



# UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

## División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades

*Teaching Transition from Objectives to Competences:  
The Application of a New Methodology  
"Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal"*

**TRABAJO MONOGRÁFICO**  
En la modalidad de Memoria de Experiencia  
Profesional en Docencia

**PARA OBTENER EL GRADO DE**  
Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa

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Chetumal, Quintana Roo, México, 2012.



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## División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades

Trabajo monográfico en la modalidad de memoria de experiencia profesional en docencia y aprobado como requisito para obtener el grado de:

### LICENCIADA EN LENGUA INGLESA

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## AC K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

First and above all, I praise **God**, the almighty for providing me this opportunity and granting me the capability to proceed successfully.

This monograph appears in its current form due to the assistance and guidance of several people. I would therefore like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them.

First, I would like to thank the director and supervisor of this monograph, **Mtra. Deon Victoria Heffington**, for her valuable guidance, time and advice that helped me finish this project.

I would like to acknowledge the advice and guidance of **Dra. Caridad Macola Rojo**, who gave me excellent suggestions when elaborating this project and helped me with the revision of this work,

Thanks to **Mtro. Jose Luis Borges Ucan**, who helped me revise this work and gave me wonderful suggestions to do it well.

And last but not least I would like to thank **Dr. Alfredo Marin Marin**, who always encouraged me to be a teacher and invited me to obtain my degree.

In my daily work, I have been blessed with a friendly and cheerful group of fellow students. Thanks to all of you who helped me be what I am now, a teacher.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I want to dedicate this Project to the people who inspire my life:*

**To my husband Wilbert**, I want to express my gratitude and deepest appreciation...you have always supported and encouraged me. Thank you for your patience and unconditional love.

**To my adorable babies, Fernanda, Emiliano and Emmanuel.** Thank you you are mom and dad's motivation in life.

**To my mother, Guadalupe Franco** I warmly thank and appreciate your dedication and support, thank you for being there when I most need you.

**To my lovely sister Nancy Euán and her husband José Ontiveros**, you were my support when I first started my career. **Of course, to my niece Joselin**, you know I love you.

**Thank you so much!**

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## INTRODUCTION

The present monograph provides the reader an overview of my teaching experience at Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal, in the Primary Section. One of the main reasons that motivated me to write about my experience is due to the recent transition of teaching by objectives to teaching by competences. Additionally, my tutor encouraged me to write about this topic since I have been in the practice of teaching English as a foreign language for about ten years in the school previously mentioned. From my point of view, teaching has its highs and lows; personally, I have experienced many great moments as an EFL teacher, but also moments in which I have questioned teaching as a career. I have found not only a living, but I have also found my vocation in life; helping children discover their skills, talents and giving them the tools they need to succeed is something that fills my soul with satisfaction.

Recently, the school I work for changed its programs and curriculum. Therefore, I started learning about competences in a course where I was introduced to new terms, new ways of planning, different ways of evaluating and also new books based on competences. The transition, from my perspective, was rather difficult; everything needed to be changed, not only on paper, but in my whole conception of how students, as learners of a foreign language, are now in control of their own learning process, and how teachers perceive their own role as teachers. Students need to be competent to deal with the changes in our world, but as a

teacher, I have to be competent too in order to be able to help children learn and interact competitively in this changing world.

In this monographic work, I will include terms and concepts related to competences in education, teaching by competences, my experience in teaching and working with a program based on competences in elementary level, as well as an account of my teaching experience.

I have had many great moments in my practice, but one of the best teaching experiences was when I had the opportunity of working with second grade students in learning centers<sup>1</sup>. The least proficient students were able to construct knowledge from a literal level to a critical thinking level in an amusing way, such as follows: the classroom was arranged in four scenarios called learning centers; in the first center they had to arrange some sentences so as to form a story using clue words such as *first, then, next, etc.*

In the next center, students had to arrange the pictures according to the stages in the life cycle of a butterfly, and write short sentences regarding this process; for example, “First, the butterfly is an egg.” Next, the butterfly is caterpillar.”, and so on.

In the third center, students needed to choose one activity they ordinarily do and write the process using connective words. In the fourth center, the kids drew the steps in the process of the third center. When working in the third center, some children started to mention silly things and laugh about their occurrences, for

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<sup>1</sup> Learning centers are a form of collaborative work in which the students assume different roles and move in an arranged classroom from center to center to achieve determined tasks.



instance “how to tie your shoe laces”, “how to brush your teeth”, or “how to eat a chocolate bar”. I let them write about these things freely. All of a sudden, one of the students raised his hand and said “Miss, I understand, all the things we do have an order, even ordinary things we do, such as my homework, requires following a process.”

I was very happy to see that through this activity, students were able to learn that everything has an order, even nature does. They started writing short simple sentences of the things they do, everybody wanted to participate, and they felt confident sharing their sentences. Through this type of activities, I learned that teaching by competences fulfills all students’ motivation, needs, expectations, skills and intelligences that may lead students to successfully meet their achievements.

Learning and teaching based on competences have many advantages: students become aware of the goals they can achieve, as well as the strengths they have. Through the effective feedback the teacher gives them, students can understand the aspects they need to improve. One very important point is that teachers define the expectations there are towards the tasks they are given. The immediate benefit of this practice is that the standards of their performance improve enormously.

In this monograph, I will expose some of the problems I faced when changing programs and methodology from objectives to competences, how I observed my students’ changes in learning, as well as my way of teaching through this methodology.

This monograph will provide the reader with the following benefits:

- An analysis of what the implementation of a new program involves.
- The process of how to change someone's teaching methods and styles for a more learner-centered approach.
- An insight into current tendencies in teaching pedagogy.

Additionally, this monographic work will be of great benefit for:

- People who have been teaching English and are skeptical of implementing or trying new methodologies or programs in their teaching practice.
- People who want to know about an educator's experience in teaching by competences.
- New students of the English language major who do not have any experience in teaching EFL by competences.

By means of this work, it is my desire to let readers know that changing their teaching styles or teaching methods for one by competences would not diminish their performance. Instead, they will gain new opportunities to help students learn in ways that allow them to satisfy their students' real needs in this changing world and not in static ways. Using competences in teaching English as a foreign language provides both students and the teacher the opportunity to be competent.

The main objective of this monograph is to describe my teaching experience in order to share how I was motivated, as well as the way I introduced the methodology by competences in a private elementary school. I will also present the

impact this methodology by competences brought to my teaching, and the attitude I had while facing these changes in my career.

This document is structured in four main chapters:

**In chapter1**, I will present a brief contextual framework which provides a description of Instituto Cumbres, its foundation, main goals, English teaching methodology and programs.

**In chapter 2**, I will include the Theoretical Framework to support teaching by competences, its concepts, and how this methodology helps EFL students and teachers.

**In chapter3**, I will share a section that narrates my experience as an EFL teacher at Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal, and explain the changes I have undergone in my teaching practice in order to work with a program based on competences in elementary level, as well as my teaching experience in working by competences.

**In chapter 4**, I will present conclusions and suggestions to advise the reader about new methodologies and the pedagogical implications that teaching by competences may have.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

"I cannot teach anybody anything; I can only make them think."

-- Socrates

#### 1.1 Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal

This school is part of an international network of private schools in 18 countries that implement the model of Integral Formation developed by the Legionaries of Christ and the members of the Movement Regnum Christi, united by the motto *Semper Altius*. It offers an integral education in four levels, which are preschool, elementary, secondary and high school (Bachillerato Anahuac). Instituto Cumbres is the only school of its kind in Chetumal, but this model of education is implemented throughout twenty seven states in Mexico, having three schools in the state of Quintana Roo.

Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal is a private school, located in Chetumal, Q.R., Mexico. This school was founded on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1980 by Monsignor Jorge Bernal Vargas L.C., The Legionaries of Christ, together with some parents concerned about the education of their children; they wanted to have a school that allowed their children to enter the best universities in the country and of course give them an integral education. It first started in a church which is now the Cathedral "Sagrado Corazon de Jesus". A short time after its foundation, the number of students grew in the school, and therefore required its own building. The Legionaries built the school which is now known as Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal

in Colonia Jardines, Antonio Plaza Street No. 250. The first Principal of Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal was the priest Hector Galvan L.C. The current principal is Lic. Adolfo Rivera Hinojosa.

Nowadays, this school has around 336 students in the kindergarten level, 146 in the elementary level, 88 in the secondary level and 102 in the high school level. It also has around 50 teachers, of which 15 teach subjects in English.

## **1.2 Mission and Vision**

Instituto Cumbres seeks to form Christian leaders educated with excellence and the most genuine human and Christian values, having patriotic values of their country, with a devoted attitude towards watching and caring for the most needed.

Its motto is “Semper Altius”, words that in Latin mean “always higher”; these words express the ambition of the school in seeking that their students develop their skills and capabilities at the maximum level.

Another of the goals of this school is to reinforce students’ positive attitude and charisma by providing them with an excellent education and giving them the tools they need to learn to learn. When children from Instituto Cumbres finish the last level of education offered, which is high school, it is easy for them to apply for admission to a good university and compete among students who come from the most prestigious schools in Mexico and abroad.

### **1.3 Teaching Methodology at Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal**

In response to the present needs of education and the demanding and competitive world, the schools of the international network with the model of Integral Formation developed by the Legionaries of Christ, have considered the approach of competences as a tool and a compatible vision to its pedagogy since it covers all the strands of the student as an individual. Instituto Cumbres is always ahead of the newest teaching methodologies and approaches in order to provide its students with the best education. Learning a foreign language is not the exception.

The model of Instituto Cumbres is centered on the children's interests and in their cognitive, affective and psychomotor processes. It seeks for students to find a bigger motivation towards learning and a permanent development of their competences as a challenge and an adventure for their whole life.

The main goal of the school's curriculum is to develop and encourage fluent readers, articulate writers and speakers, and discern listeners and viewers. Therefore, teachers are faced with the challenge of choosing and using effective academic language instruction methodologies for students across the curriculum which is built on three fundamental pillars:

1. Activate prior knowledge
2. New content
3. Assessment

Instituto Cumbres seeks that its students are formed in various competences; for instance, competences for human formation (based on values), competences for spiritual formation (based on religion), among others.

Academically speaking, the model of this school is based mainly on competences for intellectual development. Critical thinking is the disciplined intellectually process that an expert does: conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information coming from the observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to think and to act.

It is based on universal and intellectual values that extend the division of the content of the subjects: clarity, exactitude, precision, consistency, relevance, reasonable evidence, good reasons, depth, amplitude, and justice.

Critical thinking immerses to certain ways of thought, such as: scientific, mathematical, historical, anthropological, economic, moral, and philosophical. It may be considered as the combination of two components:

- a) A set of abilities to process and to generate information and opinions.
  
- b) A habit, based on an intellectual commitment, to use those abilities to guide conduct.
  - Critical thinking competences at a literal level
  - Critical thinking competences at an inferential level
  - Critical thinking competences at a critical level

Instituto Cumbres claims that the competences of critical thinking and their development mark the difference between educational systems that are considered vanguard and those that are not.

Teachers at Instituto Cumbres receive courses and monthly academic workshops where they are exposed to topics of interest related to their teaching. In addition, they receive weekly feedback to improve their teaching.

One of the priorities of the International Center for Integral Formation (ICIF) is to guarantee that the programs allow students to have the tools to face the intellectual challenges of the present and the future, besides a preparation that will lead them to understand and apply the information this model provides. That information will enable them to apply it in their daily life. Also, the ICIF makes sure that with the educational model, students are able to use the information it offers them, to solve and analyze problems, to perform well on the tests and to obtain conclusions, and at the same time to defend and justify their intellectual and personal values, to offer and criticize arguments, and to appreciate the point of view of the others.

Before the methodology by competences was launched, the teachers took an online course which provided them with theory and practice regarding the new methodology. They were graded and the results from the course were added to their files.

Nevertheless, some teachers showed resistance to work under this paradigm. At the beginning of the process of implementation, teachers complained



that it took a lot of time to plan the way they were asked to; however, with time, they have recognized that planning transversally helps them cover more topics in less time and that children are able to work more confidentially and efficiently. Unfortunately there are still some teachers who refuse to move with the times and embrace 21st century teaching skills. I believe this could be perhaps because they are afraid of changing or just plain laziness. With every new generation of students, the teacher must be updated and ready for the challenge. For teachers, maybe one or two years are not a long time, but in the development of children, the time is massive.

Planning by competences takes a lot of work, but it also gives a lot of satisfaction for both teachers and students. Planning a good transversal didactic sequence is crucial to the success of the class, and many teachers tend to skip this part. A good lesson plan includes the competence, performance goals, performance indicators, concepts, procedures and attitudes, the didactic sequence with its components, as well as the evaluation, and differentiated instruction.

The professors have a teachers' book, a lot of extra materials, audio materials, online sources (the books have also an online version), assessment from the academic coordination, and also assessment and supervision from the ICIF.

#### **1.4 English at Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal**

Instituto Cumbres considers learning English as a foreign language necessary to face this changing globalized world. To learn it successfully, it is necessary for students to start learning it at early stages. Therefore, students are given the tools they need to learn English in the kindergarten level, which is part monolingual (only in English), and in the last year, K-3, (third grade of kindergarten), it becomes bilingual. Students continue the bilingual program in the elementary level, where besides learning English as a foreign language, they also study science in the foreign language. In the secondary level, students continue with the bilingual program, and other subjects in English are added, for instance: Geography, History, Chemistry, and Literature.

This report tells about the elementary level of this school, which conceives the student as a protagonist of his/her education and learning, an incessant interrogator of the enigmas of life, a peculiar discoverer of the truth, an open-minded and open-hearted individual subjected to the guide of the teacher, a person open to coexistence, and a soul arranged lovingly to know and to love God. All this accumulation of abilities and competences has the intention to strengthen each of the students in their capacity of facing the challenges of a world which is becoming more globalized every day. It encourages students to be critical, analytical and self-sufficient, but mainly conscious of their reality and its opportunities like responsible Christian leaders, applying universal principles and values.

The English program reinforces learning strategies that not only integrate the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, but also extends to the development of abilities that relate different matters from the curriculum. Not only the communicative language is used, but the academic language, by means of projects, stories, plays, as well as participation in debates, oratory and declamation, national contests and standardized examinations.

There are various activities that enhance the use of the foreign language; for example, spelling contests, demonstrative classes, poetry contests, institutional projects, among others, most of them with the presence of parents.

The elementary school has six grades, ranging from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Since the learning of the foreign language starts from preschool, it is not difficult for elementary teachers to teach first graders. Children come to this level with a basic knowledge of the language. What is difficult is when a child comes to upper primary (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades) and he/she has not received any instruction in English; at these levels, students often have a good understanding and use of the foreign language. English is taught from Monday to Friday; students take English classes half of the day. Teachers have 14 weekly hours of English and 2 weekly hours of science.

The teachers' English books were specifically designed to respond to the needs of the school's program. They are arranged into five modules. Each module consists of literature, reading skills, phonics and spelling skills, language arts and learning strategies, depending on the level. The English program also includes

Science as a subject to be taught in the foreign language; it includes Biology, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Technology and Social Science. The level of science terms and concepts increases according to the level and grade taught. Science is one of the subjects students enjoy the most. They love doing experiments, which also require research and the guide of the scientific method.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“Competence is the ability and skill to do what is needed.”

(Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1995:274)

#### 2.1 Defining a Competence

In recent years, the acquisition of competences has become a central issue in all levels of education. Anderson (1992) distinguishes between abilities and competences. Abilities represent the (operational) outcomes of psychometric tests, while competences represent the underlying cognitive functioning. On the other hand, Gronlund (1981), while elaborating on competence based on a test, uses the word competences as a synonym for operational skills (writing skills, computational skills, reading skills, etc.). Competences are not assumed fixed structures, but individual abilities that can be improved by training.

Chomsky (1965) coined the term *competence* to account for the unconscious knowledge speakers have of their language. This unconscious knowledge refers to what someone *knows* about the language, the mental representation of the language (Fromkin and Rodman, 1981). Langford and Hunting (1994) used Chomsky’s definitions of competence and performance in deductive and inductive reasoning. In contrast with Chomsky, they conclude that competences, that is, the basic cognitive structures, can be acquired by learning processes. In other words,

the author says that you are competent in your own language although the process of acquiring it is unconscious.

According to Mrowicki (1986) competences consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity. These activities may be related to any domain of life, though being typically linked to the field of work and to social survival in a new environment. The author not only uses all of the above attributes for competences, but also that the individual should be competent in his environment, in other words in the real world.

Pimienta (2010) defines being competent as: *“Being able to use knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to solve different tasks presented daily in a specific context...”*. In other words, Competence-Based Education is an authentic and integrated experience where students and teachers participate in an active way. Students use the acquired knowledge in different contexts. This is not new in the English class. Language learning has always been concerned about expressing ideas, feelings, and opinions in an oral and in a written way. Being original and creative is basic.

Students become aware of the goals they can achieve as well as the strengths they have. Through the effective feedback the teacher gives them, students can understand the aspects they need to improve. One very important point is that teachers define the expectations there are towards the tasks that are

given. The immediate benefit of this practice is that the standards of their performance improve enormously.

I will now consider what differences we can find between Competence-Based and Content-Based Education.

Pimienta (2010) makes a comparison between competence-based education and content-based education:

*Competence-Based Education:*

- It is student-centered. The process is focused on what students are able to do.
- It focuses on the abilities the students are able to develop.
- It has a very well planned framework made by generic, disciplinary and professional competences.
- The evaluation is well defined at the beginning of the process, along with the selection of the competences. It is based on the whole development process.
- The students are part of the process. They get the tools to become autonomous learners.
- It fosters a commitment to have a better performance.
- It evaluates the students, teachers and institutions.
- It is mainly focused on achievements and continuous improvement.
- It gives students the chance to improve.
- It is a report of performance.
- It is a commitment towards the society that will foster students when they finish school.

*Content- Based Education:*

- It is teacher-centered. The teacher talking time predominates. Students are seen as recipients of the information.
- It focuses on the content and on how well students can answer controlled tasks.

- It is mainly formed by language skills and language systems. Grammar tends to be the center of the program.
- The evaluation is thought at the end of the teaching process.
- It is based on the teacher's and institution's criteria.
- It fosters a passive attitude towards the learning process.
- It is mainly evaluating the students.
- It is mainly focused on mistakes and weaknesses.
- It is a record of grades (numbers).
- It is a commitment towards the institution.

Figure 1.1 Competence-Based Education vs. Content- Based Education (Pimienta,2010).

The previous definitions of competencies clearly show that all of them have derived from Chomsky's theory of language. All of the above authors mentioned some common words for instance: skills, abilities, knowledge, and performance. In my opinion, it is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competence that may draw on an individual's knowledge of language, practical skills, and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating.

The term competence is exposed in different perspectives, but Chomsky (1965) talks about communicative competences in language as the abilities the individual uses to learn and acquire language. Pimienta (2010) is a modern author who proposed a more centered education approach to competences; he distinguishes between competence-based education and content-based education.



## 2.2 Language Competence

Chomsky (1965) coined the term *competence* to account for the unconscious knowledge speakers have of their language. This unconscious knowledge refers to what someone *knows* about the language, the mental representation of the language (Fromkin and Rodman, 1981). Competence, however, has been subdivided into two broad areas, namely, linguistic competence and communicative competence.

### 2.2.1 Linguistic Competence

O'Grady, Dobrovolsky and Aronoff (1993) define linguistic competence as the ability speakers have *"to produce and understand an unlimited number of sentences, including many that are novel or unfamiliar"*. Normally, language users speak a language without consciously knowing about the rules governing it, i.e. the grammar behind it. For this reason, some authors refer to *linguistic competence* as *grammatical competence*. This knowledge has five main components: phonological, syntactic, semantic, lexical and morphological.

*a) Phonological competence* refers to the knowledge speakers have of the sounds and possible sound combinations of a language. This implies that speakers of a language can recognize the words of their language (or those who might be) by simple listening to them, i.e. a speaker of English can determine whether a word might belong to English or to another language only by listening to it.

*b) Syntactic competence* refers to the knowledge the speakers have about the possible syntactic combinations of their language. Usually, speakers know most (if

not all) of the possible combinations of their native language. e.g. a speaker of English knows that "the dog the boy bit" is not grammatically correct.

c) *Semantic competence* refers to the knowledge speakers have of the meanings of words in their languages. Speakers know, for instance, the relationship between the word "dog" and the reality represented by this word, although there is apparently no natural connection between the two. That is why in French the same reality is represented with the word "*chien*" and in Spanish "*perro*".

d) *Lexical competence* refers to the knowledge speakers have of an extensive amount of words in their language. It also refers to the ability that speakers have to use these words according to the appropriate context. For instance, in the paradigm of nouns, speakers can choose from a quite extensive variety of nouns when building a sentence; however, the speakers know that in a sentence such as "*The \_\_\_\_\_ died in that car-accident.*" only biological beings could be placed in that position because only biological things "*die*"; however, inanimate or non-existing nouns could fill the blank for representing abstract ideas, or other different purposes such as irony and humor (this is usually referred to as a pragmatic meta-knowledge).

e) *Morphological competence* refers to the knowledge speakers have of the formation of words in their language, or better said, word structure. Usually, speakers know that, in general, to create a plural noun they need to add an "s" at the end of the word. For instance, the word "*table*" can be pluralized into "*tables*". In this case, in linguistics, it is said that the word is composed by two morphemes – considered to be the minimal meaningful units in a language- which are "*table-s*".

Speakers of languages know about word-formation in their languages. They create words, for fun or fashion, that "*sound*" like their languages, but that maybe they do not "*officially*" constitute a part of their lexicon.

### **2.2.2 Communicative Competence**

Communicative competence is a broad term that involves not only the structural features of language, but also its social, pragmatic and contextual characteristics. Therefore, it is necessary to understand communicative competence as the sum of a series of competences.

a) *Grammatical competence* refers to the ability to speakers have to use the different functioning rules of the system of their language. This competence, actually, is what we referred previously as linguistic competence.

b) *Sociolinguistic competence* refers to the ability speakers have to produce sentences according to the communicative situation. Speakers (usually) know when, where and whom to say things to.

c) *Discursive competence* refers to the ability speakers have to be able to use the different types of discourse. Usually, language users know what is being referred to in different contexts, i.e. they discern between new and old information, and are able to determine the discourse topics. For instance, speakers know when a "*he*" refers to "*John*" or to "*the child*" according to the text context in the sentence: "*John went to the park.*", and "*He found a child who was sick.*" and "*The young boy was crying because he didn't know where his mother was.*"

d) *Strategic competence* refers to the knowledge speakers have to maintain communication. Therefore, this competence accounts for the strategies language users have to be understood, and to understand others. Gestures, expressions, mimics and intonation are among others some of the most strategies used.

### **2.3 Savignon's Communicative Competence**

Savignon (1997) states that a language competence depends on the reasons for developing it. Therefore, one must ask themselves the following questions: Are you mainly interested in speaking proficiency, foreign language literacy, cross-cultural awareness, or knowledge about language? Is language ability an end to itself, or a means to another end, such as pursuing graduate studies, studying abroad, preparing for field work or professional practice? There are many ways to define language ability and to learn and teach languages.

One of the best known models of language ability is known as "*Communicative Competence*". This model was developed to account for the kinds of knowledge people need in order to use language in meaningful interaction. The term was originally coined by an anthropologist by the name of Hyme (1990) as a means of describing the knowledge language users need in addition to the grammatical forms of the language. The term was then adopted by the language teaching community after it had been developed into a model for that field Canale & Swain (1980), and Savignon (1997). In the version commonly used by language teachers, the model includes four components:

## **1) Grammatical Competence**

It is the ability to use the forms of the language (sounds, words, and sentence structure). Grammatical competence is the primary focus of study in most academic language courses. Most scholars agree that there is some kind of fundamental difference between being able to use the forms of the language and being able to talk about the forms of the language: the relationship between those two kinds of knowledge is a controversial topic.

## **2) Discourse Competence**

According to Scollon & Scollon (1995), it's the ability to understand and create forms of the language that are longer than sentences, such as stories, conversations, or business letters. Discourse competence includes understanding how particular instances of language use are internally constructed.

## **3) Sociolinguistic Competence**

According to Gee (1990), it is the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts. Sociolinguistic competence overlaps significantly with discourse competence because it has to do with expressing, interpreting and negotiating meaning according to culturally-derived norms and expectations. Sociolinguistic competence is most obvious to us when the conventions governing language use are somehow violated; for example, when a child innocently uses a "*bad*" word or when the expectations present in one culture are different from another.

It is our sociolinguistic competence that allows us to be polite according to the situation we are in and to be able to infer the intentions of others. In our

everyday life, we vary the kind of language we use according to levels of formality and familiarity. We express solidarity in groups to which we belong or wish to belong to; for example, in classroom chat with other students, or at a party. In situations where we may eventually have solidarity with the others present, but do not yet know them well, we express deference, for example at an international meeting of scholars in the same field. In situations where there is an obvious status difference between participants, we are careful to express the right amount of respect.

#### **4) Strategic Competence**

It's the ability to compensate for lack of ability in any of the other areas. Savignon (1997) and Chomsky (1965) express their definitions of being competent in language. While Chomsky talks about the abilities an individual has of his mother tongue, Savignon (1997) claims that the same competences apply for learners of a different language.

Chomsky (1965) presented the ideal native speaker and proposed the term communicative competence to represent the use of language in social context, the observance of sociolinguistic norms of appropriacy.

Knowing both conceptions may help EFL teachers to improve their understanding of the nature of common mistakes when learning a foreign language; and also the extent to which an EFL student should target to correct these mistakes.

## **2.4 Implications of an Instructional Design by Competences**

### **2.4.1 Lesson Planning by Competences: Didactic Sequence**

The didactic sequences are, simply, an articulated set of activities of learning and evaluation that, with the mediation of a teacher, help students move towards certain educational goals, considering a series of resources. Actually, this implies substantial improvements in the processes of formation of the students, since the education becomes less fragmented and it focuses in goals.

In the model of competences, the didactic sequences are an excellent guide to measure the processes of learning in the framework of the learning or reinforcement of competences; like pertinent didactic situations, activities and formative evaluation (oriented to evaluate the process systematically). In this way, a methodological line is followed and allows the teachers that already work with this methodology a better adaptation to the work by competences in the classroom.

Nevertheless, from the competences the didactic sequences no longer set out that the students learn in certain contents, but develop competences for life, so the appropriation of the contents in the diverse subjects becomes necessary. Thus, there is an important challenge for teachers: how to change the goal of the traditional educational paradigm to focus on the processes of formation and learning through competences.

### **2.4.2 Assessment and Evaluation**

Spandel & Stiggins (1990), state that assessment is the act of gathering information on a daily basis in order to understand individual students' learning and needs. Therefore, evaluation is the culminating act of interpreting the information gathered for the purpose of making decisions or judgments about students' learning and needs, often at reporting time.

Assessment and evaluation are integral components of the teaching-learning cycle. The *main* purposes are to guide and improve learning and instruction. Effectively planned assessment and evaluation can promote learning, build confidence, and develop students' understanding of themselves as learners.

Assessment data assists the teacher in planning and adapting for further instruction. As well, teachers can enhance students' understanding of their own progress by involving them in gathering their own data, and by sharing teacher-gathered data with them. Such participation makes it possible for students to identify personal learning goals.

Doff (1988), mentions that evaluation refers to procedures for gathering data on the dynamics, effectiveness, acceptability, and efficiency of a language program for the purposes of decision making. Basically, evaluation addresses whether the goals and objectives of a language program are being attained, that is, whether the program is effective.



Evaluation is concerned with how teachers, learners, and materials interact in classrooms, and how teachers and learners perceive the program's goals, and learning experiences.

### **2.4.3 Characteristics of a Competent Teacher**

According to Darling-Hammond (2006), a person's competences may be defined in terms of one's knowledge, skills and behaviors. To understand the competences required of a teacher, we must first define the job of a teacher.

The task of a teacher is closely tied to the nature of the classroom. Today's classrooms call for teachers to *"prepare virtually all students for higher order thinking and performance skills once reserved to only a few"* (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 300).

Besides knowledge and skills, a competent teacher must have certain features that distinguish his nature:

#### **Practice**

A competent teacher seizes every opportunity to encourage learning, believing that all students can learn, and learning isn't limited to the classroom. To this end, the teacher takes every opportunity to improve on his or her own professional practice, in order to provide quality learning.

## **Leadership and management**

A competent teacher is a leader who wins the hearts and minds of the students. Such a teacher sees the value in developing and working with others, including parents and colleagues, and actively seeks out opportunities for professional collaboration within and beyond the school.

## **Personal effectiveness**

A good teacher understands the importance of developing oneself before he or she is able to provide support for others. As a professional, this teacher maintains high standards of personal and professional integrity when carrying out all duties and responsibilities.

Researchers and practitioners are becoming increasingly aware that the character of the 21st century classroom - and thus the demands on both students and teachers - is undergoing significant change.

Effective teaching is one of the central purposes of educational practice and research in improving learning. But behind the mastery of learning stands the mastery of teaching. Understanding teaching has presented a persistent and formidable challenge to those who have sought to improve the quality of teaching and learning over the years. Teachers are important and make a difference. The quality of teaching is a crucial factor in promoting effective learning in schools.

Cosbie (1996) says *what happens in the classroom determines the quality of a school*. In other words, the teacher's role goes well beyond information giving.

The idea that “*to learn effectively we have to work things through for ourselves*” does not mean that the teacher’s role becomes a minor or peripheral one, where she/he withdraws into the background, or acts only as a manager of learning resources

Teachers come in all assorted sizes, shapes, weight and colors. However, they share one common creed: To help each child reach the highest possible degree of personal development. I personally believe that teachers are a composite. As Carelton (1992) once stated: *The teacher must have the energy of a harnessed volcano, the memory of an elephant, the understanding of a psychiatrist, the wisdom of Solomon, the tenacity of a spider, the patience of a turtle trying to cross the highway in rush-hour traffic, the decisiveness of a general, the diplomacy of an ambassador, the financial acumen of a stocks and bonds wizard, and finally to always remember that teachers teach not by words but mostly by precept and example.*

In addition to being all of the above, teachers must always remember that they are the eyes and ears of society and that whatever they do; the difference between official hours and off hours is relative. They have to demonstrate not only professional competencies and skills, but also social responsibilities as mirrors of society.

## CHAPTER 3

### MEMORY REPORT

“Memory is the mother of all wisdom.”

Aeschylus (BC 525-BC 456), Greek dramatist

My experience as an EFL teacher started in the year 2000; I was still a student at the Universidad de Quintana Roo when I was invited to work at Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal. I started teaching English as a foreign language to 1<sup>st</sup> graders. I had 22 girls in the 1<sup>st</sup> A and 20 boys in the 1<sup>st</sup> B. One of the problems I faced was that it was the first time I taught English to children, they looked at me as if I were their mother; besides this, I hadn't had the experience of being a mom yet. Moreover, parents had big expectations, they wanted their children to be proficient in the language and they demanded it from me.

I have been teaching English in this school for about eleven years and now I can proudly say that thanks to the opportunity I was given, I have taught all levels in the primary section, all levels in the secondary, and high school. These eleven years of practice have given me a lot of satisfaction and also some disappointments. Each year was the building block of my teaching experience.

In this chapter, I will share my memory; a section that relates my experience as an EFL teacher at Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal, the students and teachers of Instituto Cumbres, and explains the changes I have undergone in my teaching in

order to work with a program based on competences in elementary level, as well as anecdotes of my teaching experience before and after teaching by competences.

### **3.1 Teachers and Students**

For teachers at Instituto Cumbres, the school year begins exactly when the last one ends. At the end of each school year, after the graduation ceremony, teachers are informed of the plans the coordination has for them, expectations, challenges, improvements and also the grade each one will teach the following school year. During this short time, about two weeks, teachers work on the annual program, they plan ahead the whole school year. I arrived at this time; I was introduced to the methodology which had a lot of Bloom's taxonomy. I remember Bloom's theory was like the bible, you had to have your Bloom's taxonomy chart to check all of the steps in your weekly plan and exams.

The English teachers were all women in the primary section; each of them had the reputation of being proficient in the target language. All in all, there were four English teachers in the primary, three were Mexican and only one was foreign. They were very kind and friendly with me, and advised me on what to do and what not to do. I also noticed there were computers available, but none of the teachers used them. They filled in their lesson plans formats by hand. I have to admit they did prepare excellent materials to support their classes, but they refused to use technology as a source for teaching.

At the end of the day and in their free times between classes, teachers get together to talk about each day, to share experiences and teaching tips. I was the

new one, but I was well accepted in the group, my coordinator and co-workers were very reliable people; I soon felt like part of the group and I was willing to learn from them and also help and demonstrate that there were easier ways to do the things we ordinarily do as teachers.

By that time, I had never seen or done a real lesson plan, only the ones we did in the subject *Elaboración de Material Didáctico*, which was taught by a great teacher whom I thank a lot because we dealt with different situations, even discipline problems, in her class. Then, I had to plan my class and also deal with real discipline situations in a real class environment.

My very first teaching experience was really challenging, as I mentioned before it was with first graders. The boys were well behaved, but the girls did not stop talking. However, they were not the real challenge, their mothers were. They complained that I was very young and inexperienced to teach their children. The coordinator called a meeting and presented me; I talked to them and asked for a chance to demonstrate that I was capable to teach, besides the coordinator assured the parents that she trusted me and she took all the responsibility. At that moment, I realized that I had a very big responsibility on my shoulders.

The children's attitude towards English was good in general although there were some kids who admitted hating English. The level of English the book demanded was high, but it was according to the level and students' age. At this time, the primary section followed a program based on the book syllabus, the book was chosen by the Centro de Asesoría Pedagógica (CAP). According to it, the book

covered all the requirements to teach English. Teachers just had to divide the book in the school year, and set dates. Another thing that frightened me was that the lesson plans were done by hand and, in addition, in handwriting. I had to learn this kind of writing quickly. Actually, my students helped me a lot because I looked at their writing and copied from them.

In addition to all these problems, situations and new things, I can say that the group got very good results. At the end of the school year, it is usual to teach a class with the presence of parents; there, they observed their children's achievements and many of them congratulated me and a mom apologized for her discontent at the beginning of the school year.

All I could say was that it was not only me, I had a great backup team which helped and advised me in the moments I needed it. This group was very special for me since they were my first group and experience as an EFL teacher. These students are about to finish the high school level and graduate from Instituto Cumbres de Chetumal; some of them will leave the country to study abroad and others will study in the country. I can proudly say that I helped them build their knowledge and English base; I feel I did my contribution to their academic formation. A funny fact is that now they are taller than me, at the beginning they raised their head to talk to me, now I raise my head to greet them.

### **3.2 The First Change in the Curriculum (2002-2004)**

As I mentioned before, the first time I did an annual lesson plan I had to follow the objectives of the books and set the possible dates according to the school activities and calendar. The primary used to have books from different publishers and authors. We had a spelling book, a big reading book with its workbook which also included grammar, and a science book. The first change occurred in the year 2002, when the Centro de Asesoría Pedagógica (CAP) decided to change the books; we migrated to a different publisher which provided a new set of books, all of them from the same author, and the books recycled contents in the different English subjects. They were based mainly in teaching English through literature.

At first, my colleagues complained about using the new books since it required a lot of work and preparation. Furthermore, we did not have a program to follow; we had to base our classes mainly in the books' syllabus and objectives. We would take the objectives from the book and divided them into an annual planning which included the whole book. My coordinator asked me to design the annual plan format and also the weekly plan format. I made the annual plan, printed it, and it was showed to the other teachers. They were asked to do the same with their books. I gave them the formats in a *word* file; it meant a challenge for them because they were not accustomed to using the computer. We started the way to modernization; we began handing our weekly lesson plans by internet. After a while we started using hard drives. Soon we got used to the books and it did not mean a big deal to teach English using them. These materials lasted for about three years.



Although the books were quite heavy in content, students liked them. The images were vivid and full of color. We had two big reading books, a spelling/phonics book, a grammar workbook and two reading practice books. What I liked about the new program was that the books were reliable and there was no problem in following the sequence.

### **3.3 The Second Change in the Curriculum ( 2004- 2006)**

The second change did not imply a lot of work, the teachers and I were accustomed to planning our classes using the computer and also to teaching using tools such as Power Point presentations. A new era began, it was 2004 when our books changed again. They were the same books in a new edition. Something different was that the annual program was given to us along with the books; we were given the year planned ahead, it was a file that showed us when each topic should be taught; we just had to do a weekly planning. This new set of books clearly established a difference between lower and upper primary. This program was based also in literature, but its building blocks were in phonics and spelling in the lower grades.

By this time, I had acquired some experience in teaching English. Teaching English became my way of life. I learned a lot from the other teachers, but also I created my own style. I implemented a lot of technology in my teaching. The school provided us with a platform; an internet page where we could do a lot of things. It was **Aula 24 horas**; soon, I learned how to take advantage of it, my students could

take online classes in real time, they loved it. The books also had an online page where we downloaded useful material to enrich our classes.

Every week I had to do a lesson plan which included developing the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The plan had to be well designed so each skill was covered within the lessons from the books. Since I taught children, I had to find how to make my classes attractive to them. I used a lot of realia and took advantage of the latest movies; I can say that *Harry Potter* helped me a lot.

Each year I taught a different level, I specifically remember and became very fond of two groups, although it is difficult to say this because each grade is different, the children were different and I have really enjoyed every one of the eleven years I have been teaching. In 2004, I taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I can proudly say that the level of English of the children was impressive. Of course this was not only the result of my work with them, but also all the effort of the teachers who worked with the group before. This group was special, they behaved different, and they demanded a lot from me. They asked for challenging activities.

At this point, I recalled my classes at the UQROO where we were told that when we planned classes, we had to take into account those students who finish early and need to have more challenging activities (fillers and differentiated instruction). Something I liked was the fact that my students talked to me in English inside and outside of the classroom.

The majority of the courses I took at the UQROO helped me a lot to understand the nature of teaching and learning. The classes that I best recall are Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Listening and Speaking in English, Phonology and Phonetics, English Grammar, and although I never thought I would say this, Literature. I know there are many others and I sure learned a lot from them.

The knowledge and skills I learned from the courses above mentioned helped me very much when planning and in my class itself. My performance when teaching was evaluated every day. The coordinator was constantly walking by and taking notes to help the teachers improve their teaching. At the beginning, I was really nervous if someone came to my class to observe, I felt shy and barely wanted to speak, but now I am used to it. And when some else is around, I do my best. The observations the coordination made while observing my classes were really helpful; through them, I had the opportunity to improve my teaching, use the appropriate register, and also helped me to be humble and accept the comments by someone else in favor of my performance as a teacher.

### **3.4 The Big Step: Transition towards Competences (2007)**

By the year 2007, the school entered in the third process of curriculum change. Teachers were asked to take an online course. This course set the basis of our new program, the primary entered the world of competences. The name of the program is SUNRISE PROGRAM (Programa Internacional de Innovación Educativa en Educacion Básica). All the teachers, including myself, took the course;

first, it was the basis or the theoretical framework of working with a competency-based program.

The course had two directions: one for the Spanish teachers and the other for EFL teachers. Here is where the challenge began. We worked separately, each teacher with his/her specialty. We were students again doing and sending homework to the online supervisor. Taking the course cost the school an important sum of money. Therefore, we had to commit ourselves to take it and be responsible for the correct application of the program. Of course, we had the guidance of an advisor who supervised our learning of the new methodology.

When we finished the course, it was time to apply it. The coordination gave us what we called the PRACTICUM (see appendix 6). All the teachers were nervous because it implied a lot of work; it included all the recommendations, strategies to use, core contents, entrance profiles etc. The lesson plan took us a lot of time, we had to use terms such as scaffolding, anchoring, differentiated instruction, indicators etc., not only using them, but understanding what they meant (see appendixes 1&2). Each grade had a different practicum; each practicum consisted of a set of competences according to the grade taught. At the beginning of the course, I had to take into count the entrance profiles to each grade and we also had to take a look at all the competences that teachers had to cover and students had to achieve. By reading the practicum, I learned that all students have the ability to learn, but teachers can make that skill accessible by helping students reflect upon, and monitor their own learning. When students see themselves as able learners, capable of monitoring and controlling their learning, they are more willing to tackle

challenging tasks and take the risks that will improve their learning process. As students move from school into their adult responsibilities at work and in the wider society, knowing how to learn will help them succeed in a changing economy and will enable them to become self-motivated, flexible lifelong learners.

All of the teachers, including myself, were terrified of this new program; we knew that it meant a lot of extra work. We were said that our book was not the guide, but we had to work within it. We had to adapt our book to the practicum needs, and if the information was not in the book, we had to do research and plan the activities we needed to cover the topics the practicum demanded. Spanish and English teachers were in the same situation. The difference between the first programs and the practicum was that the practicum gives us the expectations in terms of how far my students can go, and the indicators are the measure of the level reached in each competence.

The books were also new; we had a set of five books, each one corresponding to a two-month period. It was an integrated book and workbook at the same time, students had to carry only one English book in their bags. Science was in the same book as well as the science workbook. The lessons were transversally designed and the book had the same literature approach as the last version of it.

Each book was a new experience; students learned a different theme that is shared in five or six selections. For instance, in the second book, module 2, of the fifth grade, the theme is "*Doing the right thing*". It deals with values such as

kindness, charity, volunteering, and caring. The selections in this module teach how the characters do the right thing in their stories, how their decisions affected their lives; characters also share their cultures, and customs. Each selection teaches a different reading skill, such as: the author's purpose, fact and opinion, cause and effect, character, setting, plot, etc., as well as reading strategies to develop vocabulary. Grammar is also an important part of each selection, the same as spelling and phonics. Most of the indicators in the practicum are covered in the lessons in the book, but some are not. We as teachers have clear that the book is only a resource and the creativity of the teachers has to fill what is missing.

The practicum also makes a strong emphasis in critical thinking skills and strategic learning skills and how to use them to get the best of students when teaching them the foreign language. Strategic learning provides the student with "*learning tools*" to develop their learning potential (the learning possibilities he possesses) while developing his intelligence potential. It implies the development of abilities, skills, and capabilities to learn and an adequate mental framework to retain and use appropriately what has been learned. In a strict sense, learning to learn involves: the adequate use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, and the use of conceptual models. Every step in the learning process was perfectly designed and planned in the practicum. Each competence was well defined and each performance goal was supported by its learning indicators.

Now it was the teachers who had to be creative and plan each step in their weekly plan according to the model by competences. The weekly plan included a didactic sequence which has to be done in detail taking into count that teaching is

important, but learning is even more important. The sequence should show how the skills, values, attitudes of the student are not only for answering a test or an exercise, but for using them in real life situations, inside and outside the school. It should help the child transfer his knowledge from school to life.

### **3.4.1 Working under the New Model**

The first time I applied this model by competences was with second grade kids. They were challenging in number (32), discipline (they were experts in making their teachers go crazy), and in learning styles (there were kids with different English levels and very competitive). I noticed that I needed to plan activities which allowed students to move and interact since my classroom was mostly visual and kinesthetic. Even though they liked challenges, they needed to be constantly motivated through contests among themselves.

The program demanded the dominium of communicative competences; which honestly were difficult to achieve, but not impossible. In second grade, students are building the blocks of their learning. When working with young learners, in this case 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, it is always a challenge to keep them focused and at the same time motivated and learning. There is always a pressure behind you. It is expected that the process of second language acquisition starts from the essential developing of phonics and spelling skills, reading and writing skills in English.

I needed and I felt committed to provide the children with a different learning experience; in theory I knew what to do, but it was not quite that easy. I decided to make a difference in the classroom decorations. I pasted signs, labels, the learning centers labels; I wanted my kids to truly want to be in the classroom. The seating arrangement had to be different; I arranged them into teams and everyone had to be able to see the front. I hung a rope across the room to hang the students' evidences.

Some of the didactic strategies I took advantage of during this course were games, problem solving, experiments, web search, collaborative work, and learning centers. Teaching involved doing one activity after another; it was tiring and I had very few opportunities to sit. The children's level of English was not high, but not too low; some kids were very good in spelling skills, some in speaking, others had a good level in their reading skills. Since they were different, I had to plan different activities to satisfy my students' different needs.

The didactic strategy that helped me consolidate my teaching and having students doing different tasks at the same time was *learning centers*. Through this strategy I could combine and work transversally different competences and also have students be protagonists of their learning. Through this strategy, I could work the language skills and sub skills for instance the grammar written practice, phonics and spelling, the reading skill of the week etc. The children's evidences were writings, posters, drawings, songs etc. (depending on the lesson being taught).



I have to say that this strategy, as I mentioned before, was to consolidate the teaching, I mean the student's learning, so it served to evaluate students' progress and be aware of their weaknesses in order to give them the right assessment. Students loved working in centers because it meant fun, moving, and playing.

I can say that working collaboratively also helped my teaching a lot. Students liked taking roles. This strategy allows children to have a sense of organization; it also helps to have children working with their classmates in a respectful environment where everybody knows what to do.

Students' attitude towards me and the language was good; even though I consider myself a strict teacher, my students' opinion was the opposite. My attitude was neutral. Of course, I had my favorites, but in class I tried to be fair with everyone. In class, I tried to speak in English all the time and I encouraged them to do their best and not to say "I can't". I demanded my students to be competent and it was my duty to make this learning process a good experience.

This new program not only changed the way we teach, it also changed the way we evaluate. The process of evaluation needed more than simply exams and quizzes. Since the program was by competences, the evaluation demanded the use of different tools to measure the students' performance and the level of each competence. We had two types of evaluation: summative and formative each one needed different tools. For instance, we made use of written exams, quick quizzes, rubrics, check lists, anecdote records, portfolios, students' interviews, and others.

What we as teachers had clear was that the evidences the students made in class had greater value than those done at home; moreover, the written exam had less percentage in comparison with the work done in class which are the actual evidence of students' performances.

### **3.5 My Achievements**

I cannot say that all this work did not discourage me. At first, it was difficult for me to apply the program as it should be. There were difficult times that my colleagues and I overcame by working as a team, sharing experiences, and supporting each other. There were also embarrassing moments that made feel so bad and I wanted to give up, but again there were people and family behind me that helped and encouraged me to try again and again.

I have learned many things working as an EFL teacher. Each year has meant a significant progress in my teaching career. Every implemented program has had its advantages and disadvantages as well. I found out that a teacher has to be able to learn and apply new methodologies and programs when it is needed. Once, a teacher wisely said that being a teacher also means learning all the time; and it is true; ever since I started working as a teacher, I have never stopped learning from books, colleagues, from my students, and also from life. Personally, I learned to listen and to be patient, to wait and to understand others. Everything is in benefit of the children I am teaching and the little minds I am helping to form.

It feels good to find out that with time and hard work I have developed my own teaching style. It is difficult for me to say if I am a good or a bad teacher, but when I look at my students and see there is a lot I can do for them, and also that I can show them the world through my teaching, then I realize that teaching is what I was born to; It is what I like to do and I love it.

## CHAPTER 4

### Conclusions and Suggestions

In conclusion, each beginning is a new opportunity to learn. Being an EFL teacher is not only teaching the language, but also being prepared and knowing the latest methodologies in order to have a great performance in favor of the most valuable being: the student. It is the student, who deserves a well prepared teacher, who guides him through the discovery of knowledge.

In today's world, we face so many different battles that it is very difficult for us, as teachers, to keep up to date in all aspects of education, or to be aware of the changes and challenges that each generation brings to our classrooms. In an everyday class, each day is different, not because we plan it to be so, but because it happens, sometimes due to external factors. A teacher's learning process never ends, it begins each day in the classroom. From my experience, teachers must be persistent and eager to learn and try new things. Things that worked some years ago do not work today, because children are different. In fact, we do not teach the way we were taught; children today need more than that. They need teachers to show them how the world works, and they need to know it today.

The globalized world we live in demands our children to be aware of the latest technology, the latest innovations in order to succeed. The world demands active people and we as teachers have to form active children capable to think, decide, plan, organize etc. The teacher has to provide positive and constructive

feedback in order to help the students to improve their skills. She/he needs to be aware of the learners' needs so that everybody feels welcome in class. The activities a teacher plans should be designed to achieve certain competence.

In my opinion, a teacher must be open to working and learning other possibilities. As with any other profession, teaching requires constant updating. We must be aware of changes in the way we teach or the country's educational system in general. For that reason, it is vitally important that if you are passionate about teaching you must keep studying and learning more about your profession. Every time you have a chance to attend seminars, academic talks or anything that might be beneficial to your vocational, do so; there is always a chance to learn something new.

From my memory, I recall the way I used to teach, and I compare it to the way I do it now and I find a huge difference. I can say now that I have my own teaching style, something that has my personal touch. I like my students to work using communicative activities. Language production is one of the aims I have in the classroom. I am always paying attention to the way my students communicate and how they communicate what they know. I start creating a safe environment in which they feel comfortable to interact. I use a variety of tools to help my students achieve this competence: for the shiest ones, I use journals; for the talkative ones, I use debates; for the kinesthetic, I use role play and mimic, among others. I also like being updated in music and T.V. programs in order to share my students' interests. I like my students to be dynamic and active in class.

While doing this paper I asked many of my colleagues, students and parents to tell me about their experiences in embracing, learning and having the new program. Most of the teachers agreed that it took time, self commitment and hard work. Nevertheless, they were happy with the results. Some also told me that it hadn't been clear yet in certain aspects, mainly in the evaluation process, but they continue to work on it. Some students told me they loved being active protagonists of their self learning. Some parents commented that if they were taught in this way learning could not have been so difficult and boring

For new teachers, I suggest listening to other teachers' experiences; sometimes the experience of other colleagues helps you to understand the changes better. I also suggest that you follow the valuable advice of you own teachers, but most of all I suggest you to be open to changes; sometimes you are comfortable working with one program and suddenly you have to apply a new one.

When teaching students, I suggest you let their imagination fly, let them be assets, protagonists of their learning. As teachers, we always remind our students the importance of education and the continual study process. But in fact, many teachers don't practice what they preach. Over the last decade, many different teaching styles, technological breakthroughs, world events and the restructure of the educational curriculum design in most civilized countries has modified how teachers must design classes and motivate students.

Furthermore, I suggest that both new teachers and the more experienced ones, embrace technology as a tool for teaching language as today's globalized

world is full of words such as twitter, blogs, etc. Whether they are beneficial or not is one thing, but they are an important part of every student`s daily life. We must try to embrace this technology as a friend rather than a foe. If we could use these technological tools to get across our English teaching to the students, that would be a fantastic achievement.

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# APPENDIX

## 1. Secuencia Didáctica




### SECUENCIA DIDÁCTICA


		Organización de los momentos de enseñanza-aprendizaje			
Fase		Descripción			
INICIO DE LA CLASE	MOTIVACIÓN	Presentar actividades que capten y mantengan la atención, resulten motivadoras para los educandos y cumplan una función relevante en su desarrollo psicológico general. Inducir el "querer hacer", tomando en cuenta las capacidades espontáneas de aprendizaje, captar la atención y generar una predisposición positiva hacia el tópico y la tarea.			
		<b>Estrategias educativas</b>			
		Situaciones o problemas a resolver.	Juegos semiestructurados.	Preguntas que induzcan la curiosidad.	Estímulos atractivos.
	FINALIDAD	Comunicar los propósitos del aprendizaje y ayudar al educando a entenderlos; explicar su alcance y analizar su utilidad directa. Inducir al educando a establecer y comunicar sus propias expectativas y nivel de esfuerzo personal para conseguir lo que se propone. Comprometer al alumno.			
<b>Estrategias educativas</b>					
	Preguntas clave/ propiciar un estado de ánimo positivo.		Mapa conceptual Red semántica Mapa mental Síntesis/resumen/cuadro		
		Para lograr un aprendizaje contextualizado y reducir la distancia entre lo que los alumnos pueden y tienen interés en aprender, es indispensable explorar los intereses, necesidades y experiencias previas de los educandos.			

### SECUENCIA DIDÁCTICA (continuación)

		Organización de los momentos de enseñanza-aprendizaje			
Fase		Descripción			
DESARROLLO DE LA CLASE	ANDAMIAJE	Con la guía del profesor, el alumno día a día construye por sí mismo la plataforma de conceptos, procedimientos y actitudes que entran en juego en la competencia o aprendizaje buscados.			
		<b>Estrategias educativas</b>			
		Esquemas para el aprendizaje de conceptos, red semántica, mapa conceptual.	Experiencias para el aprendizaje de procedimientos, algoritmos, heurísticos, diagrama de flujo.	Esquemas para el fortalecimiento de actitudes, clarificación de valores.	
	CONSOLIDACIÓN	Se refiere a las actividades destinadas a comprobar la comprensión de los contenidos de enseñanza, oportunidades para utilizarlos y aplicarlos con eficacia en diferentes situaciones. Es necesario que se mantengan disponibles en la memoria del alumno y se puedan recuperar con rapidez.			
<b>Estrategias educativas</b>					
	Ejercitación y prácticas (actividades de repetición con un cierto grado de novedad).	Interacción social, aprendizaje cooperativo.	Acompañamiento afectivo durante la aplicación del conocimiento en diferentes contextos.		
CIERRE DE LA CLASE	EVALUACIÓN	Evaluar el logro de la competencia y analizar la causa de los errores del alumno identificando confusiones, dudas, titubeos, lagunas en los componentes.			
		<b>Estrategias educativas</b>			
	Elaboración de indicadores y descriptores por aprendizaje esperado.	Instrumentos, productos, procesos que evidencien el logro (portafolio, guías de observación, listas de cotejo, rúbricas).	Análisis de errores.		
	INSTRUCCIÓN DIFERENCIADA	Asegurar el éxito escolar empleando recursos humanos y educativos que ajusten la situación detectada en la evaluación, a las necesidades y dificultades particulares evidenciadas por cada alumno. Este elemento además de contribuir a que ninguno se quede atrás, ofrece enseñanza remedial y la consecuente construcción dinámica de la autoestima y del autoconcepto del educando.			
<b>Estrategias educativas</b>					
	Ofrecer recursos diferenciados que se ajusten a las necesidades de los niños (tareas, prácticas, explicaciones adicionales, etc.) que pueden dosificarse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Por niveles de lecturabilidad.</li> <li>b. Por niveles de dificultad.</li> <li>c. Por tipo de práctica: ejercicios de repaso y consolidación en el tema que el niño necesita.</li> </ul>	Roles de cooperación entre padres y maestros para fortalecer en casa el aprendizaje de sus hijos.  Detección y canalización de niños con necesidades especiales para contar con una intervención temprana, adecuada y oportuna.			

## 2. Secuencia Didactica

<i>Didactic Sequence</i>		
	<i>Fase</i>	<i>Estrategias educativas</i>
<b>GINNING OF THE CLASS</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	<p><b>Materials:</b> Masks, costumes, etc.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Have children act out the roles of a baby, child, and grownup in a situation such as eating or playing, so that the differences can be seen.</p>
	<b>Purpose</b>	<p><b>Materials:</b> Classroom</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Tell children they are going to learn about the life cycle of the butterfly. Help them set a purpose for listening, such as to find out how an egg grows and changes into a butterfly.</p>
		<p><b>Materials:</b> Flashcards</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>Scaffolding</b>	<p>Poster</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Activity:</b></p> <p>Use a poster that describes how a butterfly grows. Go over the life cycle of the butterfly, starting with the egg. Point out the larva and explain that a caterpillar is the larva of a butterfly or moth.</p> <p>Tell children that like all the living things they have learned about the development of an egg into a butterfly are affected by conditions in the habitat.</p> <p><b>MISCONCEPTION</b> A caterpillar is just one kind of larva, the larva of a butterfly or moth. A caterpillar has legs. Many caterpillars are soft and fuzzy. Another kind of insect might have a larva that looks like a tiny worm. The larva of a fly, called grub has no legs.</p>
	<b>Consolidation</b>	<p><b>Materials:</b> Masks, costumes, etc.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Have children act out the following: The larva hatching from an egg; a caterpillar eating and growing; a pupa inside its hard covering; a butterfly emerging from its hard covering.</p>

<b>END OF THE CLASS</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<p><b>Materials:</b> Worksheet</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Answer the following worksheet.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">   Worksheet.doc </div>
	<b><i>Differentiated instruction</i></b>	<p><b>Materials:</b> Worksheets Flashcards</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> <b>Exemplary:</b> Draw the life cycle of different animals: hen, frogs, butterfly, and human beings.</p> <p><b>Developing:</b> Draw the life cycle of the butterfly.</p> <p><b>Emerging:</b> Identify different traits of the butterfly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>



### 3. Weekly Plan Form

PLANEACIÓN SEMANAL		
Nombre del(a) profesor(a):		
Colegio:		
Grado:		
Planeación de la semana del _____ al _____.		
I. Área curricular	II. Ámbito de aprendizaje:	
III. Competencias	IV. Aprendizajes esperados	V. Contenidos:
		Conceptos:
		Procedimientos:
		Actitudes:
VI. Estrategias didácticas (proyecto, solución de problemas, aprendizaje colaborativo, juegos, etc.)	VII. Organización del grupo (descripción de las diferentes formas de organización: ambientes de aprendizaje, trabajo individual, grupo, etc.).	

VIII. Medios educativos que se usarán: material concreto como libros de texto (señalar páginas), software, recursos didácticos, etc.	
IX. Evaluación del desempeño	
Indicadores	Instrumentos de evaluación: rúbrica, portafolios, exámenes, tareas, pautas de observación, etc.
Conceptuales:	
Procedimentales:	
Actitudinales:	



## ENTRANCE AND EXIT PROFILES 2ND GRADE

STUDENT ENTRANCE PROFILE AREA I: LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES The student:	STUDENT EXIT PROFILE AREA II: LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES The student is expected to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrates clear knowledge about life's essential elements and suggests strategies to protect and preserve air and water.</li> <li>2. Proposes strategies for the preservation and protection of different ecosystems.</li> <li>3. Describes the incidence of weather and geographical location on the culture, commerce, economy and growth of different communities.</li> <li>4. Makes use of proper scientific tools to determine how populations, animal and plant species adapt their shapes, structures and functions to the life conditions that different habitat impose.</li> <li>5. Demonstrates the ability to draw conclusions on the transformation of matter in diverse ecosystems.</li> <li>6. Makes predictions based on what he/she knows about natural phenomena and their relationship with different life sciences (functional).</li> <li>7. Describes the different states (solid, liquid and gas) of matter through the exploration of its structure and some of its properties and reactions.</li> <li>8. Explains how the human body works, relating structures with functions in the physiological processes of nutrition, digestion and circulation.</li> <li>9. Suggests best practices to strengthen health and general well-being to prevent disease and promote self-care, such as selecting proper foods and physical activity and preserving mental and emotional health.</li> <li>10. Demonstrates reading competence for beginner level reading and writing about science while understanding scientific topics from different text sources.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate knowledge of life cycle of plants and animals, the influence of heredity and the environment on organisms, aspects and actions that may affect their development, and carries out personal actions that support the preservation of plants and animals.</li> <li>2. Explain, with sustained arguments, the existing relationship between the elements that are essential for life and the diverse ecosystems in nature.</li> <li>3. Explain, with conceptual clarity the way by which populations and species of plants and animals adapt their shapes and functions to the life conditions that different types of habitat demand.</li> <li>4. Scientifically reasons about Earth's composition and location in space, within the Universe and within the Solar System; analyzing its relationship with the Moon and the Sun, and understanding that their motions give way to time zones, seasons and seismic motion.</li> <li>5. Show abilities to observe, measure, record and explore the positions and motions of objects, identifying the effects that physical phenomena have over matter.</li> <li>6. Value the structure and functions of the human body so as to develop a personal healthy life style, integrating mind and body.</li> <li>7. Apply scientific method abilities that entail the comprehension of a general topic in order to draw conclusions and develop personal criteria around the sciences of life, Earth and space, physical, health and the human body.</li> <li>8. Demonstrate his/her scientific competence in observing, exploring, comparing, problem solving, organizing and communicating information gathered about natural phenomena in his/her immediate environment.</li> <li>9. Use tools appropriately and efficiently, in order to observe, measure and record data about wind speed, rainfall, and temperature, so that he/she can scientifically describe phenomena and make predictions on atmospheric changes.</li> </ol>

## 5. Elementary Curricular Map

### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION CURRICULAR MAP PROPOSAL FOR 2ND GRADE ELEMENTARY MODEL II - TYPE CUMBRES.

#### OPTION A:

The curricular map is the structure upon which the curriculum foundations are placed according to the weighted criteria assigned to each of the knowledge areas or subjects. It is the graphic organizer of time available for learning. The curricular map has three components: basic subject area, special subject area, formative subject area and weekly instruction time.

1. **Basic Subject area:** subjects that must be taught in all territories either in First or Second Language.
2. **Special Subject area:** taught by specialists.
3. **Formative Subject area:** subjects under the scope of our organizational Integral Formation plan.
4. **Weekly instruction time:** 40 weekly class periods, 45 minutes each.

MODEL II TYPE CUMBRES CURRICULAR MAP 2ND GRADE			
BASIC SUBJECT AREA BLOCK IN FIRST LANGUAGE (50%)		BASIC SUBJECT AREA BLOCK IN SECOND LANGUAGE 50%	
Spanish or Language.	8 periods	English	14 periods
Mathematics	6 periods	Science	2 periods
Social studies	2 periods		
Total: 16 periods		Total: 16 periods	

FORMATIVE SUBJECT AREA BLOCK		SPECIAL SUBJECT AREA BLOCK	
Integral Formation (Catholic Formation and Virtues and Love Education)		Physical Education	2 periods
3 periods		Music Education	1 periods
		Technology Lab.	2 periods
Total: 3 periods		Total: 5 periods	



## PRACTICUM: THE EDUCATOR'S CURRICULUM GUIDE

### Second Language. Grade 2.

- Entrance Profile
- Exit Profile
- Core Contents
- Learning How to Learn
- Strategic Learning
- Critical Thinking
- Learning Scope
- Competence
- Concepts, Procedures and Attitudes as an integrated part of a Competence
- Performance goal
- Performance indicator