

KEISER UNIVERSITY ENGLISH CONFERENCE



THE INTEGRATION OF TALENT, TECHNOLOGY, AND LANGUAGE

THE DEMANDS OF A UNIFIED STRATEGY FOR EL SALVADOR

English Conference
The Integration of Talent, Technology,
and Language:

*The Demands of a Unified Strategy
for El Salvador*

December 8th, 2018

English Conference The Integration of Talent, Technology, and Language:

The Demands of a Unified Strategy for El Salvador

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Contents

About the authors and presenters.....7

Introduction.....8

by Mathew J. Anderson

Articles

English a Global Language.....9

by Mathew J. Anderson

**Does Implementing the CEFR or The GSE Help Improve
English Language Learning in Guatemala?**.....10

by Alfieri Avilán

**Lessons Learned from the IBD/Zonas Francas’s
Call Centers Training Project**.....11

by Douglas Arróliga

English and Technology focus on B-learning.....12

by María Alejandra Mora

Photo Gallery.....9

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Introduction

Al presente, el idioma inglés es el lenguaje global de los negocios, un sine qua non para poder participar en la economía globalizada. Al presente, miles de millones alrededor del mundo están tratando con un ahínco inusitado aprender el inglés, no solo para enriquecerse comunicacional y personalmente, sino también para satisfacer una necesidad económica. En otro plano, un número cada vez mayor de multinacionales se han convencido de la importancia del inglés como plataforma de conectividad con todo y con todos y están por lo tanto requiriendo al inglés como el lenguaje común corporativo. A esta lista de adeptos al inglés, pertenecen organizaciones de renombre tales como Airbus, Samsung, Nokia, Renault, y Rakuten, para mencionar algunas. La adopción de un medio comunicacional común no es solamente el camino del futuro, así como una excelente idea corporativa, sino también una necesidad para facilitar y fomentar el desempeño ejecutivo y laboral a todo lo largo y ancho del variado ámbito geográfico y lingüístico donde opera la compañía. Y el inglés es el idioma ideal para establecer esta conectividad.

Aparte del carácter histórico asociado con la difusión del inglés, muchos de los adelantos más sobresalientes del mundo se alcanzaron teniendo en mente al mercado anglo-parlante. En la actualidad, por ejemplo, apenas podemos sobrestimar la influencia del inglés en la manera como codificamos para crear los algoritmos que subyacen el uso masivo de inteligencia artificial y el uso creciente de la robótica en todas las áreas del quehacer humano.

De acuerdo al Índice Anual de Proficiencia en Inglés de EF (2015), el inglés es el lenguaje más preferido por los mercados de más alto crecimiento en el mundo, ya que es el idioma comúnmente utilizado en los negocios mundiales. Por otra parte, estimaciones globales indican que 1,500 millones de personas alrededor del mundo están tratando de aprender inglés. La diversidad cultural, económica y geográfica de esta población ha aumentado la demanda por una herramienta de entrenamiento en el inglés que sea de fácil acceso y financieramente asequible.

Una encuesta conducida por Ipsos Global Public Affairs (2012) sobre adultos empleados en diferentes países, muestra que el 25% dijeron haber interactuado con gentes de otros países como parte de su trabajo/negocios, mientras que 67% afirmaron que el inglés fue el lenguaje más comúnmente usado en sus comunicaciones. El mandarín ni si quiera llegó a ocupar el segundo lugar. Además, 63% de los empleados en China usan el inglés para comunicarse con gente en otros países, mientras que el 56% del contenido online a nivel mundial es en inglés.

De manera que, esté o no esté listo el mundo, el inglés es el lenguaje oficial de los negocios y se ha convertido rápidamente en una necesidad que se mantendrá en el futuro previsible. Tal y

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como Hiroshi Mikitani, presidente ejecutivo de Rakuten dice, los beneficios de la comunicación en inglés son muchos. Y compañías como Rakuten, Samsung y Alibaba, después de apreciar dichos beneficios, decidieron adoptar el inglés como condición previa a cosecharlos.

English a Global Language.

Originally published in El Nuevo Diario, Nicaragua.

by Mathew Anderson

How and why did English become the universal language to communicate?

The emergence of English as the preferred language for international communication is intimately linked to the rise and fall of the British colonial empire and the subsequent emergence of the United States of America as a world trade power and investor after the Second World War. This resulted in an international swarm of English-speaking commercial, financial, and banking relationships between and within countries that made English the ideal language for business. This process was subsequently assisted by other innovative products and services from industry, telecommunications and popular culture in the United States, such as automobiles, television, cell phones, space technology, industrial technology, the Internet, cinematography, and American Pop music.

What exactly was the role of the British Empire in the emergence of English as a contemporary Lingua Franca?

As we all know, during the Roman Empire, Latin became the lingua franca. This situation prevailed during the first fifteen centuries of the modern era. After the remains of the Roman Empire succumbed with the fall of Byzantium by the Ottomans in 1461, none of the empires that emerged at this time (Arabic, Spanish, Dutch, Ottoman, French, and British) expanded its commercial, military, and cultural supremacy to as many corners of the world as the British Empire. This fostered the learning of English in countries on all continents. The only continent in the world that escaped from British imperialism was South America. But, even so, they left their colonial presence in the Falkland Islands, claimed by Argentina to this day. The teaching of English as a first or second language was one of the most important imperial legacies that Britain inherited from its colonies in Asia, Africa, Oceania, and America, after they were freed from their imperial yoke. This is the historical reason why there are so many English speakers in the world: around 1,200 and 1,300 million.

What is the connection between the emergence of the USA, and the expanded use of the English language in recent decades?

The most important reason why English became in modern times the preferred language for business was the vacuum left by the commercial, political, and military decline of Great Britain after the First World War. This vacuum was filled, if not overflowed, by the commercial, political, and military emergence of the United States after the Second World War, which further encouraged and entrenched the use of English in commercial and financial transactions between countries.

The cumulative result of this is that the English language has more than five successive centuries of being used as a means of communication in international trade and its knowledge has become indispensable in all branches of business, especially in the globalized era in that we live now.

Given the commercial rise of Japan, the “Asian Tigers”, and more recently, the spectacular growth of GDP and China’s trade with the rest of the world, **is there the possibility that English begins to lose its status as a Lingua Franca before the Mandarin, for example?**

I doubt it very much. When Japan and Europe fully recovered their industrial potential and the “Asian Tigers”, followed by China, became major exporters of industrial goods to the United States of America. Likewise, they simultaneously became the largest importer of goods and services from the regions mentioned above, as well as the preferred destination of external capital in search of low-risk, liquid financial assets with reasonably high rates of return.

This international economic symbiosis (which began in the early seventies in the last century) was intensified in recent decades by the spectacular growth of the Chinese economy. Paradoxically, this has multiplied the commercial and financial transactions and communications in English, raising the demand for the banking, investor, accounting, and economic personnel that dominates commercial English, both spoken and written. This phenomenon is occurring both within China and in the rest of the world.

What other factors, besides international trade and the flow of innovative goods and technologies from the US have influenced the increasingly widespread use of the English language in the world?

I wish they were trade, financial capital movements, international investment, scientific research, and high-quality university education the only reasons why English is so demanded. From 1920 to the present, music in English (and to a large extent its pop music) has gained an increasing number of followers in at least four generations who memorized the lyrics of their

favorite songs in English, even though they did not understand their meaning.

In addition to music, animated and science fiction films in English have captivated the hearts of millions of children around the world (many of whom are now over sixty years of age) and over the past decades. Who did not feel enchanted as a child, after watching the films of “Peter Pan”, “Cinderella”, “Pinocchio”, “Robin Hood”, “Bambi”, “Aladdin”, and “Beauty and the Beast”. And who did not feel scared, or nailed to their seats, excited, or happy after seeing “Frankenstein”, “Blade Runner”, “The Invasion of the Body Snatchers”, “ET”, “Planet of the Apes”, “Jurassic Park”, “Robocop”, “The Terminator”, “Avatar”, “Star Wars”, “Jaws”, “The Matrix”, and “Matrix Recharged”. Although many of us saw these films dubbed in Spanish or with Spanish subtitles, we always recorded in our memory unforgettable phrases in English and/or visual images that have enriched the collection of memories of our childhood or youth or film fans.

In view of the above, the legacy of Great Britain in past centuries, American leadership and/or the expansion in international trade, and foreign direct investment, education, scientific research and technology, popular music, cinematography, the cartoons for children, the internet, together with the English study as a second language from elementary school in many countries of the world; they are cumulatively responsible that English is currently the preferred world language to communicate in business, for advanced education, in science and technology, in music and entertainment, and in the relationships between people who speak two mother languages different from each other.

What are the four things you need to be successful in learning English?

Experts in teaching English as a second language have identified four practical tips for learning English successfully. First, you must have the will, or a burning desire or interest in learning English and develop the ability to communicate in spoken and written English. Second, every day, you should actively seek every opportunity to speak it, preferably with people who know English, and who can help you improve your pronunciation and sentence construction. Remember that practice makes perfect. Third, you should study it every day. It is recommended to invest two hours a day of study of grammar rules, reading in English, acquisition of words and new verbs. Fourth, every day you must listen to English for at least one hour on television, movies, videos, YouTube, the internet or at conferences given in English.

Does Implementing the CEFR or The GSE Help Improve English Language Learning in Guatemala?

by Alfieri Avilán

Standardizing the English language teaching and learning in the world is not new, it has been a success in many developed countries due to the importance of such language in many areas. It is a fact that in the Latin American region and more specifically in Central America that process is far from becoming a reality. In consequence, improving the quality of the English language is a necessity that the educational system in Guatemala needs to address. Therefore, the use of already created international standards such as the Global Scale of English and the Common European Framework of Reference is critical.

The implications of undergoing such project are very challenging. Just to mention three, creating new national curricula, integrating GSE or CEFR´s ca-do statements into such curricula and certifying educators nationwide.

Nonetheless, there are successful implementations of the GSE in the region that demonstrates the effectiveness of taking the path of standardization English, for example, Panama Bilingue, Colombia bilingue, Keiser University in Nicaragua. These examples can serve as models for future attempts to improve language learning in Guatemala.

One of the first attempts to bring a standard way to measure, assess, create syllabuses and curriculums in English occurred in the 1990's. Previously, "The Threshold Level" Van Els (1977) provided the first steps to the road for standardizing learning goals in English language learning. Since then the path for standardizing English Language Teaching and Learning, meaning providing a common framework based on levels and objectives, became clearer when in 2001 The Council of Europe launched the Common European Framework of Reference, Council of Europe (2001) which set the pace for creating a unified system of teaching and learning English in the continent.

This paper looks into the scope and impact on the use of international frameworks both The Common European Framework of Reference and The Global Scale of English and their impact on language learning in specific settings of English Language Teaching such as Guatemalan schools. The challenge becomes clear when the variety of schools in the country ranges from institutions that offer very few hours of instruction a week (3) to fully American-style schools. Furthermore, the contrast in the use of national curricula versus these frameworks sets another challenge.

The main objective of this paper is to demonstrate whether the impact on the use of these frameworks in the English language programs in some schools in Guatemala is constructive or not.

The efforts and results derived from the implementation of the frameworks around the world have proven positive. Hence the importance of finding out if countries with diverse challenges, such as Guatemala would benefit from replicating the experiences in other places.

In order to verify the possibility of a clear result in this research, it is necessary to understand the Common European Framework of Reference and the Global Scale of English, their differences, though case studies both locally and in other countries. Also, visitations, class observations and interviews in schools of the ELT type in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras, Costa Rica, and The Dominican Republic were conducted through a period of five years.

2.1 Common European Framework of Reference as a starting point in the standardization of English Language Teaching around the world.

2.1.1 Background of the CEFR

In 1977 van Els’s “The Threshold Level”(1975) created a path to understanding that learning a language for a common purpose, in this case in the European context, needed a set of measuring tools that became learning objectives which were created with the sole purpose of aiding the creation of curriculums, syllabuses and assessment materials for teaching and learning.

After other attempts to refine that first idea and after thirty years of trial and error The Council of Europe launched the first edition of the Common European Framework of Reference in 2001, the first compendium of learning objectives designed to create a unified standard for teaching and learning English across the European countries. This first edition of the framework permits looking into language teaching in a more efficient way, consisting of a six-level structure that measures the linguistic competencies of users to have: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. Each level consists of a series of can-do statements which demonstrates learners’ abilities in the four macro skills of language learning, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

2.1.2 Issues with the CEFR

The Common European Framework of Reference has been subject to recent analysis since its effectiveness has been questioned. Some of the inside elements used for measuring performance are not accurate. For instance, sixty-five percent of the can-do statements were developed for

speaking, a percentage that covers the bands A2 to B2 leaving the remaining bands and skills with an unbalanced status.

Also, the progress of learners in one same band shows no clarity in the measurement due to the fact that the can-do statements' drafting was not only ambiguous but also too general. These two are just a few examples of the improvements that the CEFR presented.

Another major challenge shown in the analysis is the time to be invested in completing a band, which can go from thirty to two thousand two hundred and twenty hours to reach a B2 level considering the beginning point in terms of proficiency and understanding that the levels or bands do not possess the same "distance".

Even though analysis shows deficiencies in the CEFR, it has been so far the worldwide most accepted framework for standardizing English language teaching.

2.2 Improving the CEFR, birth of The Global Scale of English, background

In the year two thousand fifteen Pearson launched The Global Scale of English or the GSE as it has become known. This scale is an improvement on the CEFR since it is based on the original research of Brian North (2000). It has come to close the gaps between the flows of the European framework and

the new reality of standardizing the use of English as a lingua franca in a more granular and accurate way. The way the GSE closes the gap in the CEFR void is by making more thorough and precise learning objectives, reducing the hours of instructions to move across the levels, creating a numerical system of levels rather than bands, differentiating adult and young learners' needs and creating frameworks accordingly.

Another major improvement of the GSE has to do with the refining of the Learning Objectives and their more granular status that improve measurement and accuracy when it comes to assigning a level. This is achieved through a process of developing learning objectives which carried out a series of steps that apparently ensure the exactitude of the descriptors to know, national curricula syllabuses and course materials from fifty different countries and the CEFR descriptors were analyzed, a further gap analysis took place in order to create the GSE's learning objectives which were rated and revised by experts (about six thousand teachers from fifty countries around the world), finally these were calibrated and tested.

2.2.1 GSE and its impact

The GSE has been used around the world for three years already, since two thousand fifteen. It is currently used by teachers in “one hundred and thirty countries around the world, and among these people, fifty-six languages are spoken and ten thousand learners are being impacted”. GSE Pearson (2015). Testimonials around the world certify the validity of this new tool for instance, Middlesex Community College, World Language Institute, MA, USA, Anadolu University in Turkey, Setsunan, Kobe Gakuin and Kobe International in Japan, Rennert International Language School in New York, Keiser University in Nicaragua, Capouilliez School in Guatemala, and Panama Bilingue Program in Panama among others are examples of institutions that successfully implemented the GSE and are obtaining better results.

2.3 Results in the investigation among schools in the Guatemalan context.

The English language has become the center of a great debate due to its importance in fields such as world economy, politics, culture, and many others. Its relevance has grown over the years becoming lingua franca, according to: Dictionary of Contemporary English, Longman “a language used between people whose main languages are different” (n/d), the preferred language for major business and political affairs around the globe. However important English is nowadays in many parts of the world, in many countries in Latin America there is still a huge gap between that fact and the implementation of a real path to develop the opportunities in educational systems so that learners can improve their linguistic competencies.

Additionally, the apparent success in the implementation of the GSE has not yet fully arrived in Guatemala where schools still do not fully know it. Instead, these institutions rely on a combination of a national curriculum and other standards including the CEFR and the Common Core of the United States. The use of each framework varies according to the type of school, for instance, if it is a bilingual school the CCSS is used, or if a regular school the CNB (national curriculum) is the choice.

Also, understanding the aims of both the CEFR and GSE does not seem to be sufficiently clear for many teachers who work in the educational system in Guatemala. In addition, the Ministry of education demands teachers to base their planning and execution of the English lessons taking into account the national curriculum in the area of education considered L3, meaning that in the curriculum priority of learning is given firstly to Mayan languages, secondly to Spanish and in third place English which makes it not only less complex in terms of learning objectives but also more difficult to accommodate to other frameworks.

Moreover, the reality of the diversity in Latin America does not permit to create a single standard in order to structure or insert English language teaching into a unique framework across institutions in Latin American countries. Challenges such as national curricula, cultural diversity, independence in syllabus creation, and governments' policies in education make it almost impossible to standardize the teaching of any language. In the case of Guatemala, this situation becomes much more evident because of the huge array of languages spoken, in consequence, it seems that neither CEFR nor the GSE is a plausible option for improving language competencies in the Guatemalan English language teaching, or at least this opportunity is nowhere near.

In order to conclude, standardizing the teaching of English in Guatemala as a way to improve its quality is not a simple endeavor to take. In order to do this, there are a three important steps to take. Firstly, it is necessary to establish the correct importance of such language in the developmental spectrum of the country, which means to include either the CFER or the GSE in the national curriculum as the main set of standards for regular schools. There are two possible ways to achieve this, one is to use the can-do statements or learning objectives as achieving indicators; number two, use those frameworks as separate guides for planning a more strategic execution of the lesson plans. As for the bilingual schools, the Common Core is the path to follow, neither the CEFR nor the GSE is a correct choice for this line of educational institutions.

Second, the Ministry of Education will have to agree on the change of the national curriculum (CNB). Of course, this is the greatest challenge to overcome since the latest change in the CNB occurred in two thousand ten, making this an impossible request to for the public administration. A second major challenge is the multi-cultural, rich, diversity in Guatemala regarding Mayans languages that are still actively spoken among the population. As a result, integrating or modifying the CNB to establish the English language as a number one priority seems very difficult. However, if the government created a national campaign to promote the importance of bilingualism as the Panama case, perhaps a mid-term positive result could be achieved.

Last, there is the urgent need for proper teacher certification in the use and application of both CEFR and GSE in the English language teaching context. Such tools are not clear for many educators in the country, leading to a misunderstanding of their importance and therefore, the total reliance in the CNB which seems weak in its effectiveness. Creating an international partnership with the Council of Europe or Pearson in order to create a cascade effect in the training of teachers can be of profit for such purpose.

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Lessons Learned from the IDB/Zonas Francas's Call Centers Training Project

By D. Arroliga

Nature and Objectives of the Project

The project called “Insercion Laboral de Jovenes Nicaraguenses Mediante la Creacion de un Sistema Sostenible de Formacion” otherwise known as IDB/Zonas Francas Call Centers Project was developed in 2011 utilizing a 1.2 million-dollar fund provided by the Interamerican Development Bank. The objective was to provide new jobs to Nicaraguan unemployed low-income population in the BPO industry. The target population was young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 from semi-rural areas.

The developers of the project invited several key stakeholders to the discussion, which included BPO's, Language Training Institutions, Pro-Nicaragua, and financial institutions. It was their conclusion, that the emerging BPO industry could not compete with other BPO's in Central America, due to its lack of English-speaking agents. Thus, a project was drafted to generate employment opportunities for Nicaraguan youth vis-a-vis the current challenges faced by the BPO industry in Nicaragua though a sustainable training system.

Statement of the Problem:

- A dramatic shrinking in the pool of English-speaking potential BPO employees affecting the industry's operations and planned growth.
- BPO's did not anticipate the number of call centers that would also begin operations and seek to expand in such a short time.
- Therefore, a fierce competition for available English speakers resulted, which reduced the size of the qualified pool anticipated.
- With continued outsourcing growth and high employee turnover (due to a better choice of jobs), a shortage of bilingual agents aggravated the situation.
- BPO employees were not assuming their job as a career, but as a springboard to further professional or personal aspirations, thus creating an unanticipated bottleneck.

Given this situation, and after hiring consultants to ascertain the real training potential from

Language Teaching Organizations (LTO's), the Call Centers Program launched in July 2013. I was hired as a consultant to generate all pedagogic and methodological framework of the program, as well as the training materials. I was also in charge to give follow up to the language training in all the participating LTO's., assessment practices, and the training of instructors from Bluefields.

Failed Assumptions

Regrettably, the project was based under a series of what I call 'failed assumptions':

- Target population's expected level of English was much lower than anticipated.
- Target population's access to acquisition of loans was unrealistic.
- Synergy among stakeholders. BPO's and LTO's partnership had no synergy whatsoever. There was mutual distrust and hiding of information on both sides.
- Language Proficiency Standardization: There were different perspectives. BPO's used their own version of English proficiency standards, while LTO's and the IDB/Zonas Francas project managers agreed to use CEFR as language proficiency benchmark.
- Teachers profile: was lower than expected. Language trainers from most LTO's did not complied with the standards proposed by the Consultant and approved by IDB. The only exception was Kieser University International Language Institute.
- Delivery of the program by LTO's: EFL vs. ESP. Since the only experience by most LTO's was in the area of ESL/EFL, it was difficult for them to make the adjustment to English for Specific Purposes (ESP).
- Target population could do fulltime training: this was the most appalling of all assumptions. The low-income target population could not attend full time because they all were income providers at their households.
- 360 hours of language training: this was completely unrealistic due to the low English proficiency levels of the target population. More training hours were needed.
- 4 to 6 months of training (semi-immersion): To reach the language proficiency goal of B2 CEFR, and the pace of the program, more than 720 hours of exposure to the language were needed, in a 9 to 10-month period.
- Train 600 students in two years: completely unrealistic due to the lack of well-trained teachers and the few LTO's participating in the project.
- LTO's preparedness (infrastructure & faculty): Of the five LTO's participating, only two complied with this assumption. BICU (Bluefield's Indian Caribbean University) was part of the project but was the least prepared of all LTO's.
- BPO's participation in student screening, training, and assessment: only three BPO's consented to participate in the project. Only one actually assisted in assessment.
- 100% Online teaching: this was unrealistic at best. The target population did not have access

to internet or access to a computer. LTO's did not have the capacity or the training to teach a language problem completely online.

The Credit Fund Issue

The Project established a Revolving Fund that would cover a US\$ 1,000 loan for tuition (full tuition). This loan would be paid in 26 months (8 months of grace) at US\$55/month and 8% annual interest.

A collateral was needed, which created a problem for prospective students who found it difficult to obtain a collateral. The main problem collaterals argued was that they were reluctant to guarantee any money in advanced since there was no certainty of a job after taking the course.

In the end, more than 350 people applied to the program and took the placement test. More than US\$80,000 dollars in 101 individual credit lines were issued to students¹.

Project's Numbers

- The program was launched in July 2013 with 170 students, mostly from Managua; Not the intended target population.
- 6 LTO's participated: Thomas More University, UAM, Keiser University International Language Institute, CCNN (Bi-National Center), UCA, and BICU.
- 120 students started the program in July 2013.
- First graduates: 66
- By July 2014, 106 students had completed the program, of which 42% were women. 54% were employed by the BPO's.
- Four BPO's were initially part of the project: SITEL, ACCEDO, STREAM, and Concentrix, but only three actually participated.

Lessons Learned

The IDB Project opened opportunities for continuing Call Centers language training, a new type of program never before carried out in Nicaragua. However, there were other elements I would

Final Report and Presentation by Mr. Carlos Porras, Coordinator of the Proyecto Inserción Laboral de Jóvenes Nicaragüenses mediante la creación de un Sistema Sostenible de Formación (ATN/ME-12287-NI) CNZF
<http://www.onestopenglish.com/clil/what-is-clil/>
<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/cefr/>

like to include as the lessons we learned from this experience:

- Innovative program: 20% online training and 80% face to face training.
- New methodologies were involved including CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Language)².
- Standardization of language outcomes (CEFR): Defined standard was CEFR B2³,
- Standardization of assessment practices: Pretest/Posttest using CASAS and later Versant.
- Seek more synergy between BPO's and LTO's: The main issue revolves around assessment practices and language training priorities, including accent reduction.
- A less complicated financial/credit system, including no collateral and no Collateral.
- More teaching hours: 900 to 1,200 hours is recommendable if the student starts at A1 CEFR.
- Better trained instructors (teacher training)
- Instructor's better language proficiency (recommended B1 CEFR).
- Coaching and teaching
- Feedback from BPO's
- Program opened to all sectors; not only to low-income students.
- Seek bilateral agreements BPO's/LTO's; KU has already taken steps toward this.
- Better screening and pre/posttest; discard CASAS and use Versant⁴.
- Guarantee a job after training; crucial negotiation to lend more credibility to the program.

CONCLUSION

The BPO industry is still the most promising of all current business projects in Nicaragua. Nonetheless, is still far behind other Central American countries. However, if working in a BPO were viewed as a career, it could serve as the prime place for low-income population to obtain steady good-paying job. If financial issues were revisited to find a better working solution for students' loans, perhaps more opportunities would be generated for the working class or low-middle class. In terms of teaching practices, I believe the KU Language Institute has taken definite strides to improve delivery. On the other hand, the creation of a national LTO accrediting agency would be instrumental in the standardization of training processes, assessment, and instructors' credentials.

<https://www.casas.org/home>; <https://www.versanttests.com/products/english>

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English and Technology focus on B-learning

by MSc. María Alejandra Mora

English is the Language of corporations. Industries such as Information Technologies, Human Resources, Tourism, Business Processing Outsourcing and Communications for several years have depended on bilingual employees to be able to offer their services offshore. The domain of English is the basic need of a desired labor force hence has transformed into a strategic topic for countries like El Salvador, Nicaragua and all Latin America. English speakers are currently in higher demand and have become essential to any country as it boosts economic competitiveness and it is directly associated with the growth and development of the economy of such countries. In El Salvador, studies on Labor Market have shown that Proficiency in English is the second hardest skill to find within staff just after IT skills. This phenomenon extends in most Central American Countries and beyond. Thus, in order to obtain highly qualified English speakers as well as Information Technology specialists poses a dire need for training the labor force.

Latin America has taken action in regards to language training. Countries like Costa Rica, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay among others have adopted it as a National Plan. The relevance of training teachers and implementing a revised curriculum in the Education system has allowed for them to make progress and obtain positive results. Thus such programs are still considered work in progress; countries like Nicaragua and El Salvador should mirror and take actions towards enhancing workforce that is bilingual that can be inserted into a booming industry such as the BPO. The Outsourcing industry attracts offshoring investors and contributes to the in house economy. El Salvador should seek short term, mid-term and long term solutions towards transforming a young, apt, specialized and bilingual work force that can foster the country's development.

El Salvador can consider long term, midterm, short term and immediate solutions that can highly contribute to the development of its economy. For example, an immediate solution that can enhance the skills of the work force is by narrowing the gap between the available workforce and the profile of the different industries that require specialized training. This training is content-specific and short term to guarantee the readiness of the potential future employee.

The high demands of the Business Processing Outsourcing specializations like Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services (IT/ITES) require certifications; whereas Knowledge Processing Outsourcing (KPO) in Human Resources, Accounting, Operations Management among others cater to train the bilingual viable candidate to be able to perform the specific duties considering their background experience.

In regards to English speaking, the short term solution is to first reach consensus in the required proficiency level between the industry and the language centers. The different industries need to define proficiency skills from the future employees and work towards reaching such level through language training programs. In order to do the process, first language institutes need to work with the teachers that will train those prospect. Thus becoming a mid-term solution.

To do so, language academies need to standardize the exiting level of the graduates to fit an international profile. As well, the measurement of instructor’s language proficiency needs to occur as a first step in order to determine the teacher training needs whether it is language training or methodological training. Measurement needs to be done. Ideally, the creation of an accreditation unit that monitors and warrants the standards and ensures the teaching quality should be a must. In regards to long term solutions, a priority should gear towards reducing teacher empiricism, set teacher training cycles, programs and certifications for teachers to maintain up to date in the new educational trends, and set evaluation cycles to obtain statistics and measure language learning advances and effectiveness of the programs. Such measures should align to Language Learning Guidelines such as the Global Scale of English or the Council of Europe Common European Framework of Reference to be able to meet the international requirements. To step into the scheme of long term solutions, stakeholders and decision-makers should work towards setting the Framework of Language Learning Policies by creating the legal grounds of an English Language Learning curriculum or program. The former program should be achievable and realistic, and the scheme needs to include teachers’ assessment and training, students’ performance assessment through continuous monitoring with defined metrics all aligned to international standards. In addition, establish a proper support system to adapt according to the needs.

With all this in mind, the starting point should focus on being realistic and accepting that the quality of teachers needs to improve in order to transform a generation into becoming bilingual; Ensure that any program that is implemented should maintain its continuity by adjusting it to the different demands rather than closing it without obtaining results; and create and develop an infrastructure of monitoring and assessment unit that will ensure modification, changes and corrections as the program advances. Considering that timing plays against all odds, and that teachers which are the key factor in the implementation process have very little time to professionalize themselves, the option of blended learning plays a key role.

A win-win situation is to create conditions where teachers as main players keep working and still have time to continuing professional development. Nowadays, the language of Programming and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is essential to education. English goes hand in hand with globalization of technology and its resources. The internet forces all digital users to be overexposed to it. Reason why, it has extended into the education field by generating

top quality tools and platforms to reach out to the digital citizens in their own language through authentic and simulated environments that promote active and engaging language learning.

The overlapping of technology and English language learning has opened a door in the virtual field as an alternative education system that caters to a wider variety of audiences. Providing solutions of high quality at a lower cost; transforming assessment through evidence; creating opportunities for immediate feedback and customization of content; enhancing efficiency of space and time since in the virtual classroom, institutions do not focus on classroom capacity or space and limited work schedules of staff therefore reaching out to different target audiences as it favors the study of anywhere, any time with just a click away.

The solution of Online learning has withstood time and has moved towards the maximization of efficacy when it is backed up by a sound and coherent pedagogical scheme that is achievable in short time frames. It has evolved towards three modalities where learners can work stand-alone with asynchronous work; can connect with their teachers through synchronous learning and where learners work on their own time and set specific meet-ups to discuss, recycle or expand content.

Furthermore, learners feel that online learning is more effective when blended learning occurs. The experience of having someone to meet and connect for explanations or for monitoring provides a sense of security and trust in the learning process. The fact of having immediate feedback once a completion of an exercise is done through a metric and evaluation system that students can track sets an added value of immediateness and response while learning occurs. Such systems favor students understanding of areas of improvement or recycling of content. Also, blended learning allows for the content to be uploaded is consistent and specific to the course outcome.

For this reason, the personalization of content is profiled to meet target audience immediate needs rather than a load of information that is not relevant to the audience. Such personalization allows for learners to focus on specific chunks of information which also contributes to increase their level of productivity in higher rates over those that study face to face considering the overall distractions that may occur in a regular classroom environment. Above all, in addition to studying content specific items, learners are also developing soft skills like typing, managing office and platforms, fostering collaboration, and developing communication, time management and critical thinking skills.

Blended learning as a solution has advantages that can maximize learning in individuals since it fosters learner's independence and self-discovery as learners. Learners who take advantage of their time are able to advance in their content and ideate a learning profile that meet their individual needs and work towards their goals. Since teachers transform into learners, it is easier

for them to cope with independent studying, and avoid the feeling of being unguided and alone. Also, it allows the teacher in training to familiarize with the necessary tools needed to connect with peers.

To conclude, the high demand of bilingual speakers to insert into a booming industry like BPO, has an option which is to train teachers, who will then train capable individuals. Yet, the first step is to create conditions for teachers to get trained. Blended learning is the best alternative to fit into a high demand sector that has limited spacing, limited schedules and too high of a demand. Blended learning comes to fit ideally into a scheme where efficiency and immediate feedback are the essence to guarantee success.

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