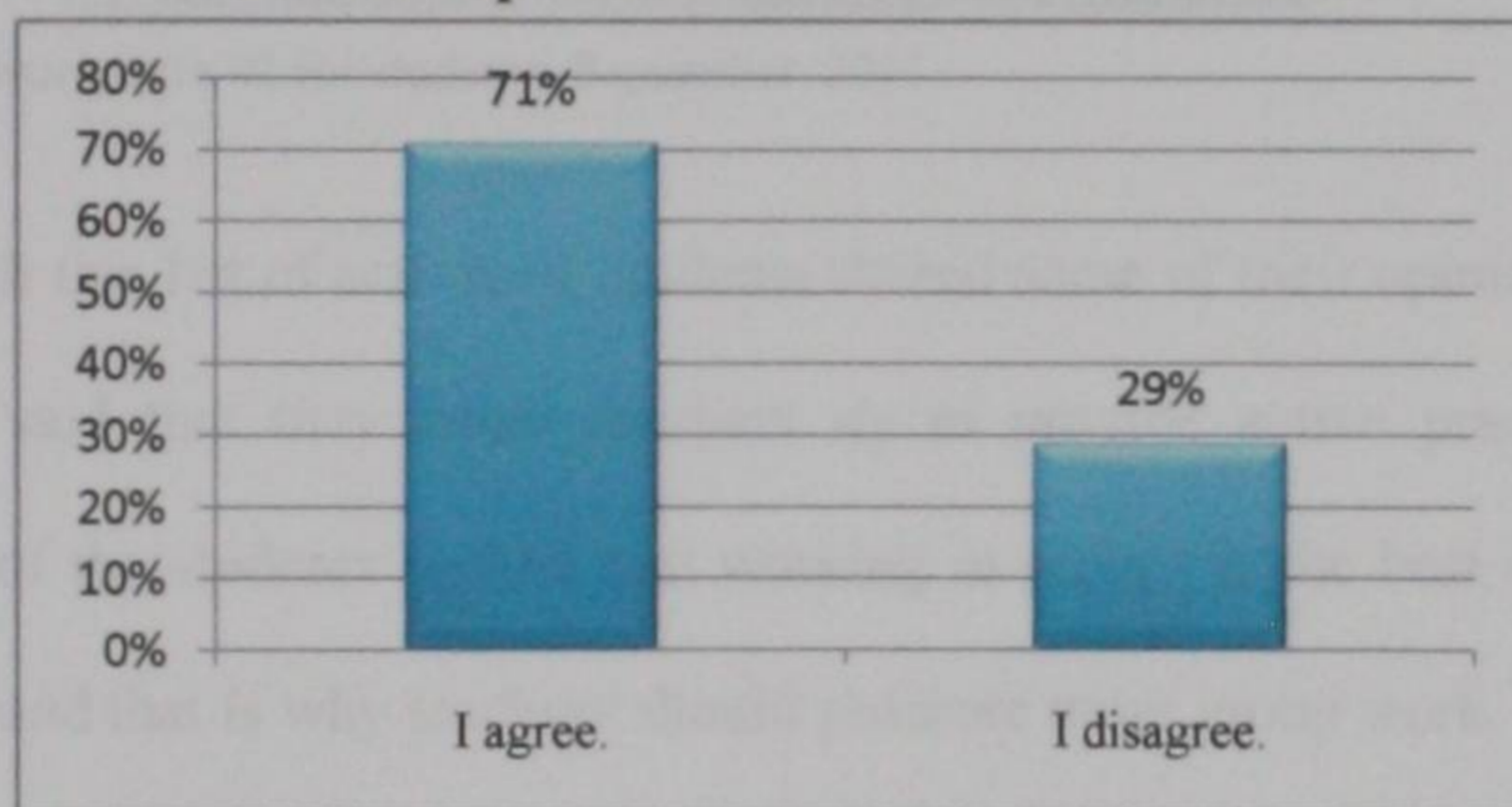
¹⁷ These students were placed under B1 and B2 categories in the diagnosis test.

Through the observations conducted, it was recorded that pupils, indeed, had a low participation rate. In group B, students seldom gave unsolicited responses, when the teacher posted an answer. They used Spanish many times and they almost never gave an elaborated answer. Likewise, the same learners were the ones who participated. This particular behavior was specifically recorded through a diagram¹⁸. Group A showed a higher quality of response since they gave more elaborated contributions to the class. However, there were certain students who took control over participation in class.

Consequences of the MPLC on Classroom Management

Concerning classroom management, it was found that students have differing opinions. However, the data garnered from the questionnaire revealed that the majority of students agreed that the teacher should implement different classroom activities. The next graph displays these percentages.

Exhibit # 10
Students' Opinion about Classroom Activities



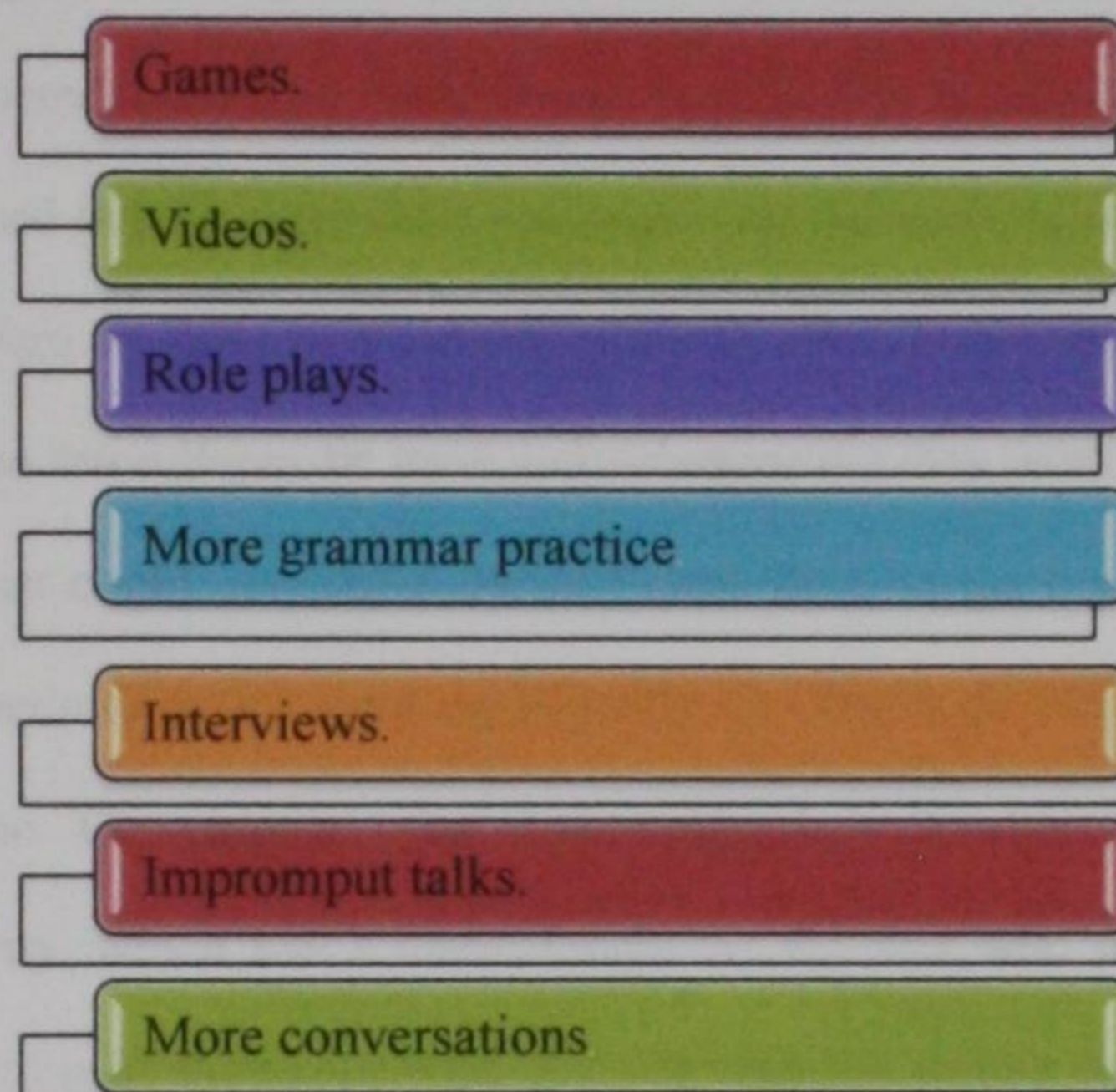
Source: Questionnaire #2 for students, September, 2011.

¹⁸See structured non-participant observation scale, appendix 9.

As it is shown, almost all students agreed that the teacher should incorporate different classroom activities. In order to gather deeper insights about the issue, the informants were requested to justify their answers by listing a set of activities they thought would benefit their learning. Next there is the list of students' suggestions.

Exhibit # 11

Classroom Activities Suggested by Students



Source: Questionnaire #2 for students, September, 2011.

Along with this list of activities, students shared some of their opinions about classroom dynamics. They said that they know teachers try to provide active practice, but time is a constraint. One of the students replied that working in groups is the best way to progress and build confidence and that is why teachers should promote more group work. In addition, three of the informants argued that activities should be more dynamic, and they should involve all the students, not only the ones who always do. Though they admitted language instructors brought different activities to the class, they labeled them as tedious and boring. This finding matches

behavior recorded by the researcher since in fifteen out of the sixteen observations conducted, the teachers asked students to solve the exercises from the book mechanically. It is important to mention, however, that Teacher A brought activities such as debates, board games, role plays and videos. Informants said that grammar, listening and reading need to be reinforced more. Regarding the mixed-language proficiency present in the class, some students reported that activities should approach all the linguistic levels.

Revealing data were provided in the focus group in which the informants had the chance to share their perceptions in a more open way. In Group 1, students with a low-language proficiency argued that teachers show preference for the students who have a higher level since their opinions were the only ones considered in the class. They stated that teachers think that all students have the same linguistic level and consequently they work really fast. Another student said that s/he just could not follow the fast class flow. In the discussion session, participants shared that sometimes topics were superficially developed, so they could not even understand basic information. They admitted that in those situations, teachers tended to make decisions to favor the majority, which was a disadvantage for the ones who were left behind. They also talked about the book; they concluded that the textbook in this course is too large and that it covers too many topics. Under this circumstance, they could not catch up with the book because when they were about to understand the topic, the teacher asked them to move on to a different unit.

Opinions given by informants in Group 2 made way for important findings. Surprisingly, students with a high language proficiency felt at a disadvantage because they stated that teachers do not pay enough attention to their doubts. Another, negative consequence of the MPLC for them is attention breakup. Two girls explained that they tended to get distracted easily since they

finished classroom assignments faster than the rest. They confessed that when this situation took place they started talking about other issues and asked for permission to go to the restroom. Another student argued that since s/he has a higher language level some classes were boring. Similarly, an informant said that the class pace is not good enough for anyone. Group work is an aspect that learners considered beneficial for them, and the observations reveal that this technique is utilized frequently. This classroom management strategy has shown to enhance the learners' potential since it encourages them to take on an active role in the classroom.

The observations provided meaningful data regarding students' class behavior. A divergent pattern was recorded between group A and group B. Students with a low-proficient level, that is group B, are really distracting, they are constantly text-messaging in class, speaking in Spanish, laughing and getting in and out of the classroom whereas Group A are on-task the entire class session. Sporadic uses of the cellular phone were recorded as well as the use of Spanish and going out. This inattentiveness on the part of the students can have clear negative consequences on their linguistic progression.

Consequences of the MPLC on Progression

In the questionnaire, students read statements about their classmates' and their own progress and then were asked to express their level of agreement in regards to each statement. The next exhibit exemplifies their responses.

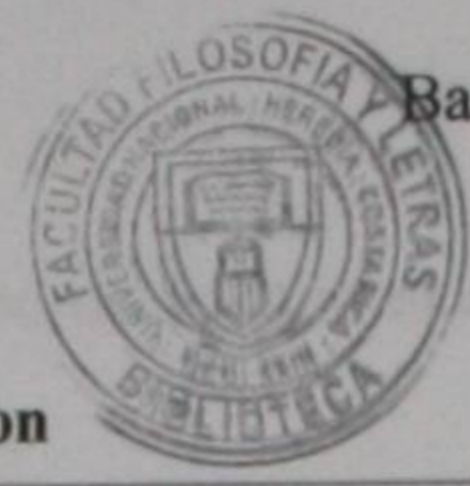
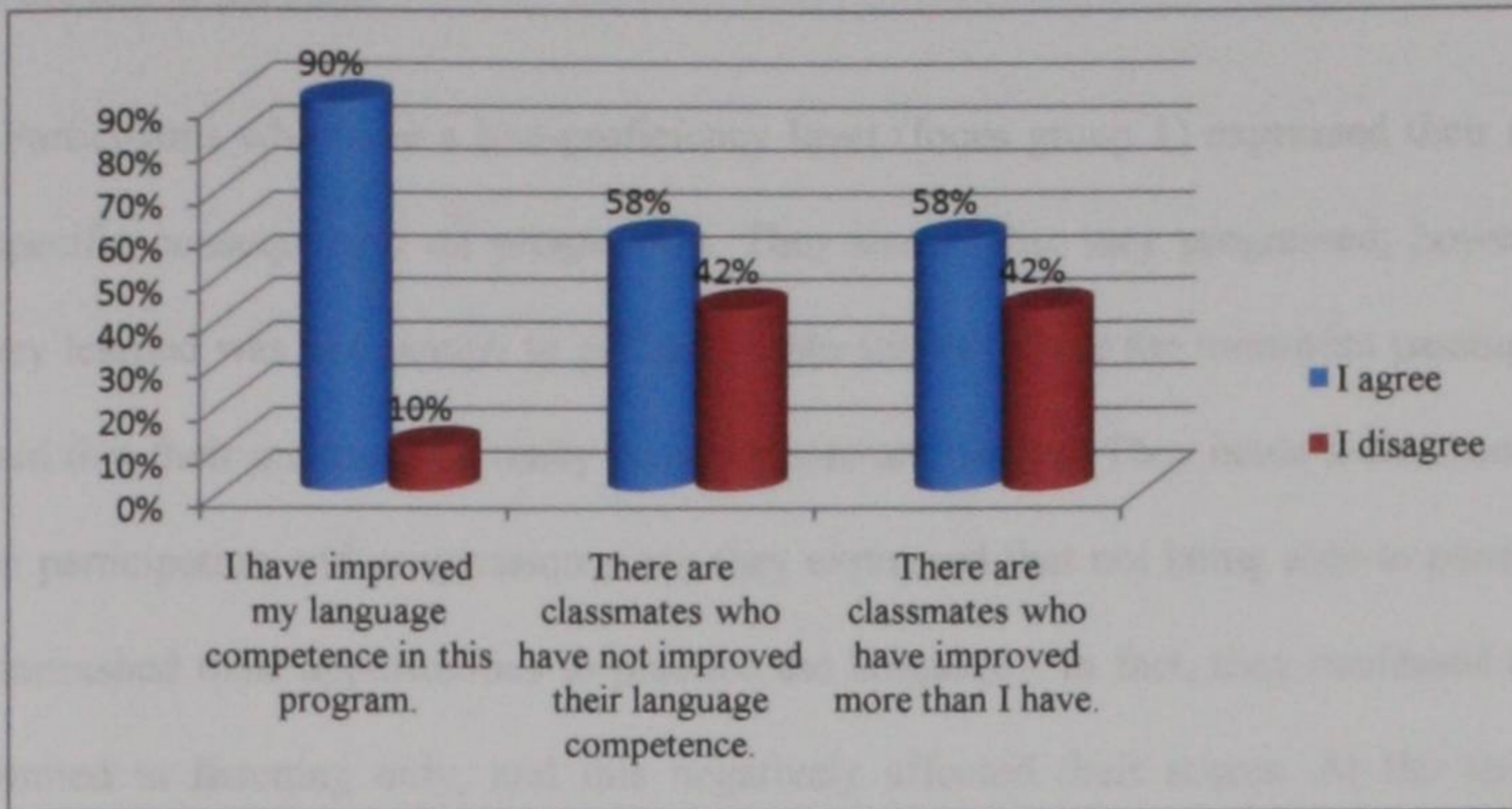


Exhibit # 12

Students' Perception of Progression



Source: Questionnaire #2 for students, September, 2011.

A positive finding is that most students, 90%, believed they have improved their language competence due to the knowledge they have gained in the Associate's Program in English. However, there is a remaining 10 % who stated they have not improved much. In terms of their classmates' progression, 58% of the learners said that there are students who have not shown a significant language progress in contrast with a 48% who disagreed. When pupils were asked to compare their progression with the one of their classmates, the majority agreed that others have progressed more. Percentages in these two statements are really similar which reveal that informants are not really sure of the class progress.

When conducting the focus group, informants gave significant insights about the positive effects of having classmates with a higher level. They mentioned that students who know a little bit more help them understand concepts and corrected their errors to improve and gave them support to achieve their goals. Pupils also stated that having classmates with high language

proficiency inspired them to improve their language performance, and do what it takes to level up with the rest of the class.

Participants who have a low-proficiency level (focus group 1) expressed their concerns about specific consequences on progression. They shared that they progressed; however, that what they learned was not enough to get acceptable scores (above the minimum passing grade). They said that their grades were really low, twenties and forties. They made a close connection between participation and progression since they expressed that not being able to participate in class diminished their opportunities to practice the language. In fact, they confessed that they were limited to listening only, and this negatively affected their scores. At the same time, participants in the focus group 2 mentioned that they agreed it is feasible to progress, but at a lower pace since they had to wait for the others to catch up with the class dynamics. Other pupils said that they have improved considerably.

When discussing their opinions, pupils in focus group 2, illustrated a positive perception about their progression by making reference to the textbook. They said that they could clearly see their progress because at the beginning of the year there were many words from the book they did not know, but now these words are few. They commented that though the book is supposed to be more advanced, it was easier for them to follow topics since it looked repetitive. This aspect is put in evidence through the structured observations conducted. To analyze pupils' progress the quality of their speaking performance can be a revealing determiner. Indeed, students in group A (high proficiency), tended to give more elaborated answers and contributions to the class in contrast with low-proficient students. While high achievers were able to answer by uttering long sentences, the counterpart was able to provide one or two-word answers. Their scores are also an illustrative source of information. They show that even though scores in group

B are low, they are not as deficient as in the first semester that is twenties and forties (Focus group, September). In fact, in this semester their grades are above fifty-nine as exhibit # 2 displays. However, their performance in class was determined by an overuse of the mother tongue, even to ask the teacher to clarify doubts. It was more evident when they participated since their contributions were limited to one word-answer.

Although the majority of students in group A have gotten scores above the minimum passing grade, student 2 and 13 obtained grades below 65¹⁹. This puts in evidence that though they feel they have progressed, their performance did not exceed the summative expectations of the course. In addition, students 3, 5 and 6 have gotten both, low and high grades, which reveals that they have progressed in one skill more than the other since the quizzes test different linguistic skills. In spite of this evidence, a student stated that progression in a MLPC is not as fast as it should be, and that people think they know a lot. Based on this contribution, it can be concluded that high achievers' progression can be delayed to satisfy their classmates' needs.

Consequences of the MPLC on Retention

According to pupils' perspectives given in the focus group 2, they are really optimistic about finishing the program. Some of the comments given by high-proficient students are "it is feasible to finish this program," "yes, I really want to finish, it is a high-quality course, anyway it depends on each person to take advantage of it," "yes, I am planning to finish so that I can have more job opportunities." They stated that this program has advantageous characteristics such as duration (it takes two years only), its weekly schedule, high-quality courses and adequate

¹⁹ See exhibit #3.

learning tools. These insights bring out into the open the pupils' commitment to finish the program. However, informants from both groups agreed that in order for the program to be successful and keep a high retention rate, specific improvements must be made. In fact, they listed a set of recommendations that are shown in the next table.

Exhibit # 13

Retention Recommendations Given by Students

According to students, the authorities should...
provide first-year students with more information about the program.
administer a placement test at the beginning of the program.
assign fewer students into each group.
provide students with instruction on how to give oral presentations.
Improve the language laboratory.
offer different groups based on students' proficiency levels.

Source: Focus groups 1 and 2, September, 2011.

As it can be seen from the previous data displayed, though learners believed the APE is a good language program, they think it requires some improvement. They shared that having so many classmates in one group has serious consequences on participation and the use of language laboratory since it is not equipped to teach many people at the same time. Many of the participants strongly argued that the authorities should make a change in the organization of the groups at the beginning of each school year. They think that administering a placement test can have positive effects. For instance, by doing this, teachers will be able to address each group's specific language needs. Similarly, they stated that an aptitude test may benefit the program since people who are not apt to learn a language will not invest time and effort in a project in which they will not succeed.

In addition to the students' perceptions on the topic, as it was mentioned during the analysis of the teachers' perceptions, the artifacts collected (teachers' records) exposes the fact that there is a high drop-out rate from one year to the next and even from one semester to the other. From this perspective, it is crucial to mention that authorities need to pay closer attention to the causes of this weakness of the program so that student retention rate increases. This way, the community can benefit from having bilingual citizens.

Social and Economic Consequences

Tourism draws people from many countries to visit the southern region of Costa Rica. National parks such as Chirripó Peak, Corcovado and Manuel Antonio, and beaches like Dominical, Uvita and Quepos draw the attention of people from around the globe. As a consequence, being English the universal language of commerce, there is a high demand of this language in this part of the country. Currently, there is an increase of business which requires employees to speak in English so that their stores and companies can expand their market and selling techniques. This particular job demand makes the learning of this language a necessity for members of the community who compete to earn a living or make profit out of their companies or profession.

The Associate's Program in English at UNASRB provides members of the community and people all around the Southern region with the opportunity to have the language skills in the English language that may allow them to successfully incorporate into a highly competitive labor market. Its plan of study incorporates the four linguistic skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading) and the micro-skills (grammar and pronunciation) through the different courses offered

to learners. Some of these courses are Integrated English, Grammar, Pronunciation, Reading and Composition among others²⁰. In like manner, the courses' schedule is organized so that employed individuals and those who happen to be majoring in different fields can study English, which is a plus in their resume, and professional and personal life. Students in this program attend classes from Monday to Friday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. These characteristics give the APE the conditions to be considered a viable and attractive option to learn English in this region.

The MPLC is a reality in the Associate's Program in English at UNASRB; as it was revealed by the data collected in this project. The reason why this happens is that, unfortunately, there are not sufficient groups to adjust to students' language needs. Unfortunately, there is no attempt on the part of authorities to address this problem. In fact, data gathered from the questionnaires applied to the head of the Foreign Languages Department and the Academic Department put in evidence that there are no plans to administer a placement test in 2012. The argument given by the head of Department not to do this is that *"it is normal in every language class to have mixed levels. There is a range of 30% to play with these levels. Those students with grades below 70 might not have the aptitude and attitude to be in this major"* (key-informant questionnaire, August 2011). This comment reveals that the MPLC is not seen as a threat; instead, it is considered a normal situation that does not require special attention.

Additionally, the academic director responded that there are no plans to administer a placement test in 2011 because of budget issues since such task will require more sources and professionals (key-informant questionnaire, August 2011). It is interesting to notice that authorities have a peculiar opinion about the role of this type of tests; one of them argued that a placement test *"is not an important indicator. It is not a reliable instrument"* (head of

²⁰See annex 12, artifacts.

department, key-informant questionnaire, August 2011). This sheds light on the negative impression held by the interviewees regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of a placement test in a language program. Though authorities outlined specific consequences of the MLPC on the learning process, the data obtained unfold that there are no changes for the future. It means that, the program will keep working under the same circumstances, this issue entails that this phenomenon (MPLC) and its consequences will prevail. Another issue of concern is identified after analyzing the program's brochure. This document is usually distributed to the community either by the Academic Department or Vida Estudiantil office so that people who take the admission test can have a clear description of the program before they make the decision to enroll. Unfortunately, the information provided is vague due to the fact that the only requirements outlined are to complete the admission process and to be admitted. This brochure does not give clear information about the language proficiency people need.

Next, there is a photoethnography analysis of five different businesses that show the need to speak English in downtown San Isidro de El General where UNASRB is located.

Photograph #1



Taken by LennaBarrantes, October 2011.

This is a sign of a **glass store** that sells bathroom splash backs, shower and kitchen panels, furniture, glass lattices and sliding doors. The phrase “English spoken” can be observed on the left.

Photograph # 2



Taken by Lenna Barrantes, October 2011.

This sign is on the front of an **attorney's office**. The phrase "English spoken" can be observed on the right.

Photograph # 3



Taken by Lenna Barrantes, October 2011.

This is the front wall of a **drugstore**. This business offers bilingual services to customers as well. See the sign "English spoken" fully capitalized at the end of the information.

Photograph # 4



Taken by Lenna Barrantes, October 2011.

This picture was taken of a private student bus that transports children in a private primary school. However, this transportation company also offers tourist tours.

Photograph # 5



Taken by Lenna Barrantes, October 2011.

This is a parking sign set up by the municipality. It provides parking information in both Spanish and English.

Photograph # 6



Taken by LennaBarrantes, October 2011.

This picture was taken to the sign of a dentist's office.

The sign "English spoken" is observed at the bottom.

The current position of English as the main language used for commerce means that its command is essential for people dealing with business of any kind. The previous pictures reveal that professionals such as dentists and attorneys are in need of knowledge and command of the English language. If they include the phrase "English spoken" as a marketing strategy, it means that personnel in their offices must speak this language. That is to say, not only the professionals but also their assistants and receptionists should offer a bilingual service. In like manner, stores such as the ones included in the photoethnography (a drugstores, transportation and a glass store) attempt to reach all types of customers by providing a wider range of communication

possibilities. With this in mind, one can conclude that English is a pivotal necessity to the community.

Citizens who do not learn this language are jeopardizing their future since they are narrowing their possibilities to get a job. As portrayed in photograph # 5, even governmental institutions are aware of the practicality of bilingual street signs because of the many tourists who require assistance in the English language. The APE is a social and economic need for the Southern region because it will support it by providing the community with English speaking citizens who are able to satisfy an important commercial demand. Additionally, a bilingual community can be successfully engaged in international trade, and it can also increase incomes.

Unfortunately, the consequences observed in this research make one believe that this language program is at risk. Evident failures such as a high rate of drop outs and students' disconformities with the MPLC can weaken the institution's commitment to offer this program every year. This issue will deprive the community of a bilingual population who will be able to satisfy economic needs that can make a difference for individuals and for the region. Even if the program continues, it is evident that the number of students who get to graduate is really low. It means that not many citizens can take advantage of this valuable language program because of the difficulties students encounter once they are enrolled.

V. CONCLUSIONS

According to the data garnered and analyzed, this case study resulted in significant conclusions in regard to the consequences of the MPLC at the Associate's Program in English. To accomplish this, the first step to take was to verify the presence of the MPLC. The diagnostic stage of this research clearly revealed its presence by identifying students with different language proficiency in a placement test administered at the beginning of the year.

Teachers' insights and observations conducted led to significant conclusions about the consequences of the MPLC. Additionally, students contributed to draw pivotal conclusions about the same topics of analysis. First, teachers who participated in this research concluded that participation is highly hindered since students who have a high linguistic level tend to take control over the class and have no problem expressing or communicating ideas while low-proficient students have a passive and limited role in the class. This latter group of students remained quiet or provided one-word answers only.

In like manner, pupils agreed that a difference in linguistic proficiency affect participation negatively. In fact, students' affective and social needs are at risk since confidence and self-esteem are damaged. Therefore, low-proficient students are deprived from the opportunity to get valuable input and feedback from other classmates since they tend to sit next to the same people to avoid distress and embarrassment. From the observations conducted, it can be drawn that there is a huge difference in class involvement since low-proficient students had an extremely passive and limited participation in contrast with high proficient students who contributed to the class dynamics by taking an active role. They participated rather frequently; by doing this they are giving themselves the opportunity to improve their linguistic performance.

In terms of classroom management, different consequences are concluded. For instance, high-proficiency level pupils affect the lesson by answering without being requested or by not giving the rest of their classmates a chance to answer or give a comment, that low-proficient students take more time to solve classroom activities, and that the repetition of explanations can be boring for high proficient learners. It is extremely difficult for teachers to handle this inconsistency of class behavior.

Another significant conclusion makes reference to the role of error correction. It can be concluded that teachers do not devote a lot of time to correct students' weaknesses; hence, students are being deprived from the benefits of correcting their errors. This takes place because teachers face a confusing situation since they do not know to what extent they are expected to ignore basic linguistic deficiencies in low-proficient students in contrast with the idea of helping students build accuracy through constant direct correction. There is a mismatch between the quantity and degree of errors among students; that is why it is difficult for instructors to adopt one position regarding how frequent and which techniques to use to correct students' mistakes.

Throughout this study, it also became evident that there are consequences on progression. When comparing scores between learners with a low proficiency and learners with a high one, a clear disparity is put in evidence. Low-proficient students face serious progression problems since their scores in the summative testing procedures of the course are really low, which limits their chance to pass the course. This insubstantial progression is also unveiled by the quality of class participation inasmuch those students' production was unsatisfactory. On the contrary, high-proficient students are able to meet the course objectives and show linguistic progression since their scores are way above the passing grade and their class participation incorporates fluent conversations, well-thought arguments and elaborated responses.

A key conclusion drawn so far is the consistency between teachers' and students' opinions regarding the consequences of the MPLC. This issue reinforces the validity of the findings outlined due to the fact that not only language instructors but also pupils agree on the effect of the consequences previously described.

Findings drawn from this research lead to conclude that the APE really helps people to improve their language knowledge due to the fact that all students have shown certain level of progress regardless their language proficiency. Actually, high proficient students are optimistic about the future and believe they will be able to finish the program next year.

Regarding the consequences of the MPLC on retention rate, it can be concluded that a dramatic diminishing of the population is put in evidence. A high rate of drop outs was recorded from the first semester to the second. That is to say, half of the students enrolled in the first semester left the program. It is certainly evident that authorities must pay close attention to find causes of the high drop-out rate in this language program.

Another clear conclusion drawn from this case study is that this high drop-out rate affects the community at an economic level. Brunca region is in need of English speaking citizens who can satisfy tourist demands. In addition, attorneys, dentists, businesspeople and doctors are also part of this population. Unfortunately, the number of people enrolled in the program does not satisfy the needs of this region since few students get to graduate every year. At the social level, community members who do not have the chance to graduate and learn English are jeopardized since they are narrowing their possibilities to get a job. Also important to conclude is that even though the program has a high demand (as observed through the high number of applicants), it is evident that the number of students who get to graduate is really low. This conclusion leads to

determine that not many citizens can take advantage of this valuable language program because of the difficulties students encounter once they are enrolled.

Another conclusion drawn is that there is a mismatch regarding the linguistic requirements to enroll the program since the information included in the brochure of the program and the contents and evaluation procedures outlined in the course Integrated English 1 differ. Finally, a concise conclusion derived from this research pleads for authorities' awareness regarding the urgent need to minimize all the consequences previously outlined by treating the MPLC as a serious problem that deserves attention so that the APE can be an accessible and successful option for the community.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the conclusions drawn from the present study, some recommendations for teachers and students who deal with the MPLC are outlined. In the same way, recommendations for the authorities in charge are included in this section. These considerations aim at helping minimize the negative consequences of the phenomenon under study.

Recommendations for Students

EFL students should hold a sense of responsibility for building their own learning. They should not limit their language progress to in-class experiences only; on the contrary, they should look for ways to widen their linguistic scope. Luckily, language students at UNASRB have free access to internet services so that they can use interactive web pages to practice. Some suggested web pages are:

http://www.englishforum.com
http://a4esl.org/
http://classroom.jc-schools.net
http://www.esl-lab.com/
http://esl.about.com/library/listening/
http://www.manythings.org
http://www.ello.org

Another important aspect to consider is the role of Cooperative Learning (CL) in EFL settings. Students can follow key principles of this methodology in order to overcome linguistic, social and affective limitations. CL can benefit students with different proficiency levels due to the role of the sense of togetherness it suggests. As it is described, through CL students build “collaborative and social skills so that they can work together more effectively” (Larsen-Freeman: 2010, 164). In the case of MPLC, high-proficient students can tutor those students with a lower level. By doing this, both types of learners are benefited. The former will have a chance to practice and show evidence of their skills while the latter will get extra help.

Along with the previous recommendation, students in the APE at UNASRB should take advantage of the tutorships organized by Vida Estudiantil. This office organizes weekly tutorial sessions together with the head of the English Department and last-year students from the English teaching major.

A final recommendation for learners is to get acquainted with the role of language learning strategies. Once students are familiar with the different strategies they can use in all possible linguistic situations, they will be able to face challenges in and outside the classroom. Strategies such as repeating, analyzing expressions, summarizing and paying attention can benefit in-class performance. In addition, setting goals, rewarding yourself, writing a language diary and seeking practice opportunities are strategies that can be followed outside the classroom setting. All of these strategies are intended to enhance students own learning in spite of their language proficiency.

Recommendations for Teachers

A suggestion for professors teaching in the APE is to be aware of the MPLC. Teachers should not ignore the pressing reality of having students with different language proficiency in one classroom. Consequently, it is important to realize that a class like this requires more preparation time. When developing the lesson plan, teachers should carefully consider material, activities and feedback procedures so that they can reach out to all existing levels.

It is highly relevant, however, not to forget that though teachers must think about the level of the students, teachers should teach to the intended level of the class. That is to say, language instructors have a course outline to follow so, in spite of the students' high or low level, specific learning objectives must be attained to accomplish the curricular expectations of the program.

Catering specific individual language needs can make a huge difference in pupils' English learning. That is why teachers should be open-minded and up-dated so that they can take advantage of multiple classroom activities that can be implemented to provide learners with a suitable learning environment. Next, there is a list of possible techniques language instructors teaching first-year students at the APE can make use of. First, provide open-ended tasks such as song projects, presentations, writing letters, creating the end of a story and picture stories. In this way, each learner will perform at his/her own level. Second, use group or pair work in the class. To do this, consider grouping learners with either mixed language proficiency or similar proficiency. By doing this, students will be able to build communication across speakers with different language competence. Third, promote peer tutoring by explaining students that a good way to practice and improve a new language is to teach it to someone else. Finally, as

recommended by a teacher in this research, teachers should not wait for volunteers to participate, and instead should ask direct questions to specific students, especially those who are quiet.

Recommendations for Authorities

UNASRB plays a key role in the Southern region of Costa Rica as a viable and only (for people with economic limitations) opportunity to get a university degree, that is why authorities should monitor and carefully assess each of the program offered. This will enable the institution to reduce and eradicate progressively negative aspects that jeopardize its contribution to the community. One important suggestion is to revise the linguistic requirements of the program, and include accurate information in the brochure distributed to the community so that people are clear about the proficiency they need to complete the program.

Together with these recommendations, the next two action plans are proposed as feasible solutions to diminish the high drop-out rate evidenced in the APE which is caused by the lack of assertive placement strategies at the beginning of the program.

Proposal of Action Plans to Minimize the Negative Effects of the MPLC at UNASRB

This section outlines two possible action plans that can be implemented to cater to the students' language needs in the APE. It is important to mention that for this plan to be effective, authorities, teachers and the head of the English department's willingness to collaborate are needed.

ACTION PLAN A

I. General Objective

To offer individualized instruction to first-year students at the APE by opening two different groups of the course *Integrated English 1* and 2 (one in each semester), one of beginning-level students and the other one of intermediate and high-level students.

II. Specific Objectives

1. To administer a placement test to first-year students in the APE two weeks before the school year starts.
2. To group students according to their linguistic level into Group A (A1-A2) and Group B (B1-B2).

III. Participants

- Head of the English Department
- Teachers
- Teacher-assistant students (TAs)
- First-year students

IV. Procedures

1. Select a MOCK TOEIC test and an interview.
2. Administer the test and conduct the interview to the students.
3. Set a date and time during the last week in January.
4. Select two teachers of the English Department and a teacher assistant (TA) to administer the test.
5. Book room A001 to administer the test (Academic department office).

6. Get copies of the test from the universities' copy and printing office.
7. Administer the test.
8. Based on the results from the placement test, the head of the English department and teachers group students either in group A or B. Students who are placed under the categories A1 and A2-that is beginning levels- will be part of group A while learners in categories B1 and B2-intermediate- will be placed in group B.
9. Organize a meeting with teachers in charge of both groups to explain the particularities of the course.

V. Materials

MOCK TOEIC Test

Interview and its corresponding rating scale

Clock

Language laboratory

Room A001 (optimum size)

VI. Important Considerations

1. Though students are grouped based on their linguistic levels, teachers of both groups must follow the same course program.
2. Evaluation procedures will be consistent with the course demands in spite of the linguistic differences.
3. Teachers are free to choose the methodology that fits their students' needs.
4. Both groups will have the same textbook as reference for the course- the one suggested by the English Department.

VII. Benefits

1. Students are provided with equal opportunities to learn since their specific language needs will be catered depending on their linguistic level.
2. Teachers are provided with a homogenous environment so that the flow of the class can move at the same pace.
3. Catering to and tracking learners' linguistic progression can minimize the high dropout rate present in the APE.
4. Student will get individualized attention since group size will be smaller than usual.

VIII. Budget Implications

1. In order for UNSRB to offer another course of Integrated English, authorities need an extra budget of around ₪ 3 744 000 per semester to pay professors. Teachers' academic degree may increase or decrease this amount.

ACTION PLAN B

I. General Objective

To develop the project UNA-OPORTUNIDAD for first-year students with low linguistic proficiency in the APE.

II. Specific Objectives

1. To administer a placement test to first-year students two weeks before the school year starts.
2. To identify the different linguistic levels present in the first-year students.
3. To list students under the categories A1 and A2 according to the placement test.
4. To provide true beginner students -categories A1 and A2- with a weekly supportive leveling course.

III. Participants

- Head of the English Department
- Teachers
- Teacher-assistant students (TAs)
- First-year students

IV. Procedures

Stage 1: Identifying the students' linguistic proficiency

1. Select a MOCK TOEIC test and an interview to administer it to the students.

2. Set a date and time during the last week in January.
3. Select two teachers of the English Department and a teacher assistant (TA) to administer the test.
4. Book room A001 to administer the test (Academic department office).
5. Get copies of the test from the universities' copy and printing office.
6. Administer the test.
7. Based on the results from the placement test, the head of department and teachers identify true beginner students.
8. Organize a meeting with students to explain UNA-OPORTUNIDAD project.
9. Make a list of students who are interested in participating in the project.

Stage 2: Organizing UNA-OPORTUNIDAD project

1. The head of the English department assigns two teacher-assistant students from the program Éxito Académico in coordination with Vida Estudiantil office as well as a coordinator (teacher of the English Department) for the project.
2. The coordinator organizes a meeting with the teacher-assistant students to train them in the use of the material and the nature of the project.
3. A convenient schedule for teacher-assistant students is set.
4. A classroom is booked to be used two hours per week.
5. The project starts the third week of February (one week after the school year starts).

Project Overview-Methodology and Procedures

1. Classes will be held twice a week (one and a half hour per day). It will be developed in 15 weeks in the first semester and 15 weeks in the second semester.

2. The book that will be used as reference is *American English File-Starter* and its corresponding material (*American English File-Starter Teacher's Book*, videos and class CD). The books will be lent by the library or bought by the students at the university's copy place.
3. The two teacher-assistant students will be in charge of developing the projects' schedule with the students and testing procedures while the coordinator will be a facilitator and a supervisor.
4. The materials to be used are photocopiable worksheets from the book *American English File-Starter* and any other supplementary material approved by the coordinator.
5. The schedule with dates, content and testing procedures is presented next.

First Semester (February to June)		
Week	Content	Testing procedure
1	Topic: Greetings Grammar: all forms of verb To Be Pronunciation: /h/, /ou/, /ɑ/	
2	Topic: Countries and nationalities Grammar: verb To Be, third person pronouns Pronunciation: /I/, /aI/	Students give a short oral personal introduction in front of the class.
3	Topic: Countries and nationalities Grammar: verb To Be, third person pronouns, negative forms Pronunciation: /ɛ/, /i/, /s/	
4	Topic: Family and friends Grammar: singular and plural forms, possessive adjectives, Pronunciation: /z/, /s/, plural endings	Students take an oral quiz: interview
5	Topic: Family and friends Grammar: adjectives, an/a, the Pronunciation: /z/, /s/, plural endings	Students take a reading and writing quiz

6	Topic: Food and drink Grammar: simple present, I and you, common verbs Pronunciation: /u/, /w/, /v/, linking	Students take a grammar quiz
7	Students take a mid-term test (the four skills are included plus a grammar section)	
8	Topic: Food and drink Grammar: simple present, I and you, quantity expressions Pronunciation: linking	
9	Topic: Jobs and places of work Grammar: simple present, we, you, they, common verbs Pronunciation: /g/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, word stress	
10	Topic: Jobs and places of work Grammar: third person Pronunciation: third person s, word and sentence stress	Students take an oral quiz: interview
11	Topic: Daily routines Grammar: adverbs of frequency, simple present Pronunciation: sentence stress	Students take a reading and writing quiz
12	Topic: Daily routines Grammar: word order in questions; questions words, common verbs Pronunciation: /ɛr/, /ɑ/, /aʊ/, /y/	Students take a grammar quiz
13	Topic: Daily routines Grammar: can/can't, permission and possibility Pronunciation: sentence rhythm	
14	Topic: Lifestyles Grammar: simple past, be, prepositions Pronunciation: /ər/	
15	Students take the final test (the four skills are included plus a grammar section)	

Second Semester (August to November)

Week	Content	Testing procedure
1	Topic: Lifestyles Grammar: simple past, have, go, get, irregular verbs Pronunciation: /ər/, sentence stress	
2	Topic: Lifestyles Grammar: regular verbs, more irregular verbs Pronunciation: regular simple past endings	Students give a short oral personal presentation in front of the class (they include all the topics studied).

3	Topic: Famous places Grammar: there was /there were, prepositions Pronunciation: /ɛr/, /ɪr/	
4	Topic: Famous places Grammar: there is /there are, prepositions Pronunciation: the letters ea	Students take an oral quiz: interview
5	Topic: Current events Grammar: present continuous, verb phrases Pronunciation: /u/, /ʊ/, /ɪ/	Students take a reading and writing quiz
6	Topic: Current events Grammar: present continuous, verb phrases, more verbs Pronunciation: sentence stress	Students take a grammar quiz
7	Students take a mid-term test (the four skills are included plus a grammar section)	
8	Topic: Future plans Grammar: future going to (plans) Pronunciation: sentence stress	
9	Topic: Future plans Grammar: future going to (plans), future time expressions Pronunciation: review of sounds	
10	Video analysis: the teacher-assistants bring a TV show to the class. They carry out a comprehension analysis and a discussion on the topic presented (TV show: The Middle, episode "The Trip").	Students take an oral quiz: interview
11	Topic: Future plans Grammar: future going to (predictions) Pronunciation: review of sounds	Students take a reading and writing quiz
12	Topic: Directions Grammar: question word order, prepositions Pronunciation: plural s	Students take a grammar quiz
13	Topic: Directions Grammar: question word order, prepositions Pronunciation: linking	
14	Song Project: each student brings a song of their choice to the class. They listen to the song and discuss linguistic content and message.	
15	Students take the final test (the four skills are included plus a grammar section)	

6. Students' linguistic assessment will be carried out by means of asking students to perform oral presentations, paper-and-pencil quizzes, language projects (video

analysis, song project), midterm test and the final test. Though learners will be given a summative score, their overall performance will be formative. In other words, no student will fail the course.

7. The rubrics to assess participants' oral performance are the next:

a. Rubric to assess oral presentations:

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
SEDE REGION BRUNCA.
UNA-OPORTUNIDAD**

45 pts

Score: _____

Student: _____
Oral Presentation Rating Scale

Points earned: _____

Topic management	2	4	6	8	10
Ideas clearly stated and supported. Ideas not left unfinished. Clear presentation of the content shows that the student knows main issues about the topic. Response to questions shows knowledge.					
Vocabulary	2	4	6	8	10
The vocabulary of the presentation was appropriate for the topic. A variety of phrases and sentence structures were used. Student demonstrates full knowledge of vocabulary from the course with elaboration.					
Grammar	2	4	6	8	10
Student demonstrates full knowledge of grammar and structures from the course. Grammar use gets meaning across.					
Pronunciation	2	4	6	8	10
Pronunciation and intonation is correct and confident. Pronunciation and enunciation are very clear. The speaker exhibits very few disfluencies.					
Voice	1	2	3	4	5
Presenter spoke clearly and at a good pace to ensure audience comprehension. Delivery was fluent and expressive.					

Outstanding 5-10 Satisfactory 4-8 Average 3-6 Deficient 2-4 Poor 1-2

b. Rubric to assess interviews.

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
SEDE REGION BRUNCA.
UNA-OPORTUNIDAD

45 pts

Score: _____

Student: _____
 Oral Presentation Rating Scale

Points earned: _____

Listening comprehension	2	4	6	8	10
Demonstrates careful listening by answering questions effectively. No pauses to answer. The student does not request for repetition of questions posted.					
Vocabulary	2	4	6	8	10
The vocabulary of responses was appropriate. A variety of phrases and sentence structures were used. Student demonstrates full knowledge of vocabulary from the topic.					
Grammar	2	4	6	8	10
Student demonstrates full knowledge of grammar and structures from the course. Grammar use gets meaning across.					
Pronunciation	2	4	6	8	10
Pronunciation and intonation is correct and confident. Pronunciation and enunciation are very clear. The speaker exhibits very little disfluency.					
Voice	1	2	3	4	5
The interviewee spoke clearly and at a good pace to ensure response comprehension. Delivery was fluent and expressive.					

Outstanding 5-10 Satisfactory 4-8 Average 3-6 Deficient 2-4 Poor 1-2

c. The midterm and final test will include only the topics covered from the schedule. The Test Generator provided by the textbook will be a guide as well.

8. An attendance list will be signed every day to keep track of students' participation in the project.

9. The teacher-assistant students and coordinator will have a monthly meeting to verify students' attendance and progression.
10. Students are not granted a grade in the project; however, they are requested to sign a contract of commitment the first day of class. Additionally, they are requested to have a high attendance rate in the project. Next, there is the contract of commitment.

Universidad Nacional, Sede Regional Brunca
 Diplomado del Inglés
 Proyecto UNA-OPORTUNIDAD

Yo, _____, estudiante regular del curso inglés Integrado 1/2, muestro mi deseo de participar del proyecto UNA-OPORTUNIDAD. Por esta razón me comprometo a:

1. asistir semanalmente a las lecciones impartidas.
2. traer los materiales requeridos para cada clase.
3. tener una participación activa.
4. dar mi mayor esfuerzo en cada lección.
5. Buscar maneras de practicar fuera de la clase lo aprendido en ella.

 Firma y fecha

V. **Materials**

American English File-Starter students' book

American English File-Starter teacher's book

American English File-Starter videos

American English File-Starter class CD

Photocopiable material from the book *American English File-Starter* (Grammar, Communicative, Vocabulary and Song activities).

Supplementary material

CD player

Television set

Board

Markers-board eraser

Attendance lists

VI. Benefits

1. Students will be provided with the linguistic building blocks they miss, and which are necessary to excel in the APE. That is to say, they will build the language knowledge they do not possess to be able to handle more challenging situations in the course *Integrated English*.
2. Students will get individualized instruction since their specific language needs will be cater more specifically.

VII. Budget Implications

1. For this action plan, authorities at UNASRB will not have to use the institution's budget.
2. A volunteer teacher is required to be the coordinator. This teacher will not get any economic reward.
3. Students will have to afford the printed material used in each class.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Students #1

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the Teacher #1

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the Teacher #2

Appendix 4: Interview with the Teachers

Appendix 5: Follow-up Interview with the Teachers

Appendix 6: Key-informant Questionnaire (head of English department)

Appendix 7: Key-informant Questionnaire (academic director)

Appendix 8: Questionnaire for Students # 2

Appendix 9: Structured Non-participant Observation Scale

Appendix 10: Focus Group

Appendix 11: Students' Test Scores in the Diagnostic Test

Appendix 12: Artifacts

Associate's Program in English

Teachers' Records

Course Outline

Document provided by the Registrar's Office

Associate's Program in English brochure

Can-do-Table (TOEIC)

Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS #1

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN
INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS #1
RESEARCHER: LENNA BARRANTES ELIZONDO.**

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENT:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather personal information about the students to establish a profile to be able to describe them.

Questions to be answered

Where do students live?

How old are the students?

Do students have a previous linguistic experience?

Why did the students registered at UNA, SRB?

Why did the students enroll the Associate's Program in English?

Are the students currently enrolled in a different program?

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL, FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS
 ESCUELA DE LITERATURA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE
 Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés
 como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto
 Investigadora: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo**

Cuestionario para el estudiante #1

El objetivo de este cuestionario es recolectar datos generales acerca de los estudiantes del Programa de Diplomado en Inglés de la Universidad Nacional, Sede Regional Brunca. Dicha información es para una investigación que forma parte del trabajo final de graduación para optar por el grado de maestría. La información que pueda brindar será de gran ayuda para este trabajo. Le agradecemos su valiosa colaboración. La información que se brinde será utilizada para fines meramente académicos.

I. Información personal

Nombre: _____

Edad: _____

Sexo: F M

Lugar de residencia durante el curso lectivo: _____

Lugar de residencia en tiempo de vacaciones: _____

Lugar de trabajo: _____

¿Por qué se matriculó en esta universidad? _____

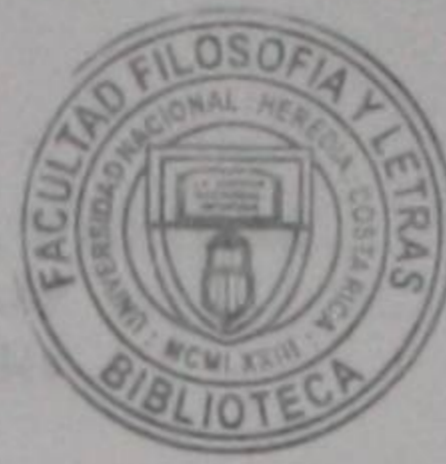
¿Por qué escogió esta carrera? _____

II. Experiencia previa

1. ¿Tuvo usted alguna experiencia previa con el idioma inglés antes de ingresar al programa de diplomado? Especifique donde y por cuánto tiempo

sí no _____

2. ¿Estudia usted alguna otra carrera o lleva algún otro curso? Especifique el lugar si su respuesta es afirmativa.



Appendix 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS #1

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
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MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN
INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS #1
RESEARCHER: LENNA BARRANTES ELIZONDO.**

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENT:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather personal information about the teachers to establish a profile to be able to describe them.

Questions to be answered

How long have the teachers been language instructors?

Which are the teachers' highest academic degree attained?

What is the teachers' area of specialization?

Are teachers currently involved in extracurricular activities?

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 como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto
 Researcher: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo

Questionnaire for the teacher #1

The following questionnaire aims to collect personal information about the professors teaching the course *Integrated English* in the Associate Program in English. This research focuses on the teachers' and students' perceptions of the consequences of the mixed-level class in this language program. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. Gender: Male----- 1 Female ----- 2

2. Year of birth: 19 ____ ____

3. Years of English instruction: _____

4. Highest academic degree attained

PhD Master's Licentiate's Bachelor's

5. What is your area of specialization?

6. Read the following questions and check the ones that best describe you.

Do you work in another institution? Which one? _____

Do you participate in conferences, seminars or training sessions for teachers? How often and where? _____

Are you currently working on any program at this university or in any other institution? Which one? What is your role? _____

Do you work in any other language program in this university? Which one? _____

Did you study in a public university? Which one? _____

Do you hold another degree in any other field? Which one? _____

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the Teacher # 2

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 MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS
 COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHER #2
 RESEARCHER: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo.

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENT:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to record the teacher's insights regarding the consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have on participation, classroom management and progression.

Questions to be answered

1. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect participation in class?
2. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect student progression?
3. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect classroom management?
4. What other aspects of the language class are affected by the mixed-level nature of the target group?

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 como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto
 Researcher: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo

Questionnaire for the teacher #2

The following questionnaire aims to collect information about the consequences of grouping students with notably different linguistic levels in the Associate's Program in English. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. Thank you for your collaboration.

Choose the statements that fit your opinion. Please provide your personal insight in the item "other."

1. Do students without prior knowledge of English feel disadvantaged?

- a) Yes
- b) No

2. If students without prior knowledge of English feel disadvantaged, how do they express this?

- a) They do not pay attention
- b) They do other things
- c) They are afraid of participating

3. What comments do students with a low-proficiency level of English make?

- a. "I don't know enough."
- b. "I can't."
- c. "It's not fair"

Other comments they make are...

5. How do the students with prior knowledge of English feel?

- a) Self-confident
- b) Laughing at and looking down on students who make mistakes
- c) They feel bored
- d) They help others
- c) Other...

6. Can you think of some ways that pupils with an advanced level can affect the lesson?

- a) They answer without being asked
- b) They don't let others think
- c) They deal with exercises of the following lessons
- e) They do not pay attention
- f) other...

7. How does previous knowledge influence students' participation?

- a) Students take control over the class.
- b) The same students (the ones with a higher level) always participate.
- c) Students answer without being asked.
- d) Other...

8. How does the lack of previous knowledge influence students' participation?

- a) Students participate only when it is requested.
- b) Students refuse to participate.
- c) Low proficient students are scared to participate.
- d) Other...

9. How is classroom management affected by the mixed-level nature of the group?

- a) Low-proficient students take more time to solve exercises while high achievers are faster. Time management is complex then.
- b) The book is too complex for low-proficient students.
- c) Repetition of explanations is boring for high achievers.
- d) Error correction must be addressed differently in both low and high-level students. This is time consuming.
- e) Other....

10. How is progression affected by the mixed-level nature of the group?

- a. Students do not advance much because they are not provided with equal opportunities for learning.
- b. High achievers tend to advance more.
- c. Low-proficient students progress, but a lower rate.
- d. High achievers do not advance because they spend time waiting for the low-proficient students to catch up with the class.

Appendix 4: INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS
COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER
RESEARCHER: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo.**

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENT:

The purpose of this interview is to record the teacher' insights regarding the presence of students with different English proficiency levels in the group under investigation.

Questions to be answered

Is the teacher aware of the mixed-level class phenomenon in group 81?

Which teaching techniques does the teacher resort to adjust instruction so as to reach out to all existing groups?

What does the teacher think needs to be improved?



Protocol for structured interview with the professor:

1. Contact professor teaching the course Integrated 2 and set a date to have the interview.
2. Look for a suitable site away from distracters and noise.
3. Start the interview with a statement ensuring confidentiality.
4. Explain the objective of the interview to the professor.
5. Direct questions confidently.
6. Ask the questions designed. But take advantage of any answer or comment to ask more about the topic.
7. Record the interview.

The following is the list of questions to be asked.

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. What has been your experience teaching this group?
3. Which teaching methodology do you implement?
4. What have you noticed about this group regarding language proficiency levels?
5. What do you do in your class to give all students equal opportunities for learning?
6. Do you have a specific grouping technique to arrange the class for daily activities?
Which one? Why?
7. What is the biggest strength and the biggest weakness in the Associate Program?

Appendix 5: FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW FOR THE TEACHER

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS
INTERVIEW FOR THE TEACHER
RESEARCHER: LENNA BARRANTES ELIZONDO**

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENT:

The purpose of this interview is to record the teacher's insights regarding the challenges that the mixed-level nature of the target group poses for participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention in the Associate's Program in English at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Is the teacher aware of the mixed-level class phenomenon in group 81?
2. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect participation in class?
3. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect student progression?
4. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect classroom management?
5. Does the teacher notice any causal relationships between the student dropout rate and the mixed-level nature of the target group?
6. What other aspects of the language class are affected by the mixed-level nature of the target group?

Protocol for structured interview with the professor:

1. Contact professor teaching the course Integrated 2 and set a date to have the interview.
2. Look for a suitable site away from distracters and noise.
3. Start the interview with a statement ensuring confidentiality.
4. Explain the objective of the interview to the professor.
5. Direct questions confidently.
6. Ask the questions designed. But take advantage of any answer or comment to ask more about the topic.
7. Record the interview.

The following is the list of questions to be asked.

1. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect participation in class? Does it hinder or favor participation?
2. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect student progression?
3. Do you implement different activities to approach all students in spite of their linguistic level?
4. Can you identify a reason why group 81 was shortened to half of the population from the first semester?
5. Can you think of possible solutions?
6. What other aspects of the language class are affected by the mixed-level nature of the target group?
7. How do you feel about teaching a class with students with contrastive linguistic proficiency levels?

Appendix 6: KEY-INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE (HEAD OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT)

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS
KEY-INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE (HEAD OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT)
RESEARCHER: LENNA BARRANTES ELIZONDO.

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to record the head of the English department's insights regarding the mixed-level class phenomenon in the Associate's Program in English at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus.

Questions to be answered

1. Which are the head of department's insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on student participation?
2. Which are the head of department's insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on student progression?
3. Which are the head of department's insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on classroom management?
4. Which are the head of department's insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on student retention?
5. Is the administration of a placement test feasible?
6. Do teachers receive specific instructions/training on how to deal with the mixed-level class?

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 como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto
 Researcher: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo

Key-informant Questionnaire: Head of English Department

The following questionnaire aims to collect significant information regarding the Associate's Program in English. This research focuses on the teachers' and students' perceptions of the consequences of the mixed-level class in this language program. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. Which are the reasons why there are students with different proficiency levels (from beginner to high-intermediate) in the Associate's Program in English?

2. Which may be the consequences of the mixed-level nature the group on...?

Class participation? _____

Student progression? _____

Classroom management? _____

The next chart lists a set of questions. Check (✓) the answer that best fits your opinion. Please justify your answer by explaining why in the corresponding space.

	YES	NO	WHY?
1. Is there a causal relationship between dropout rate and the mixed-level class?			
2. Is the administration of a placement test feasible for the institution?			

3. Can the institution offer two different groups of one course for first-year students who show to have contrastive linguistic proficiency level? E.g. Two groups of Integrated English 1, one for beginner levels and another one for intermediate or advance.			
4. Can this placement (the one mentioned in question 3) minimize the effect of the mixed-level class?			
5. Are teachers provided with the necessary tools to face the mixed-level class?			

Appendix 7: KEY-INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE (ACADEMIC DIRECTOR)

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS
KEY-INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE (ACADEMIC DIRECTOR)
RESEARCHER: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo.

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to record the academic director's insights regarding the mixed-level class phenomenon in the Associate's Program in English at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus.

Questions to be answered

1. Is the director aware of the mixed-level class phenomenon in the Associate's Program?
2. Are there administrative procedures that cause the mixed-level phenomenon?
3. Is there a possible solution to this issue in a near future?
4. Do teachers receive specific instructions/training on how to deal with the mixed-level class?

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL, FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS**ESCUELA DE LITERATURA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE****Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés
como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto****Investigadora: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo****Cuestionario para el Director Académico**

Este cuestionario tiene como propósito obtener información de aspectos relevantes de la carrera Diplomado del Inglés en el campus Pérez Zeledón para realizar un trabajo final de graduación para optar por el grado de maestría. La información que pueda brindar será de gran ayuda. Le agradecemos su valiosa colaboración.

-
1. ¿Cuáles cree usted que fueron las razones principales por las que se inició a ofertar la carrera Diplomado del Inglés en el año 2008?

2. ¿Está cumpliendo este programa con las expectativas académicas de la universidad? ¿Por qué?

3. ¿Dentro del proceso de admisión existe la aplicación de un examen de ubicación para medir el nivel lingüístico del estudiante? ¿Por qué?

4. ¿Cuán necesario cree usted que este sea?

5. ¿Cuáles consecuencias académicas cree usted que se generen al agrupar a los estudiantes de nuevo ingreso sin considerar su nivel lingüístico (estudiantes con alto-medio y bajo dominio del inglés? 01,02,03, 04,05

-
-
-
6. ¿Qué implicaciones tiene el aplicar un examen de ubicación lingüístico a los estudiantes de nuevo ingreso?
-
-
-

En la siguiente tabla se presenta una serie de preguntas. Por favor marque con una equis (X) aquella que refleje la realidad de las situaciones enlistadas. Justifique su respuesta en la casilla ¿Por qué?

	sí	no	¿Por qué?
1. ¿Se tiene programada la apertura de este programa en el año 2012?			
2. ¿Se tiene programado la incorporación de un examen de ubicación para el año 2012?			
3. ¿Cree usted exista la necesidad de agrupar a los estudiantes de nuevo ingreso considerando de su nivel lingüístico?			
4. ¿Están los profesores preparados para enseñar estudiantes con diferente nivel lingüístico en una misma clase? 03			
5. ¿Reciben los profesores de este programa capacitaciones en su especialidad? 03			

Appendix 8: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDENTS #2

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS
COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDENTS
RESEARCHER: LENNA BARRANTES ELIZONDO.**

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENT:

The purpose of this interview is to record the students' perspectives regarding the consequences that the mixed-level nature of the target group poses for participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention in the Associate's Program in English at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus.

Questions to be answered

1. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect participation in class?
2. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect student progression?
3. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect classroom management?

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 Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés
 como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto
 Investigadora: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo**

Cuestionario #2

El objetivo de este cuestionario es recolectar datos sobre las perspectivas de los estudiantes del Programa de Diplomado en Inglés de la Universidad Nacional, Sede Regional Brunca. Dicha información es para una investigación que forma parte del trabajo final de graduación para optar por el grado de maestría. La información que pueda brindar será de gran ayuda para este trabajo. Le agradecemos su valiosa colaboración. La información que se brinde será utilizada para fines meramente académicos.

Nombre: _____

A continuación se enlistan una serie de situaciones. Por favor lea el enunciado y marque con una X la opción que más se acerca a su experiencia personal.

Estoy en completo desacuerdo. 1	Estoy en parcial desacuerdo. 2	Estoy parcialmente de acuerdo. 3	Estoy de acuerdo. 4
Significa que esta situación realmente no describe lo que pienso y siento.	Significa que esta situación no siempre describe lo que pienso y siento pero algunas otras sí.	Significa que esta situación algunas veces pero no siempre describe lo que pienso y siento.	Significa que esta situación realmente describe lo que pienso y siento.

1. En mi clase tengo compañeros que tienen el mismo nivel lingüístico que el mío.	
2. El tener compañeros con un nivel diferente de dominio del inglés afecta mi participación durante la lección. Ya que...	
3. El que hayan estudiantes con diferentes niveles lingüísticos afecta el desarrollo de las clases. Ya que...	
4. Se debería realizar algún tipo de reajuste a la hora de agrupar a los estudiantes de la carrera tomando en cuenta su nivel lingüístico.	
Participación	
5. No puedo participar como quisiera ya que me cuesta expresar mis ideas.	
6. Las actividades y temas del libro son muy difíciles de entender.	

7. Me siento ignorado en clase.	
8. Me siento frustrado por no poder realizar las actividades tan rápido como otros.	
9. Me siento aburrido de tener que esperar a que los demás compañeros terminen.	
Progreso	
10. No he aprendido mucho desde que inicie el programa.	
11. Creo que he aprendido bastante en este programa.	
12. La habilidad que más he mejorado es lectura.	
13. La habilidad que más he mejorado es escritura.	
14. La habilidad que más he mejorado es la comprensión auditiva.	
15. La habilidad que más he mejorado es expresión oral.	
16. Siento que hay compañeros que han mejorado más que yo.	
Ya que	
17. Hay compañeros que no han mejorado mucho su nivel lingüístico.	
18. Tengo buenas calificaciones.	
19. Me gustaría subir mis notas.	
Desarrollo de la clase	
20. Las actividades de clase son muy difíciles de realizar.	
21. Las actividades y temas del libro son muy difíciles de entender.	
22. Las explicaciones del profesor son repetitivas.	
23. Los profesores deberían realizar otro tipo de actividades.	
Como por ejemplo...	
24. Trabajar en grupos me ayuda.	
25. La manera de agrupar las sillas en la clase me ayuda.	

Appendix 9: STRUCTURED NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION SCALE

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS
COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
STRUCTURED OBSERVATION SCALE
RESEARCHER: Lenna Barrantes Elizondo.**

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this observation is to record the teacher's and students' in-class behavior regarding the challenges that the mixed-level nature of the target group poses for participation, student progression, classroom management and student retention in the Associate's Program in English at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus.

Questions to be answered

1. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect participation in class?
2. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect student progression?
3. How does the mixed-level nature of the target group affect classroom management?
4. What is the students' reaction toward the instructional strategies used?

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
 FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
 MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS
 CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS COMO LENGUA
 EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
 STRUCTURED OBSERVATION SCALE
 RESEARCHER: LENNA BARRANTES ELIZONDO.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Duration: _____

Course observed:

Number of students

observed:

Objective: To record the teacher's and students' classroom behavior in a mixed-level class.

ACTIONS TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE MIXED-LEVEL CLASS PHENOMENON			
TEACHER'S STRATEGIES	Tally record	STUDENTS' REACTION	Tally record ²¹
A. Participation			
1. The teacher calls out one specific student to answer a question.		a. Students provide a limited response.	
		b. Students provide an elaborated answer.	
		c. Students do not provide an answer.	
2. The teacher calls on volunteers to answer a question.		a. Students actively provide a response.	
		b. Students passively provide an answer.	
		c. Students remain silent.	
3. The teacher asks for impromptu speech.		a. Students provide a limited contribution.	
		b. Students provide an elaborated contribution.	
		c. Students do not provide any contribution.	
4. The teacher promotes brainstorming.		a. More than five ss participate.	
		b. Less than five ss participate.	
		c. No st participates	
5. The teacher elicits <i>Initiate-Respond-Evaluate</i> .		a. Students provide a limited response.	
		b. Students provide an elaborated answer.	
		c. Students do not provide an answer.	
6. The teacher does not give instructions regarding seating arrangement.		a. Students sit in pairs.	
		b. Students sit in groups.	
		c. Students sit individually.	
7. The teacher lets the students choose the members of the group.		a. Students tend to choose the same members.	
		b. Students choose the classmates who are near.	
8. The teacher requests ss to solve an exercise (from book or any other printed material).		a. Students follow the teacher's instruction.	
		b. Students do something else.	
		c. Ss get help to answer the exercise.	

²¹The narrative values of this tally system are in the second column on the right.

C. Classroom Management

1. The teacher walks around the class.	a. Students ask for clarification in Spanish.	
	b. Students ask for clarification in English.	
	c. Students do not ask for clarification.	
2. The teacher gives general comments and correction on the board.	a. Students take notes.	
	b. Students pay attention.	
	c. Students do not pay attention.	
3. The teacher corrects students directly during class instruction.	a. Students repeat the correction out loud.	
	b. Students pay attention but do not repeat.	
	c. Students take notes.	
4. The teacher gives individual feedback at the end of the session.	a. Students take notes.	
	b. Students pay attention.	
	c. Students make a comment.	
5. The teacher rephrases errors and asks students to repeat after her.	a. Students repeat after her/him.	
	b. Students just pay attention.	
6. The teacher resorts to a specific grouping technique.	a. Students follow the teacher's instruction.	
	b. Students do not follow the teacher's instruction.	
7. The teacher gives classroom instructions more than twice.	a. Students pay attention.	
	b. Students asks for clarification.	
	c. Students take notes.	
8. The teacher writes on the board a summary of oral explanations.	a. Students pay attention.	
	b. Students asks for clarification.	
	c. Students take notes.	
9. The teacher explains the subject matter more than twice.	a. Students pay attention.	
	b. Students asks for clarification.	
	c. Students take notes.	
10. The teacher uses the body language to clarify meaning.	a. Students pay attention.	
	b. Students asks for clarification.	
11. The teacher sets goals for students.	a. Students pay attention.	
	b. Students asks for clarification.	
	c. Students take notes.	
12. The teacher resorts to other material other than the class textbook.	a. Students pay attention.	
	b. Students asks for clarification.	
	c. Students take notes.	
1. The teacher praises students.	a. Students thank the teacher.	
	b. Students remain quiet.	
	c. Students ask for clarification.	
2. The teacher tells jokes that release tension.	a. Students laugh.	
	b. Students remain quiet.	
	c. Students share one of their own.	
	d. Students ask for clarification.	
3. The teacher lectures the	a. Students pay attention.	

students.		b. Students asks for clarification.	
		c. Students take notes.	
4. The teacher replaces a difficult word by a more commonly used one.		a. Students pay attention.	
		b. Students asks for clarification.	
		c. Students take notes.	
5. The teacher resorts to slow speed when students show difficulty in understanding.		a. Students pay attention.	
		b. Students asks for clarification.	
		c. Students take notes.	
6. The teacher uses pauses to give learners time to think.		a. Students respond after some time.	
		b. Students do not respond.	

ACTIONS TAKEN BY STUDENTS

Students' behavior		Tally record
SCAN 1 10 first minutes	1. Students participate by giving unsolicited contributions.	
	2. Students ask a classmate for clarification.	
	3. Students use a dictionary.	
	4. Students solve the exercises assigned.	
	5. Students speak in English with classmates.	
	6. Students use their cell phone in the class.	
	7. Students get out of the classroom.	
	8. Students are off-task.	
	9. Students speak in Spanish.	
SCAN 2 40 minutes	1. Students participate by giving unsolicited contributions.	
	2. Students ask a classmate for clarification.	
	3. Students use a dictionary.	
	4. Students solve the exercises assigned.	
	5. Students speak in English with classmates.	
	6. Students use their cell phone in the class.	
	7. Students get out of the classroom.	
	8. Students are off-task.	
	9. Students speak in Spanish.	
	10. Students ask the teacher for clarification.	
SCAN 3 40 minutes	1. Students participate by giving unsolicited contributions.	
	2. Students ask a classmate for clarification.	
	3. Students use a dictionary.	
	4. Students solve the exercises assigned.	
	5. Students speak in English with classmates.	
	6. Students use their cell phone in the class.	
	7. Students get out of the classroom.	
	8. Students are off-task.	
	9. Students speak in Spanish.	
	10. Students ask for clarification.	
SCAN 4	1. Students participate by giving unsolicited contributions.	
	2. Students ask a classmate for clarification.	
	3. Students use a dictionary.	

Last 10 minutes	4. Students solve the exercises assigned.	
	5. Students speak in English with classmates.	
	6. Students use their cell phone in the class.	
	7. Students get out of the classroom.	
	8. Students are off-task.	
	9. Students speak in Spanish.	

Teacher's desk

Further Comments:



Coding:

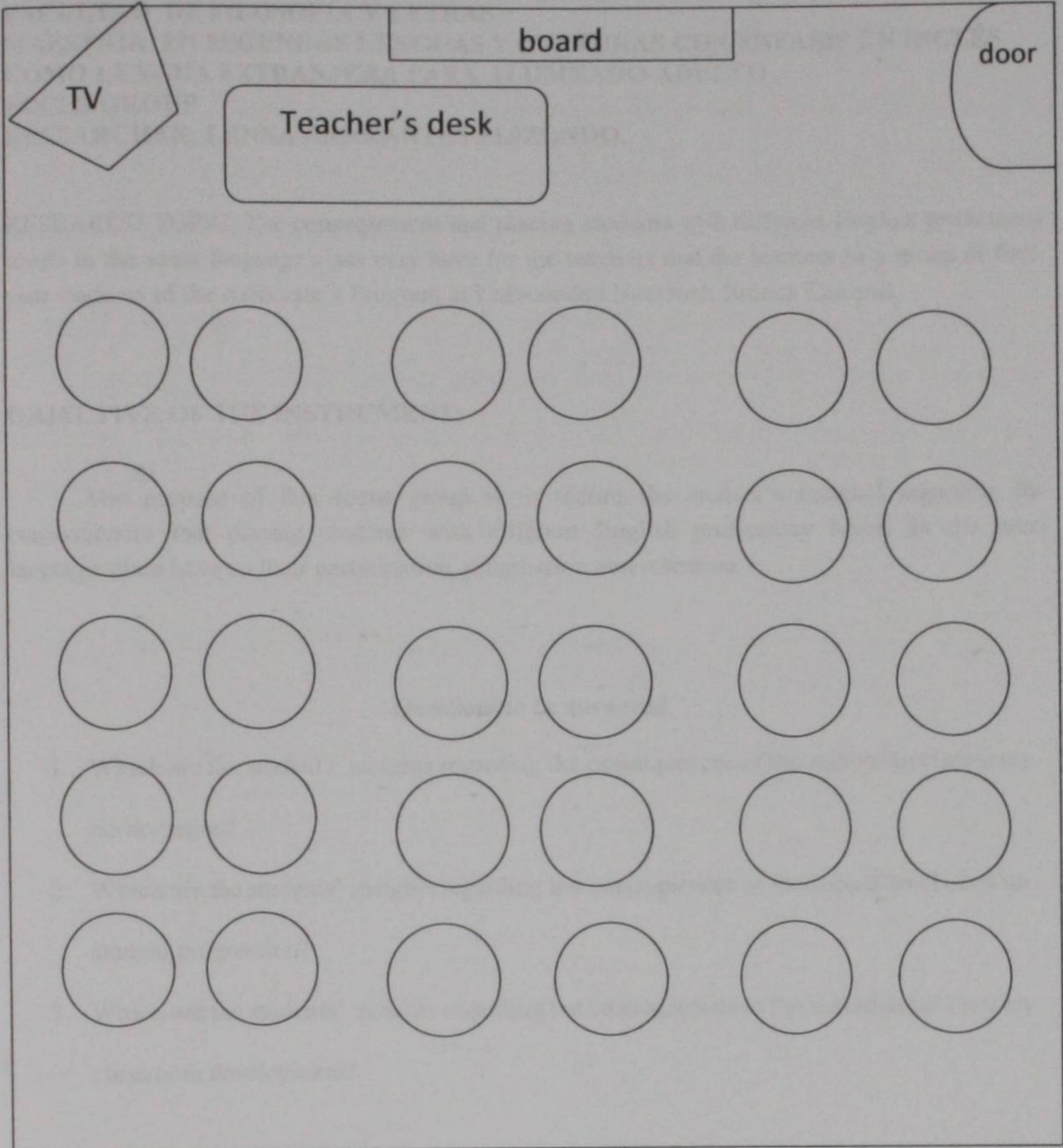
V: volunteer participation

v: verbal response

0: no response

S: solicited participation

nv: nonverbal response



Appendix 10: FOCUS GROUP

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS
MAESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS
COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO
FOCUS GROUP
RESEARCHER: LENNA BARRANTES ELIZONDO.

RESEARCH TOPIC: The consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class may have for the teachers and the learners in a group of first-year students of the Associate's Program at Universidad Nacional, Brunca Campus.

OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENT:

The purpose of this focus group is to record the student's insights regarding the consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class have on their participation, progression and retention.

Level	Proficiency level	Number of	Services	Date
Questions to be answered				
1. Which are the students' insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on participation?				
2. Which are the students' insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on student progression?				
3. Which are the students' insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on classroom development?				

1. Which are the students' insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on participation?
2. Which are the students' insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on student progression?
3. Which are the students' insights regarding the consequences of the mixed-level class on classroom development?

Methodology:

This instrument intends to record students' insights about the research topic in-depth. To understand its implementation a description of the participants, place, time, procedures and material is given. These focus groups were carried out in Spanish, which is the informants' mother tongue, to avoid any communication mismatch and to provide them with a full understanding of the events and topics discussed.

1. Participants:

Two different focus groups were conducted. They were organized according to students' proficiency level. To do this, their scores obtained in the placement test were used as reference. This test was administered during the diagnostic stage of this research. The next chart shows the organization.

Group	Proficiency level	Number of participants	Duration	Date
1	A1(novice) A2(beginner)	6	50 minutes	September 28 th , 2011
2	B1-B2 (intermediate)	6	50 minutes	September 28 th , 2011

Each of the two focus groups followed the same characteristics regarding procedures, topic and material.

Place:

The two focus groups were conducted in room 2 in the library at Universidad Nacional, Brunca campus. The chairs were arranged as a semi-circle. In the same way, this room was fully

equipped with the necessary conditions to develop the activity as expected. These conditions were: quietness, air-conditioning, a chair for each participant, a video recorder, a tape-recorder, a projector, a laptop and a board.

2. Time

The two focus groups were carried the same date but at a different time. Group 1 started at 5:15 p.m. and finished at 5:50 p.m, while group 2 started at 6:00 p.m. and finished at 6:50 p.m.

3. Procedures

a. Welcome activity: 5 minutes.

1. Introduction of the researcher and assistant.
2. Each student was given a tag and a candy.
3. Introduction of the participants with the game *Fruit Name*²². they wrote their name on the tag.

b. Warm-up: 10 minutes

4. Twenty cards were stuck on a small board. Each card has a word.

Exito	Poco tiempo	Calificaciones	Libro de texto	Obstáculos
Frustración	Mucho tiempo	Laboratorio	Internet	Oportunidades
Diversión	Tareas	Profesores	Lecturas	Expectativas
Metas	Exámenes	Compañeros	Aburrimiento	Limitaciones

5. Each student stood up and chose a card.

²² In this activity, each student must introduce him/herself by giving a first and middle name. The first name will be their actual name and the middle name must be the name of a fruit that starts with the beginning letter of their name. E.g. Laura lemon

6. They came back to their subgroups to have a micro-discussion on how those words are related to their experience as EFL learners.
7. As macro-discussion volunteer students shared their ideas.

c. Presentation: 10 minutes

1. The moderator of the focus groups gave a short presentation of the research topic. She presents a short Power Point Presentation that puts the mixed-level class in evidence.
2. Students were asked to give their opinion on the topic.

d. Individual work:

1. Five cardboards with different colors each were stuck on the back wall of the room. Each of them had a phrase.

Green	Yellow	Orange	Peach
A positive aspect	A negative aspect	A recommended aspect	A challenging aspect

2. Each student was given a marker. They were asked to write their ideas under each category.
3. The cardboards were collected and stuck on the front wall.
4. A macro-discussion was carried out by using the information from the cardboards.
5. Three new cardboards were stuck on the same back wall of the room. Each cardboard had a phrase and a color code.

Light-blue	Red	Purple	Gray
The effects of the mixed-level class on participation.	The effects of the mixed-level class on classroom management.	The effects of the mixed-level class on progression.	The effects of the mixed-level class on retention.

6. A macro-discussion was carried out by using the information from the cardboards.

e. Material:

1. 12 tags
2. 12 candy
3. 2 yellow cardboards (one per focus groups)
4. 2 peach cardboards (one per focus groups)
5. 2 orange cardboards (one per focus groups)
6. 2 green cardboards (one per focus groups)
7. 2 light-blue cardboards (one per focus groups)
8. 2 red cardboards (one per focus groups)
9. 2 purple cardboards (one per focus groups)
10. 2 gray cardboards (one per focus group)
11. 6 markers
12. Projector
13. Video camera
14. Audio camera
15. Masking tape

8. Characteristics of this focus group:

Its main purpose is to record the student's insights regarding the consequences that placing students with different English proficiency levels in the same language class have on their participation, progression and retention. This instrument is implemented in the final stage of data collection since it aims at capturing deep perspectives from students. That is why specific constructs such as participation, class management, progression and retention were incorporated.

SWOT²³ analysis method was used so that the researcher could identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research topic as well as the opportunities and threats of the students enrolled in this program. Activity one in the section **individual work** captured the strengths and weaknesses of the mixed-level class by asking students to identify *positive, negative, challenging and recommended aspects* to deal with this phenomenon. In the same way, activity five in this same section garnered data about the opportunities and threats of learners who face the mixed-level class. In this activity, informants listed on the cardboards the consequences of placing students with different proficiency levels in one group. They referred to specific threats and opportunities on participation, progression, class management and retention.

9. Challenges for the development of the focus groups

- Look for the suitable place and arrange an accessible date for the researcher, the assistant, the librarian and the informants.
- Get access to the equipment needed and learn the operational steps of each device.
- Get as many informants as possible who were willing to participate.
- The use of video camera can be distracting and obtrusive for students.

10. Benefits of the focus group technique

- Students are able to sympathize among each other; this creates a trustful atmosphere that leads them to share real insights.
- Informants' perceptions are recorded; clearly then, these data will be at hand to the researcher through the analysis process to be constantly reviewed.

²³SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is a strategic method used to assess these previous concepts.

- First-hand data from the informants are captured on the cardboards.

11. Clarifications about SWOT analysis method:

In order to incorporate SWOT analysis in this focus group, the researcher must handle key concepts which are:

- SWOT:** is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project (in this case Associate's Program in English at UNA).
- Strengths:** are aspects that are done well and valuable. They are assets (physical, human, intangible) or attributes.
- Weaknesses:** are aspects that are done poorly and end up being a disadvantage or a deficiency. They can also be labeled as missing capabilities.
- Opportunities:** are external chances to get benefits in the environment (in this case the class).
- Threats:** are external elements in the environment (class) that could cause trouble for L2 learning.

12. References

http://www.ryerson.ca/~kjensen/strategic_planning/swot.html

<http://www.freeswotanalysis.com>

<http://www.ukessays.com/essays/business/swot-analysis.php>

RAW DATA FROM FOCUS GROUP**INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUP 1****UN ASPECTO NEGATIVO ES:**

- se pierde seguridad en uno mismo.
- sentimiento de inferioridad.
- desmotivación al enfrentar la inferioridad del nivel.
- menor deseo de participar o inseguridad en el momento de hacerlo.
- temor a equivocarse y a la burla. quedarse atrás por falta de participación.
- sentir vergüenza a la hora de hablar y que los compañeros se burlen de uno.

UNA RECOMENDACION:

- mayor motivación por parte de los profesores o realizar programas y juegos para tener lecciones mas dinámicas.
- brindar mayor información acerca del programa.
- hacer un examen de ubicación.
- fijarse que todos no tenemos el mismo nivel. preguntar se todos comprenden lo visto.
- crear grupos mas reducidos y realizar un examen de ubicación.
 - que los profesores no tengan favoritismos a la hora de dar los porcentajes.

UN ASPECTO POSITIVO ES:

- ayudan a mejorar algunas cosas que ellos saben y uno no.
- ellos nos ayudan cuando no sabemos.
- nos ayudan cuando es muy complicado para nosotros.
- nos dan un consejo de cómo hacer mejor las cosas y nos corrigen.
- motivación al querer igualar su nivel y una ayuda y guía en aspectos como el vocabulario y pronunciación.
- apoyo en todo lo relacionado con la materia y motivación en momentos difíciles que crees no poder lograr tus metas.

UN RETO ES...

- pararse enfrente de la clase a hacer una presentacion oral.
- tratar de igualar su nivel.
- igualar su nivel y ser mejores.
- mejorar y no solo conformarse con pasar un curso.
- demostrar que podemos superar cualquier obstaculo.
- poder hacer una exposicion oral sin sentir miedo o setirme intimidada por el o la profesora y compañeros.

EFFECTOS EN PARTICIPACIÓN

- se limita al no tener mucho conocimiento del lenguaje.
- miedo a hablar.
- el conocimiento es afectado y la motivación disminuye provocando eliminar nuestra participación en forma definitiva.
- poca participación por miedo a equivocarse.
- limitaciones en ciertos temas por falta de vocabulario y desconocimiento del lenguaje.
- los que más saben hablan toda la clase y los profesores no nos toman en cuenta.

EFFECTOS EN LA PERMANENCIA EN EL PROGRAMA:

- desmotivación al perder un curso. perder la motivación de continuar con el programa por el poco conocimiento adquirido.
- desmotivación al no obtener buenas calificaciones.
- no todas las personas llegan a tener un nivel tan alto como todos los demás y eso motiva a abandonar los estudios.
- temor al empezar de nuevo y frustración por los que van más avanzados.
- inseguridad en otros cursos que se llevan con los que sí lograron pasar todos.

EFFECTOS EN EL DESARROLLO DE LA CLASE

- me da miedo opinar por temor a que se burlen de mí.
- poca participación por temor a equivocarme.
- miedo de no poder desarrollar mis ideas por el poco conocimiento que tengo.
- los profesores toman las opiniones de estudiantes con mayor nivel lingüístico y éstos son los que siempre opinan en todas las lecciones.
- los profesores creen que todos tienen el mismo nivel y quieren desarrollar la clase rápidamente.
- no se puede ir al ritmo que se debería.

EFFECTOS EN EL PROGRESO LINGUISTICO

- al no participar hace que nuestro progreso disminuya y somos perjudicados.
- por poca participación uno se limita a sólo escuchar y afecta la calificación.
- se aprende mucho, pero al compararnos con los que saben más nuestras calificaciones no son las requeridas.
- menos oportunidades para expresarnos.



Transcription of discussion session:

Researcher: -chicos vamos a ver estos son ya las consecuencias digamos lo que tenemos aquí es lo que ustedes escribieron, ¿en participación? Aja ¿Josué Jocote?

Josué Jocote: -bueno, este en la participación la verdad uno se limita mucho casi que no se puede participar porque diay uno no tiene como que se yo mucho conocimiento de lo que están hablando, o tal vez ni uno entiende el tema o... entonces se le hace sumamente imposible así como participar o decir algo al respecto.

Researcher: -aja, ¿están de acuerdo los demás? ¿sí? bueno aquí en desarrollo de la clase ustedes tocaron varios temas participación, que los profesores no pueden con todo digamos, que mas o que les gustaría decir con respecto a eso?

-Yo pienso que no se puede llevar el ritmo que se debería llevar por el nivel

Researcher: -¿no se puede avanzar igual, no se debería avanzar igual?

-Y no sé, se toma el mismo programa el mismo nivel para todos.

-Si para todos

-Y tal vez una persona que ha estado dos, tres años en Estados o en institutos llegan aquí y para ellos es más fácil entender las conversaciones y todo...

-Yo siento que hay ciertos temas en que el profesor le pregunta algo a uno y es como que uno "pá!" la mente en blanco de una vez, y ya que ¿quién quiere opinar? y ya los que saben más levantan la mano y son 6, 7 palabras y uno con costos puede decir tres...

-Y que esas mismas personas son las que siempre están opinando, digamos son tres, cuatro, cinco personas que son las que siempre están ahí...

-Si y eso nos da desventaja porque decía la profesora:-fulanita y usted que piensa y nosotros como no podíamos hablar entonces, diay al final nos bajaba puntos porque, no hablábamos, no participábamos en clase.

Researcher: -el progreso lingüístico, en el avance de poder aprender, ¿qué me pueden decir?

-Todo, todo va como relacionado porque digamos, al mismo tiempo digamos a usted le da miedo participar porque diay no se por miedo a que se burlen de usted o porque el profesor vaya a no sé a ser muy estricto o así entonces usted no, tiene menos posibilidades de aprender, entonces como usted se encierra como en un globo digamos como en una burbuja entonces...entonces diay, uno no digamos no avanza tanto.

Researcher: -ok, aquí habla más o menos de las calificaciones, como vieron ¿cómo eran sus calificaciones? todas eran así como muy bajas o a veces, o en que habilidades iban mejor, o menos mal?

-Este, por ejemplo para mí lo que era, gramática, lo que era asíde escribir era un poco más difícil porque a la hora digamos usted escucha las palabras, se dicen diferente y se escriben diferente, entonces eso es difícil, lo que es ya listening usted escucha la conversación y si agarra algo ya más o menos entiende la idea, entonces ya es un poco más fácil.

-Quizás el aspecto de pronunciación porque este, algunos hemos llevado cursos pero no de pronunciación.

Researcher: -pero en si las calificaciones?

-Bajas

Researcher: -¿cuál fue la nota más baja que obtuvieron pueden decirlo?

-20, 40's

-Yo era así siempre en listening eran veintes, y otros en grammar que eran cuarentas el semestre pasado pero por dicha este semestre ya ahora voy, todos los voy pasando puros 80's 70's

-Como cuando ya uno se empezaba a acoplar a al curso ya era cuando iba finalizando entonces...

-El curso va demasiado rápido

Researcher: -¿el libro? ¿Qué les parece el libro? ayudaba o era muy difícil de entender o si era fácil o...

-Tal vez si era fácil de entender pero no sé, yo siento que no se abarcaba todo, era así como por, como por partes.

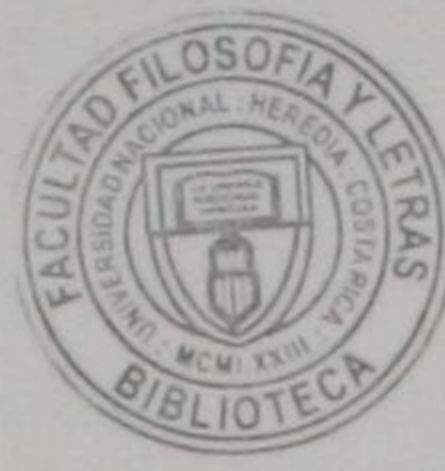
-Tal vez ese día se podía ver todo pero como por encima digamos, no se tenía como que se yo enfatizado un tema porque iba así como demasiado rápido entonces diay no, no se podía, que se yo algún tema entenderlo bien o algo así porque di se iba así como por encima pero en si lo que es practicas y eso yo pienso que sí, bueno si están un poco entendibles.

-En lo que eran ciertos temas con, con los compañeros que ya iban más avanzados, habían temas que a ellos se les hacía más fácil, y habían pocos que nos costaba mucho o sea llevar el ritmo, entonces la profesora por la mayoría que ya lo entendían bastante bien los llevaba más rápido, entonces terminábamos....

-El libro si era demasiado extenso, y de verdad, llega usted a un tema que apenas es que medio lo va entendiendo y ya brinca usted a otro tema y a usted se le confunde todo entonces además todos los exámenes iban mal porque cuando ya usted iba medio entendiendo u tema, se pasaba a otro y...

Researcher: -ok, mmmm no se si quieran decir algo más? porque si n o les agradezco mucho el que hayan venido, el que hayan compartido sus experiencias

-Este, tal vez una sugerencia, que bueno si un examen de ubicación y tal vez un curso o algo que lo enseñe a uno como hacer expresiones, presentaciones orales porque digamos yo por ejemplo estudie en bachillerato por madurez entonces es algo totalmente distinto cuando usted entra a la u que tiene que empezar a hacer expresiones y todas esas cosas.



INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUP 2

UN ASPECTO NEGATIVO ES:

- se lleva un nivel más grande que los demás, lo cual se torna un poco aburrido.
- no se avanza a una velocidad apropiada para todos.
- las personas creen que uno lo sabe todo.
- no le prestan mucha atención cuando uno tiene una duda.

UNA RECOMENDACION:

- dividir los grupos y dar las lecciones según el nivel de los estudiantes.
- tratar siempre de que lo principal sea la práctica del vocabulario con conversaciones, ya que ésta es la mejor forma de progresar. quitarse el miedo y utilizar lo que se aprendió.
- aplicar exámenes de ubicación o de aptitud para colocar a los estudiantes.
- dividir a las personas.

UN ASPECTO POSITIVO ES:

- se entiende más fácil y rápido.
- los trabajos no son tan difíciles y uno puede ayudar a los compañeros.
- se refuerzan los conocimientos ya adquiridos.
- la facilidad de aprender.
- las lecciones son más fáciles.

UN RETO ES...

- estar todos al mismo nivel.
- tratar de buscar otras fuentes para mejorar mi inglés.
- ser mejor cada día.
- mejorar en todos los cursos.

EFFECTOS EN PARTICIPACIÓN

- el número de estudiantes y su nivel de conocimiento hace que unos participen más que otros.
- no todos participan.
- se participaba menos.
- muchas veces no todos podían participar.
- se participa pero menos porque se le da más oportunidad a los que saben menos.

EFFECTOS EN LA PERMANENCIA EN EL PROGRAMA:

- si es posible terminar, porque es una carrera interactiva y bonita y sí pienso terminarla.
- sí deseo terminar porque es de muy buena calidad y además depende de uno mismo el sacarle provecho, pero los cursos ayudan mucho a mejorar.
- sí voy a terminar el programa, es una meta terminar el programa que si se empezó se debe terminar.
- sí lo pienso terminar para tener más oportunidades laborales.

EFFECTOS EN EL DESARROLLO DE LA CLASE

- menos asistencia a la clase por los estudiantes.
- no hacer tareas.
- traer los libros o no traerlos.
- aclarar dudas.
- los estudiantes se dispersan si no están 100% ocupados.

EFFECTOS EN EL PROGRESO LINGUISTICO

- sí se progresa, pero más lento.
- yo creo que he mejorado mucho.
- he mejorado mucho, principalmente en gramática.
- sí siento que mejore mucho en todas las habilidades.
- es un poco lento.
- sí se progresa pero lento, porque se debe esperar a los que van más rezagados.

Transcription of discussion session:

Researcher: -ahora vamos a comentar las, sus respuestas con respecto a las consecuencias que tiene el estar, el tener varios compañeros con diferentes niveles lingüísticos en una aula, empezamos con lo que es participación, pueden leerlo o nada mas generar ideas, algún participante...

Magda manzana: -yo siento que digamos, tal vez los que saben menos no participan porque les da miedo, como uy no aquel sabe más, entonces me da cosa participar entonces, y los que saben más tienes que participar porque los otros no participan y tal vez uno sabe la respuesta, entonces diay uno...la dice.

-Si yo siento que el efecto es la vergüenza ahí, digamos que el que sabe menos, va a participar obviamente menos porque le da vergüenza que tal vez los otros se burlen o algo así.

-Y también puede ser de que la persona piense no si yo ya dije esa respuesta no puedo decir la otra porque me van a decir di que se cree? Entonces piensan que uno es como muy orgulloso o algo así.

-Si también que no todos digamos pueden participar por lo mismo por el nivel muchas veces uno entiende algo y ellos no lo entienden entonces uno tiene que participar a si como obligado porque el profesor dice que alguien responda y nadie quiere responder entonces uno tiene que hacerlo.

Researcher: -ok, vamos a ver seguimos con lo que es el desarrollo de la clase, como puede afectar?

-Bueno yo escribí como pueden ver que los estudiantes se dispersan mucho bueno por lo menos yo, cuando yo no tengo que hacer me disperso entonces a veces digamos si uno está haciendo un ejercicio y lo termino más rápido o antes, uno a veces diay ya se pone a hablar de otras cosas o a ver qué está pasando afuera o algo así.

-Si o se va para el baño

Researcher: -ok, vamos a ver que mas anotaron por ahí... como afecto también porque no lo hemos comentado lo del tamaño del grupo? porque integrado uno eran muchos.

-Si eso yo pienso que es un efecto muy grande porque digamos tal vez las personas que sabían menos necesitaban más digamos, que les pusieran más atención y era muy, muy difícil por lo mismo por ser un grupo tan grande entonces no se le prestan tanto, tanta atención a cada estudiante entonces...

-Es que si para el profesor yo me imagino que también debe ser muy difícil porque a veces yo me acuerdo que tal vez muchas veces el profesor ni se daba cuenta si uno participaba o no, el que participaba o no, siempre participaban los mismos y ellos ni cuenta se daban por el grupo ser tan grande.

Researcher: -después vemos con lo que es el progreso lingüístico, ustedes consideran que por ejemplo el libro que se utilizo les ayudo a progresar o las actividades, o piensan que han progresado algo desde que iniciaron en febrero a ahorita?

- porque yo pienso, bueno yo siento que yo si he mejorado a como empecé y siento que el primer libro era como, digamos como en la parte de listening y speaking si era como apropiado ahora siento que es fácil como que más bien, no se digamos es mi percepción como que deberíamos usar tal vez uno que fuera un poco mas...

-Complicado

-Aja y es vacilón porque digamos de hecho el libro es la secuencia del... o sea se supone que es más avanzado pero ya uno lo siente como que...

-Es casi lo mismo.

-Si como por ejemplo cuando empezamos en febrero yo veía que en la parte que era listening cuando teníamos dudas de algunos vocabularios, era un montón de palabras pero ahora que estamos viendo estos temas ahorita, ya son muy pocas las palabras o ninguna porque la profe pregunta saben que es esto y uno dice si,si esto es esto.

-Si digamos a pesar de que es la secuencia en si lo que cambia un toque es que en la parte de listening que las cosas son más grandes, pero igual no es tan diferente, tal vez sea más grande pero no sé, uno no lo siente tan difícil.

-Sabe que pasa también que a veces uno en el libro se topa cosas como muy fáciles pero después llega el quiz y a veces son muy difíciles diferente a lo que viene en el libro.

-Sí y también el libro es como muy repetitivo, siempre lo mismo.

-Si todo va como en base de lo mismo, y si eso es un problema que tal vez que vemos cosas como muy fáciles en el libro y después en los quices y en los exámenes es cuando uno ve la diferencia.

-Y las vemos muy rápido.

Researcher: -Bueno están los efectos en la permanencia del programa, ustedes consideran que se van a graduar el otro año? están positivos... que escribieron aquí? Bueno algo que quieran compartir?

-Bueno a lo que he sentido ahorita, digamos de estos dos semestres, digamos es como lo, diría yo como lo básico pero digamos es bonito y es interactivo yo he escuchado digamos a otros estudiantes del otro año que tienen que llevar cultura y todo eso y que se les hace difícil pero diay si uno le pone y si uno en realidad le gusta, di uno si lo puede terminar y graduarse.

-Si tal vez es difícil porque bueno yo lo digo por mi experiencia que a veces uno desea como que esto se acabe rápido y como que a veces desea uno salir corriendo pero yo siento que en toda carrera uno va a sentir eso a alguna hora porque obvio tiene que tener algo de presión y, pero y no digamos, di imposible no es y diay lo único que hay que hacer es ponerle.

-Yo lo que pienso es que muchas veces digamos sobre todo cuando es un idioma la gente es como digamos perezosa, a veces uno dice voy a empezar un curso y nunca lo termina, yo siento que aquí digamos la ventaja es que bueno, aparte son dos años pero son dos años que se aprovechan muy bien como que es toda la semana así verdad bien fuerte y yo si siento que digamos yo si veo la mejoría en todos mis compañeros y yo siento que los cursos que dan aquí son de muy buena calidad. Y que también obviamente depende del estudiante, este aprovecharlos al máximo digamos yo siento que depende de uno tomar, porque la u nos da como las herramientas y son muy buenas y ya depende de uno digamos ponerlas en práctica y ojala buscar más cosas digamos para salir al final con un nivel bien bueno en inglés.

Researcher: -ya para concluir, que recomendaciones les darían ustedes a las autoridades con respecto al programa de diplomado en general, alguna recomendación que ustedes,... yo como profesora no puedo tener la perspectiva que ustedes tiene como estudiantes y las autoridades menos pero digamos si ustedes pudieran sugerir...

-Que traten de hacer niveles y digamos colocarlos en diferentes aulas digamos que los profesores den las clases diferente depende del nivel de los estudiantes.

-Si yo pienso lo mismo digamos como hacer, como se hace en muchos cursos un examen de ubicación porque digamos es muy difícil como se hablo digamos trabajar en diferentes niveles, en un mismo grupo es muy difícil, entonces como un examen de ubicación para que todo se adecue mejor a lo que ocupa el estudiante.

-Y también di, se puede decir como el equipo o ¿algo así? si como mejorar el equipo para que uno tenga una mejor...

Researcher: -mejorar los laboratorios

-Sí y también el número de estudiantes digamos, si hacen tal vez un examen de ubicación no todos van a pasar entonces se va a poder como adecuar mas lo que son los laboratorios y eso, para, pero arreglarlos primero.

-Si porque eso es otra cosa digamos tras de que entran muchos, es otro detalle la cantidad de gente, si y el laboratorio no es para tanta gente entonces es otra cosa.

-Yo siento que digamos es feo decirlo pero tal vez hay gente que no tiene la aptitud para estudiar y tal vez vienen un semestre digamos que hasta a perder plata y tiempo porque digamos es feo decirlo pero sino tienen la aptitud para estudiarlo diay no se como...

Researcher: -es un campo que tal vez otra persona que si tiene aptitud lo podría aprovechar y no pudo porque había cupo lleno. Bueno muchas gracias chicos por la participación.

-bueno con gusto!

Appendix 11: Students' Test Scores in the Diagnostic Test

	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Lissi Morales	230	110	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Susan Leitón	425	125	B1
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: Reading	Score
Cristian Mora	180	95	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Viviana García	230	75	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Hanset Alpízar	240	135	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Cesar Blanco	175	45	A1
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Evelyn Céspedes	260	195	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Karla Monge	200	65	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Eduard Céspedes	155	195	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Dilana Chávez	365	270	B1

	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Pamela Romero	185	100	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Amanda Hidalgo	205	150	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Nancy Aguilar	155	65	A1
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Anthony Obando	250	125	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
William Aguilera	255	85	A2
	Converted score: Listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Greivin Obando	245	95	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Wendy Sandí	185	110	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Daniela Chacón	265	80	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: Reading	Score
Soledad Cordero	380	105	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Elsa Valverde	410	225	B1
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Diana Mora	175	45	A1
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Jonathan Torres	155	5	A1

	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Luis Diego Picado	200	100	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Verónica Martínez	265	45	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Josúe A. Angulo	175	45	A1
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Christian Acuña	410	350	B2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Daniela Vargas	390	65	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Leydhi Gamboa	175	135	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Ericka Quires	225	155	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: Reading	Score
Karolina Corrales	140	55	A1
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Tania Montes	200	80	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Carmen Mora	230	130	A2
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Amanda Zuñiga	440	225	B1
	Converted score: listening	Converted score: reading	Score
Jeremy Solano	290	140	A2

APPENDIX 12: Artifacts

Artifact: Program's Curriculum

DIPLOMADO EN INGLÉS

CICLOS DE 18 SEMANAS

TABLA DE REQUISITOS

EI PLAN DE ESTUDIOS NO TIENE CORREQUISITOS

NOMBRE DEL CURSO	REQUISITO
I Ciclo	
Inglés Integrado I	Admisión
Pronunciación: Vocales	Admisión
Expresión Oral y Comprensión Auditiva I	Admisión
Expresión Escrita Básica en Español	Admisión
II Ciclo	
Inglés Integrado II	Inglés Integrado I
Expresión Oral y Comprensión Auditiva II	Expresión Oral y Comprensión Auditiva I
Pronunciación: Consonantes	Pronunciación: Vocales
II NIVEL	
I Ciclo	
Elocución	Inglés Integrado II
Composición	Inglés Integrado II
Gramática I	Inglés Integrado II
Cultura I	Inglés Integrado II
Pronunciación: Acento y Entonación	Inglés Integrado II Pronunciación: Consonantes
II Ciclo	
Ensayo	Composición Gramática I
Cultura II	Cultura I
Gramática II	Gramática I
Expresión Oral y Comprensión Auditiva III	Expresión Oral y Comprensión Auditiva II Elocución
Lectura	Inglés Integrado II

Artifact: Course Outline

Curso:	INGLÉS INTEGRADO I
Área de conocimiento:	Capacidad funcional en el idioma
Código:	LLM 400
Naturaleza:	Teórico-Práctico
Tipo de curso:	Común
Modalidad:	Ciclos de 18 semanas
Nivel:	I
Créditos:	06
Total horas por semana:	15
Horas presenciales:	12 (04 teoría, 02 laboratorio A, 06 práctica)
Horas de estudio independiente:	03
Horas docente:	12
Requisito:	Admisión a la carrera
Correquisito:	No hay
Profesor:	

DESCRIPCIÓN

Inglés Integrado I es el primero de dos cursos en que se pretende iniciar al estudiante en el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades básicas de la lengua: comprensión auditiva, conversación, lectura y escritura. A la vez que el estudiante continúa adquiriendo un manejo teórico y práctico de las funciones de las diversas estructuras gramaticales requeridas en situaciones de comunicación oral y escrita, tiene la oportunidad de utilizar el vocabulario básico necesario para expresarse con mayor precisión. Una vez más, se fomenta no solo el desarrollo de la fluidez sino también la autocorrección. Además, se le brinda al estudiante sesiones de laboratorio para practicar los conceptos gramaticales aprendidos y la comprensión auditiva.

OBJETIVOS

El estudiante será capaz de:

Utilizar técnicas de comprensión y percepción auditiva;

Mostrar comprensión auditiva de material en inglés;

Mostrar su conocimiento de algunas técnicas básicas de lectura;

Comunicarse oralmente en diversas situaciones de la vida cotidiana;

Usar formas simples de las funciones del lenguaje para comunicarse apropiadamente;

Conocer y utilizar diversas estructuras gramaticales;

Utilizar un vocabulario básico y pronunciarlo adecuadamente;

Usar técnicas básicas de composición para comunicarse en forma escrita;

Comunicarse por escrito de modo informal y creativo;

Expresarse en forma oral y escrita sobre rasgos fundamentales de su propia cultura y la extranjera.

CONTENIDOS**Capítulo I**

Lectura: Reconocimiento de ideas principales;

Estructura: El verbo *to be*, presente simple, pronombres, emphatic *DO* y *DOES*;

Funciones: Cómo iniciar una conversación, saludos, presentaciones, entrevistas cortas;

Escritura: Descripción personal;

Comprensión auditiva: Comprensión de ideas principales, percepción de formas reducidas y palabras enfatizadas, inferencias.

Capítulo II

Lectura: Reconocimiento del tema dentro del párrafo;

Estructura: *There is/are*, preguntas con *whose*, el presente continuo, el impersonal *it*, modales;

Funciones: Conversación sobre preferencias;

Escritura: Descripción de arte;

Comprensión auditiva: Comprensión de ideas principales, percepción de formas reducidas y palabras enfatizadas, inferencias.

Capítulo III

Lectura: Ideas secundarias, títulos y temas de párrafos;

Estructura: Sustantivos y expresiones de cantidad, comparaciones, modales, futuro con *going to*;

Funciones: Ordenar y rechazar alimentos, comparación de hábitos alimenticios;

Escritura: Descripción de alimentos;

Comprensión auditiva: Comprensión de ideas principales, percepción de formas reducidas y palabras enfatizadas, inferencias, diferencia entre *can* y *can't*.

Capítulo IV

Lectura: Temas generales y específicos, rastreo;

Estructura: Formas del futuro, preposiciones de lugar y tiempo, artículos.;

Funciones: Dar y solicitar direcciones;

Escritura: La carta informal;

Comprensión auditiva: identificación de ideas principales, percepción de formas reducidas y palabras enfatizadas, inferencias.

Capítulo V

Lectura: Párrafos en orden cronológico, detalles de tiempo;

Estructura: El tiempo pasado, conectores;

Funciones: solicitar y responder a solicitudes;

Escritura: La narración autobiográfica;

Comprensión auditiva: percepción de formas reducidas y palabras enfatizadas, inferencias.

Capítulo VI

Lectura: Comprensión de detalles de opiniones;

Estructura: El presente perfecto, superlativos, comparaciones con *so*, *too*, *either*, *neither*.

Funciones: Disculparse, conversar sobre costumbres;

Escritura: Narración tradicional;

Comprensión auditiva: percepción de formas reducidas y palabras enfatizadas, inferencias.

METODOLOGÍA

El curso tiene un enfoque ecléctico. Se hace uso de distintas técnicas y procedimientos apropiados para cada una de las situaciones que se presentan a lo largo del curso. La comunicación oral y escrita (individual, en parejas y grupos) son la meta principal. El papel del profesor es de guía o facilitador de diversas situaciones reales en las que el estudiante demuestra su capacidad de comunicarse.

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Artifact: Teachers' Records

STUDENTS' LIST

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL INGLES INTEGRADO 1 DIPLOMADO I CICLO 2011
1. CRISTHIAN ACUÑA MATA
2. NANCY AGUILERA SEGURA
3. WILLIAM AGUILERA BOLAÑOS
4. JANSENTH ALPIZAR LEON
5. JOSUÉ ANGULO UREÑA
6. CESAR BLANCO CASTRO
7. EVELYN CESPEDES JIMENEZ
8. EDUARD CESPEDES ROJAS
9. DANIELA CHACON AGUILERA
10. DILANA CHAVES CAMACHO
11. MARIA CORDERO MONGE
12. CAROLINA CORRALES NARANJO
13. LEIDY GAMBOA MENDEZ
14. VIVIANA GARCIA MENA
15. AMANDA HIDALGO JIMENEZ
16. SUSAN LEITON GUILLEN
17. VERONICA MARTINEZ MORA
18. ILIANA MEZA VALERIO
19. KARLA MONGE ROMERO
20. TANIA MONTES PALACIOS
21. CRISTINA MORA FALLAS

22. DIANA MORA SABORIO
23. CARMEN MORA VEGA
24. LISI MORALES QUESADA
25. GREIVIN OBANDO AGUILERA
26. ANTHONY OBANDO MENDEZ
27. LUIS PICADO VALVERDE
28. ERICKA QUIROS CARRION
29. PAMELA ROMERO VARGAS
30. WENDY SANDI DELGADO
31. GEREMY SOLANO VEGA
32. JONATHAN TORRES ARGUEDAS
33. JAVIER VALENZUELA CARVAJAL
34. ELSA VALVERDE GAMBOA
35. DANIELA VARGAS MORALES
36. AMANDA ZUÑIGA ARIAS

STUDENTS' LIST

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL INGLES INTEGRADO 2 DIPLOMADO II CICLO 2011
1. CRISTHIAN ACUÑA MATA
2. WILLIAM AGUILERA VILLALOBOS
3. JANSENTH ALPIZAR LEON
5. MARLEN CASTRO CALDERO
6. EVELYN CESPEDES JIMENEZ
7. EDUARD CESPEDES ROJAS
8. DANIELA CHACON AGUILAR
9. DILANA CHAVES CAMACHO
10. MARIA CORDERO MONGE
11. AMANDA HIDALGO JIMENEZ
12. SUSAN LEITON GUILLEN
13. VERONICA MARTINEZ MORA
14. LISI MORALES QUESADA
15. ERICKA QUIROS CARRION
16. ELSA VALVERDE GAMBOA

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL INGLES INTEGRADO 2 DIPLOMADO II CICLO 2011	Quiz 1	Quiz 2
St. 1. CRISTHIAN ACUÑA MATA	80	87
St 2. WILLIAM AGUILERA VILLALOBOS	55	45
St 3. JANSENTH ALPIZAR LEON	85	67
St 5. MARLEN CASTRO CALDERON	75	52
St 6. EVELYN CESPEDES JIMENEZ	75	55
St 7. EDUARD CESPEDES ROJAS	---	52
St 8. DANIELA CHACON AGUILAR	85	70
St 9. DILANA CHAVES CAMACHO	80	95
St 10. MARIA CORDERO MONGE	85	---
St 11. AMANDA HIDALGO JIMENEZ	80	90
St 12. SUSAN LEITON GUILLEN	85	77
St 13. VERONICA MARTINEZ MORA	65	52
ST 14. LISI MORALES QUESADA	80	77
St 15. ERICKA QUIROS CARRION	75	70
St 16. ELSA VALVERDE GAMBOA	85	90

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL INGLES INTEGRADO 1 DIPLOMADO II CICLO 2011	Quiz 1	Quiz 2
St 1. NANCY AGUILERA SEGURA	62	60
St 2. JOSUÉ ANGULO UREÑA	53	60
St 3. CESAR BLANCO CASTRO	57	60
St 4. LEIDY GAMBOA MENDEZ	59	63
St 5. KARLA MONGE ROMERO	68	100
St 6. CARMEN MORA VEGA	66	75
St 7. LUIS PICADO VALVERDE	68	75
St 8. PAMELA ROMERO VARGAS	68	93
St 9. WENDY SANDI DELGADO	67	100
St 10. GEREMY SOLANO VEGA	76	97
St 11. JONATHAN TORRES ARGUEDAS	63	65

Artifact: Document provided by the Registrar's Office



Profesora
Lenna Barrantes Elizondo

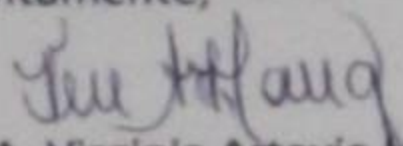
Estimado señora:

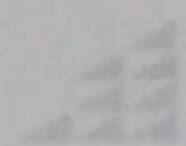
De acuerdo a su solicitud le desgloso la siguiente información:

Total de estudiantes matriculados en el año 2011 a nivel general de todas las carreras en Pérez Zeledón: 790 estudiantes.

- Inscritos en el 2011
Enseñanza del Ingles 227 Diplomado en Ingles 345
- Inscritos en el 2010
Enseñanza del Ingles 157 Diplomado en Ingles 251
- Inscritos en el 2009
Enseñanza del Ingles 160 Diplomado en Ingles 273
- Inscritos en el 2008
Enseñanza del Ingles _____ Diplomado en Ingles _____

Atentamente,


MBA. Virginia Artavia Haug
Coordinadora Unidad Registro SRB.



Artifact: Associate's Program in English brochure

UNA UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
XXX ANIVERSARIO

UNA
Diplomado en
INGLÉS

El mundo de la globalización
exige profesionales en
diversas disciplinas con dominio
de idioma inglés y con
habilidades para el comercio
internacional.

FORMA PROFESIONAL
El egresado del Diplomado en Inglés tendrá:
Características:
Las aptitudes lingüísticas, lingüísticas y gramaticales del inglés.
Las aptitudes comunicativas, orientadas a la negociación.
Las aptitudes técnicas de negocios que le permitan desenvolverse eficientemente tanto en forma oral como en forma escrita.
Destrezas:
Utilizar las herramientas lingüísticas para el desarrollo de negocios.
Aplicar las competencias de la lengua inglesa con otros idiomas.
Escribir documentos de manera clara y precisa en diferentes situaciones de la vida real.
Interpretar documentos de forma escrita en forma oral y viceversa en situaciones de la vida real.
Utilizar sus conocimientos sobre reglas culturales para la comunicación intercultural en situaciones de negocios.
Comprender, interpretar, analizar, evaluar y aplicar técnicas de negociación intercultural en situaciones de negocios.

REQUISITOS DE INGRESO
Los requisitos mínimos para ingresar al Diplomado en Inglés son los siguientes:
1. Puntaje de admisión a la Universidad Nacional.
2. Admisión a la carrera.
REQUISITOS DE OBTENCIÓN
El estudiante deberá haber cursado y aprobado todas las materias del Plan de Estudios propuesto de cada nivel.
MODALIDAD DE ESTUDIOS
Operativo en inglés.
VALUACIÓN DE LA CARRERA
Acreditada

Plan de Estudios

I Nivel
I Ciclo

Código	Nombre de la materia	Créditos	Prerequisito
INGE01	Inglés I (Gramática)	03	01
INGE02	Inglés II (Gramática)	03	02
INGE03	Inglés III (Gramática)	03	03
INGE04	Inglés IV (Gramática)	03	04

I Nivel
II Ciclo

Código	Nombre de la materia	Créditos	Prerequisito
INGE05	Inglés V (Gramática)	03	05
INGE06	Inglés VI (Gramática)	03	06
INGE07	Inglés VII (Gramática)	03	07

II Nivel
II Ciclo

Código	Nombre de la materia	Créditos	Prerequisito
INGE08	Inglés VIII (Gramática)	03	08
INGE09	Inglés IX (Gramática)	03	09
INGE10	Inglés X (Gramática)	03	10

II Nivel
IV Ciclo

Código	Nombre de la materia	Créditos	Prerequisito
INGE11	Inglés XI (Gramática)	03	11
INGE12	Inglés XII (Gramática)	03	12
INGE13	Inglés XIII (Gramática)	03	13

Artifact: CAN-DO-TABLE (TOEIC TEST)

TOEIC® Listening and Reading Scores Descriptors
and European CEFR levels

TOTAL minimum TOEIC® scores (10 to 990 pts)	Europeans CEFR levels	CEFR General Description
945 pts	Proficient user - C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
785 pts	Independent user B2 - Vantage	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
550 pts	Independent user B1 - Threshold	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
225 pts	Basic user - A2 Waystage	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
120 pts	Basic user - A1 Breakthrough	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

* CEFR: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages outlines an ascending series of common reference levels for describing learner proficiency. This CEFR describes both knowledge and skills in positive "can do" statements at six levels of proficiency for different language skills from A1 level (Basic User - Breakthrough) to C2 level (Proficient User - Mastery). The benchmarking study of the TOEIC® Listening and Reading scores to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) was conducted by Tannenbaum, R.J., & Wylie, E.C-2006. The results of the standard setting are recommended minimum score requirements, or cut scores. The mapping of TOEIC® scores to each CEFR level in this particular study is presented as guidelines for minimum thresholds for each level. ETS does not recommend using the minimum cut scores strictly.



SIDUNA



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