INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, fostering the students’ communicative competence is a very important goal in the EFL (English as a foreign Language) classroom and so is their academic performance. Therefore, this work was developed taking into account students’ needs at Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia as the community which will benefit from this research and teachers as the guides of the process who may become acquainted with TBLL (Task based language Learning), a viewpoint on teaching and learning that had not been tried formally in our setting.

The following are some institutions that are currently teaching English without setting a syllabus and their history.

In South Africa, for example, during the Apartheid (1948 – 1994) schools did not use to follow a syllabus to take English classes. English was not an important language to be taught in schools because the government had the idea that the only languages the people needed to use were African languages.

The policies about teaching English were then supported by the idea students needed to know a different language to encourage the world and the English language was then adopted due to the role the language played in their lives.

In contrast to the first language syllabus, which enshrines “natural enthusiasm, vitality, spontaneity and originality of pupils”, in first language global aim (CED 1986) Cape Education Department, the English second language syllabus gets directly into the business of “living in a multilingual environment” and has “communicative competences”.

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In stable, resourced white Afrikaans-medium schools where learners have had ready access to English it has been possible for the goal of communicative competence to be achieved. However, in over-crowded, under-resourced black schools, where there has been little access to English, the goals of the syllabus are rarely been achieved. The external examinations for black students have worked in concert with this teaching style, typically testing usage in a mechanical, often simplistic, multiple choice (Peirce 1990; Barret 1993).

Unsurprisingly, given the political context, neither the first-nor the second language syllabus has had a strong critical dimension; a great deal has been taken for granted. It is the aspect of the syllabus that was challenged by the People’s English Movement in 1989.

Political changed in South Africa in recent years and the changing nature of formerly white schools has led to a reconsideration of the English syllabuses. As a result of its deliberations, the Core Syllabus Committee for English published a new English Guideline Document in December 1993. In the document the committee responded to the debate about the terms “English first-and second-language” and the demands to acknowledge bilingual and multilingual competence. ¹

Stephen Bax’s (2003) argument for “teaching in accordance to specific contexts” is very similar to that of some other researchers (e.g. Holliday 1994) who have warned that a method cannot easily be exported from one context to another.

¹Preparing Student Teachers to Teach English First and Second Language Problems and Challenges. Sarah Murray and Heinnie van der Mesht. Rhodes University.
The relativists argue that a method is not equally suited to all contexts, and that different methods suit different teachers and students in different contexts. Based on this argument, someone may argue that since China has its own special teaching context, Chinese teachers should not adopt western CLT (Communicative Language Teaching).

Having in mind the previous situation, in 1992 the State Education Development Commission (SEDC) the official authority for setting educational policy in China introduced a teaching syllabus, and required that secondary school teachers teach English “for communication”. To do it, a compilation of textbooks was used to develop the four language skills.

In 2001 SEDC required all secondary school teachers to use task-based language teaching. The Chinese government noticed that the use of CLT was advantageous to China; teachers can teach English methods outside China; they were not teaching the traditional way reduced only to teach grammar and vocabulary, also they realized that students could develop high competence in the use of English for communication. ²

In Japan the Ministry of Education proposed a curriculum innovation in 1987. Before this year there was not a syllabus to teach English language. The proposal was for a shift away from long established grammar-translation curriculum content and classroom practices, towards teaching form communication and communicative competence. (Lamie 2001: XV).

What was found in other countries:

“In Algeria it is difficult to teach English because of the lack not only a syllabus but the lack of authentic material that help them transmit English culture. There is no official reference about it”. ³

In Greece a school teacher wanted to teach English to 6-year-old students through reading stories. The school has already had a syllabus that adopted a communicative framework where “Knowledge is a learning experience that results from a process which requires the activation of cognitive, social and functional skills”. (Syllabus Document: 71-72). ⁴

The problem presented below refers to a preliminary review and reflection on the English syllabus Indian province of the Congregation of Sisters Bethlemitas. Through research methodology - participatory action in which active mind are part of the English program involved, the needs of the population are established, and from these, the review of each of the elements of the syllabus is to find what aspects of it are meeting the needs and expectations of students and teachers, and what aspects are seen as problematic. The syllabus was established unilaterally by the general government of the Congregation, which was not available with the diagnosis of needs and expectations of those who were to participate and implement the program. After a year and gave me to work with him and by the perception of certain problems with it, it was necessary to initiate and this process of review and reflection.

This led to the approach of the research questions that fall to establish the extent to which the syllabus meets the needs of students and teachers, and what aspects of it is perceived as the most problematic, to establish some possible actions to be implemented to meet these needs.

Not to prioritize language of India and Cultural avoid suspicion within the province, the Congregation decided to implement English as the official language of the province to facilitate multilingual communication in the Indian context, as with the rest of the Congregation, although most do not speak that language.

The teaching and learning of English were made without a syllabus established without method. Just the teachers in charge of the first levels of training taught what they believed was important and more emphasis was placed on the grammatical aspect than in communication skills. We must take into account also that the educational method in India remains traditional and rote, where the student does not participate actively in the learning process. Perhaps the difficulties facing today communicative level are due to the type of teaching, since within class interaction is not encouraged.  

This case arises in this study from the need to find a motivating and realistic approach when incorporating content of teaching English as a foreign language the teacher training program in a context characterized by the motivation of students and overcrowding.

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This program is the subject of Education "and Teaching English Language" trunk nature subject specialty in Primary Education, taught at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of the Autonomous University of Madrid. In the Autonomous University of Madrid, the subject "English Language and Teaching" Primary is given during the second semester of the first year career.

The average profile of the student of this subject is a person discouraged with English and with a negative predisposition towards what is considered an imposition of this subject in the curriculum of their specialty.

In a survey conducted in the third level from year 2002-2003 in the morning shift, responses revealed that in almost 50% of cases, the reason that said students studying English was "because it is necessary to get the degree "and variations thereof such as" to pass the exam "and" because I have to, "revealing that their motivation is mostly instrumental (Gardner and McIntyre, 1993) As for the section of Teaching, the group sees little use to their inclusion in the program, since they do not believe that will be found in the need to implement the content is a section in their professional future.

Broadly speaking, this experience is that, in small groups and with the help of teachers and teaching materials, students plan an English lesson of varying duration to determine for themselves depending on the activity or activities they propose.

These lesson plans will go to form part of a dossier that all students will have at the end of the course. In the future, this dossier can serve as reference material when teaching an English class.

The principles underlying the planning of this experience are twofold. On the one hand, effective learning of the content seems to be related to the potential usefulness of these. Therefore, the task is presented as an activity of real application in the professional future
of the students. The dossier is intended to provide guidance in the unlikely event that, in the exercise of their profession they are required to teach an English class, for example replacing the specialist teacher for a short period of time. This situation, which can be given provisionally by permission of the competent inspection would cause some concern in an inexperienced teacher who finds no resources to teach the class. However, with the help of the dossier, students' English language and its teaching "could provide an English lesson to choose from those proposed by their peers and by their own group.

Furthermore, the active participation of students in the development of expertise is crucial to the success of it. Therefore, experience is seen as the realization of a practical task that has a common goal to the whole class, losing reference to the traditional model of teacher as transmitter of content and students as mere recipients thereof. In addition, the proposed contents are controlled independently by the student, in the manner and time determined in depth.  

Taking into account the local context and bearing in mind the globalization, the social, economics, politics and cultural changings, that demand the permanent knowledge of a foreign language, the Universidad UniMinuto through Centro de Idiomas adopts the praxeologic educational model (everything must be praxis not only theory) to organize the different programs according to the Common European Framework of Reference (June 2002) to learning and teaching foreign languages in order to achieve the proper management of the language according to the specific needs of information.

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6 La enseñanza de didáctica de lenguas extranjeras para futuros maestros no especialistas: una experiencia en Educación Primaria. María Fernández Agüero - Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Glosas Didácticas - Revista Electrónica Internacional
An Action Research “The use of the Task-Based instruction in the development of lexical competence“ was held in 2016 At Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, this paper was implemented in order to show how the theory of Task-Based instructions was applied to develop the lexical competence into activities carried out during classes. As a result, TBL allowed guide the participants throughout real context activities planned previously, whose main aim was the acquisition and the use the new English vocabulary.

At a public University a qualitative research was carried out in 2016 to implement task-based language teaching as a way to integrate language skills and help learners to improve their communicative competence in English. After implementing TBLT in the classroom, the results suggest that its implementation facilitated the integration of the four skills in the English as a foreign language context.

At a public university in Florencia Colombia, “Improving Language Learning Strategies and Performance of Pre-Service Language Teachers through a CALLA-TBLT Model” was an Action Research carried out in 2017. The objective of this study was to aimed at improving the English language performance and language learning strategies use of 33 first-year pre-service language teachers by combining elements from two models: the cognitive academic language learning approach and task-based language teaching. Explicit strategy instruction in the proposed model resulted in a proper combination to improve learners’ language learning strategies and performance.

After 2009 the syllabus for the English classes followed in the university was traditional: Educational Method. The main learning objective of this method was target to understand and produce single narrative texts in English.

In 2009 the university decided to re-design a new syllabus in order to get the certificate for the Centro de Idiomas.
Thinking of the design of a syllabus for the English class began as a reflection on how the Coordination of Multilingüism area at Universidad Cooperativa, and participants, in this case the English teachers, may plan, organize, and implement what is intended to be taught in a way that is both helpful to solve difficulties and innovative in our context.

Simultaneously, this is a project based on a TBL approach that is believed to promote language learning; David Nunan (1988), defines task as an activity that necessarily involves language by providing learners with opportunities to make the language input more comprehensible, furnishing contexts in which learners need to produce understandable output, and making the classroom closer to real-life language situations.

Based on an informal interview to students of first level of English at the beginning of this study, it was determined that:

- They do not feel they are learning through communicative competences by using the traditional method.
- They feel grammar is not as important to learn to speak English.
- They are not used to studying on their own.
- They feel more comfortable when they have the chance to practice with their peers.
- They are not learning to speak English but learning only grammar.
- They would like to know how to communicate in English spontaneously.

Based on classroom observations and teacher’s memories I witnessed a series of facts worthy of attention in an action research project. The first problematic situation had to do with an observable difficulty the students showed when following the tasks given by the current syllabus, which seemed to be over the level they had acquired so far. Findings from informal interviews showed that it is caused by the lack of practice and development
in their language skills. Besides, they have had to go fast to cover the lessons in their textbook since the current syllabus has established a definite number of lessons to be taken throughout the semester. Therefore, they have covered a series of units without internalizing or grasping a complete understanding of everything and they have had to move on to further lessons without enough practice of the previous themes and a complete work on their skills. (See Annex 1).

Over the past two semesters, the teacher/researcher has had this group students have been forced by the syllabus to follow a pace that is not appropriate for their level. That allowed me to think on a new design of a syllabus as the contents developed in class are too demanding in terms of language and they do not have abilities enough as well as time to do it. Thus, they would be able to work at the right level and advance later with a better command of the themes assigned to them.

I saw within the group a lack of interest, which made me wonder about the reasons apparently unknown, but as I kept in contact with some other teachers, they all had the same comments about the group. Some of the words that come to mind at this point are “misfits,” “mischievous,” and so on, but the digging from their previous courses tells us that the students had left each and every year the subject English pending in their curriculum or under the status not passed.

One basic reflection I came across has to do with the fact that in the context, in which I have worked syllabus design has traditionally been made by authorities in institutions and they have often set unrealistic goals for students and teachers. On some occasions, teachers have taken part in that process of design trying to guess which design is the best based on their experience, which is not complete enough to address the students’ needs and expectations. Having this in mind and after observing the performance in a group of students and reflecting upon the suitability of an existing syllabus in this institution, the author of this project thought about the need to find out about syllabus design processes
and start approaching this issue in order to help change teaching and learning positively in the situation chosen for this research work.

When I decided to choose this topic for the research project, several factors were taken into account besides the initial interest in syllabus design. I considered the feasibility of the project and the possibility to obtain enough results for a research report within the time allocated for the process. Another aspect I kept in mind was the usefulness of my work since both the reflection and the implementation I intended to start should be pertinent and encouraging in the context where they will take place.

The English teachers’ opinion about the way students are learning English in the classroom is a very important issue to start this research because they are in touch with the students and they know the program which has been carried out during the last four years in the Multilingüism area.

The following is a summary of what English teachers think about the program, what we agreed on our meeting (See Annex 1):

- They say that the English area does not have a syllabus to be followed in the classroom.
- It is a must that didactic materials are prepared by teachers.
- Teachers prefer to work by following a textbook.
- They do not agree the most important process to be followed with the students is through the usage of the platform “Tell Me More”.

Briefly, the main problem English teachers and students have at the Universidad Cooperativa deals with the lack of a syllabus to be carried out in the English classroom that makes difficult the process of teaching and learning. Facing this situation, the
research question that can be set is ¿What is the impact that the design and implementation of a Task-Based Syllabus has on the EFL students of the Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia? In consequence, the object of study of this research is: English Language Learning and the field of action is: English Syllabus Design.

As well as this, the general objective proposed is: To find out how the learning process of English as a foreign language might be impacted by the design and implementation of a task-based syllabus at Universidad Cooperativa. Consequently, in order to reach the general objective, I found it necessary to formulate the following specific objectives:

1. To determine what students’ needs, learning styles, and interests are, to be considered in the syllabus design.
2. To determine which criteria and theories should be considered when designing a task-based syllabus for basic university students.
3. To implement and evaluate the impact of a Task-Based Syllabus to be followed with the students in their English learning process.

To accomplish each one of the objectives, I found necessary to establish the following scientific tasks:

1. Determining students’ needs, learning styles, and interests to be considered in the syllabus design.
2. Determining which criteria and theories should be considered when designing a task-based syllabus for basic university students.
3. Implementation and evaluation of the impact of Task-Based Syllabus to support students learning of English as a foreign language.
RATIONALE

Syllabus Design demonstrates, in a practical way, the principles, involved in planning and designing an effective syllabus. It examines important concepts such as needs analysis, goal-setting, and content specification, and serves as an excellent introduction for teachers who want to gain a better understanding of syllabus design in order to evaluate, modify, and adapt the syllabuses with which they work. (David Nunam, 1988).

This Task-Based syllabus is especially designed for students of first level of English. The objective of designing a task-based syllabus is to improve the implemented methodology for developing the English class which was designed bearing in mind tasks as the pedagogical methodology to approach the students to the language learning taking into account that the program they follow in the English class does not include the development of communicative skills competences which Task Based syllabus does. To face this problem, I designed four Didactic Units which contents are related to students’ interests such as personal information, daily routines, family and home. Once students have finished the learning process, they would be able to talk about these topics suggested in the syllabus.

Having in mind the lack of a syllabus to be followed in the English classes, I consider necessary to design a Task-Based Learning syllabus through which students identify and be useful to them to cope their needs in the learning process. The design of a syllabus based on tasks represents to them the opportunity to develop their communicative skills and the approach to new vocabulary which they consider of a great importance when learning a new language.

The methodology used to make the syllabus works was by designing lesson plans for each one of the didactic units containing topics easily to remind and to put into practice
as well as the adaptation of the appropriate material necessary in the implementation of the activities.
CHAPTER I
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Some confusion has risen from the definitions and use of the terms "curriculum" and "syllabus". Therefore, the beginning of this chapter will be devoted to these basic definitions as a point of departure for all the constructs with which this research project will deal. In the paragraphs following it, I will pay special attention to understanding the concepts of syllabus design and Task Based Learning.

1.1. CURRICULUM

Curriculum is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcome, formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school, for the learners' continuous and willful growth in personal-social competence (Tanner, 1975).

In formal education, a curriculum is the set of courses and their contents offered by an institution such as a school or university that includes the policies and regulations stated by the government of the country in which such curriculum development occurs. In some cases, a curriculum may be partially or entirely determined by an external body. In Colombia there is a definition and a set of parameters in Law 115 and Decree 1860 of 1994 that help institutions define goals, but institutions are free to create their own profiles and determine their own goals as long as they abide by that law. Curriculum describes the collective teaching, learning and assessment strategy and materials that are available for that particular course as well as the course objectives which are often expressed in terms of learning outcomes.
It should be stated that my current appreciation of curriculum theory and practice has evolved since it has made coherent reflections on learning processes and in relation to real life ideas such as subject and lesson. Nowadays I have defined curriculum in an operational way of all events and the structure and sequence of learning objectives so that it has become a meticulous fulfillment of a program.

In order to have an understanding of modern visions of curriculum, I am going to look at four ways of approaching its theory and practice in the section that follows:

1. Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted.
2. Curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students - product.
3. Curriculum as process.
4. Curriculum as praxis.

1.1 1. CURRICULUM AS PROCESS

I have seen that the curriculum as product model is heavily dependent on the setting of behavioral objectives. Another way of looking at curriculum theory and practice is via process. It encompasses the design and development of integrated plans for learning, the lesson plans, as well as evaluations, their implementation and the outcomes of the learning experience. In this sense curriculum is not a physical thing, but rather the interaction of teachers, students and knowledge. In other words, curriculum is what actually happens in the classroom and what people do to prepare and evaluate. It is a process of critical questioning to frame learning and teaching. The main purpose of the process is to translate broad statements of intent into specific plans and actions. The intention is to ensure, as far as possible, alignment between the three states of curriculum: the planned curriculum, what is intended by the designers; the delivered curriculum, what
is organized by the administrators and what is taught by the teachers and the experienced curriculum (from the students’ point of view, what is learned by the students. (Prideux, 2003).

What I have in this model is a number of elements in constant interaction. It is an active process and links with the practical form of reasoning set out by Aristotle.

1.1.2 CURRICULUM AS PRAXIS

Curriculum as praxis is, in many respects, a development of the process model. While the process model is driven by general principles and places an emphasis on judgment and meaning making, it does not make explicit statements about the interests it serves. It may, for example, be used in such a way that does not make continual reference to collective human well-being and to the emancipation of the human spirit. The praxis model of curriculum theory and practice brings these to the center of the process and makes an explicit commitment to emancipation. Thus action is not simply informed, it is also committed: it is praxis.

Critical pedagogy goes beyond situating the learning experience within the experience of the learner: it is a process which takes the experiences of both the learner and the teacher and, through dialogue and negotiation, recognizes them both as problematic. It allows and encourages students and teachers together to confront the real problems of their existence and relationships. Thus, when students confront the real problems of their existence they will soon also be faced with their own oppression. (Grundy, 1987).

In this approach the curriculum itself develops through the dynamic interaction of action and reflection. Catherri (Grundy, 1987). At its center is praxis: informed, committed action.
Furthermore, the two basic characteristics of curriculum are flexibility and adaptability to context, which make it pertinent. It may be said that curriculum is a teleological system, i.e., a set of elements with a corresponding set of relations which are aimed at a predetermined goal.

Curriculum referents are the supporting points and the context on which it is defined. They are three: curriculum theories, context or the multiple including pedagogic, cultural, ethnic, social, environmental, collective, historic, ethic, legal, and projective factors, and evaluation of the academic performance.

1.1.3 CURRICULUM IN CONTEXT

To complete this discussion of curriculum it is necessary to pay further attention to the social context in which it is created. One criticism that has been made of the praxis model (especially as it is set out by Grundy 1987) is that it does not place a strong enough emphasis upon context. This is a criticism that can also be laid at the door of the other approaches. In this respect the work of Catherine Cornbleth (1990) is of some use. She sees curriculum as a particular type of process: it is what actually happens in classrooms, that is, 'an ongoing social process comprised of the interactions of students, teachers, knowledge and milieu.' In contrast, Stenhouse 1975, defines curriculum as the attempt to describe what happens in classrooms rather than what actually occurs. Cornbleth further contends that curriculum as practice cannot be understood adequately or changed substantially without attention to its setting or context. Curriculum is contextually shaped. While I may quibble about the simple equation of curriculum with process, what Cornbleth does by focusing on the interaction is to bring out the significance of context.

First, by introducing the notion of milieu into the discussion of curriculum she again draws attention to the impact of some factors that we have already noted. Of especial significance here are examinations and the social relationships of the school - the nature
of the teacher-student relationship, the organization of classes, streaming and so on. These elements are what are sometimes known as the hidden curriculum. This was a term credited to Philip W. Jackson (1968) but it had been present as an acknowledged element in education for some time before.

The learning associated with the 'hidden curriculum' is most often treated in a negative way. It is learning that is smuggled in and serves the interests of the status quo. The emphasis on regimentation, on bells and time management, and on streaming are sometimes seen as preparing young people for the world of capitalist production. What I do need to recognize is that such 'hidden' learning is not all negative and can be potentially liberating. 'In so far as they enable students to develop socially valued knowledge and skills... or to form their own peer groups and subcultures, they may contribute to personal and collective autonomy and to possible critique and challenge of existing norms and institutions' (Cornbleth 1993: 50).

An aspect to be highlighted about curriculum is its position as a boundary between formal and informal education. It represents a theoretical distinction in which a regulated plan guides what is done in a program carried out under specific steps and aimed at predefined goals.

Taking into account the curriculum in context, it is necessary to consider the main targets in the next section, the context for Colombian curriculum is shown followed by its implications in our institution in terms of its theory and application.

1.1.4 COLOMBIAN CURRICULUM – LAW 115 OF 1994

Within the structure of PEI (Proyecto Educativo Institucional) for its acronym in Spanish, curriculum is the means through which our educational work is done. It is the field in which institutional autonomy is executed with the greatest freedom under the legal
regulations. A good curricular design along with its coherent development and systematic evaluation is what constitutes the main factor to generate educational quality. Curriculum is assumed as a flexible and pertinent structure which is adapted to the context. It is created and developed by the educative community in a participative way with the deep contribution of teachers, the management of the Academic Board and the leadership of the headmaster.

Among the constituent elements of curriculum, I may find the main constructs, the objectives of education, the agents of the process and the syllabus. The first four elements are the theoretical basis and the last one is the operational plan.

In the curricular process the stages of design, adoption, development, and evaluation are followed. Design is the making of the structure. Adoption is performed by the Management Board. Development is executed daily through the diverse pedagogic activities. Evaluation is done to improve its design and development and verify its impact. These stages occur in a recurrent way as an improvement cycle. Closely associated to curricular design, development, and evaluation are the management and research processes. By means of the former, budget use is planned and organized, control is exerted, and evaluation is managed. By means of the latter, basic problems are identified and new knowledge to improve understanding and implementation of curriculum is discovered in order to obtain better achievements in the development learners’ competences.

Article 76 of the General Law of Education defines curriculum as “the set of criteria, syllabuses, programs, methodologies, and processes which contribute to the whole formation and construction of national, regional, and local cultural identity including the human, academic, and physical resources to put into practice the policies and develop the institutional educational project.” In this first legal definition there is a conception of curriculum as a set of elements with a definite goal. An initial difficulty is the fact that its
components belong to different categories. This is why one of the conceptual tasks is to classify those components in order to understand and structure curriculum in an appropriate way so as to provide it with the necessary coherence which allows complete understanding and development.

1.1.5 CURRICULUM IN OUR CONTEXT

From the perspective of a knowledge society and to be an active part of this, the individual must acquire communication skills that allow it to interact in a global world. That is why the Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, seeks that the established student community acquires a multilingual competence to increase and improve their language skills and be able to use them so as to proactively interrelates with society.

By virtue of the University autonomy ruled as stated in article 77 of Law 115 of 1994, educational institutions offering formal education will benefit from autonomy to organize the mandatory and fundamental areas defined for each level, to introduce optional subjects in the areas determined by the law, to adopt teaching methods, and to organize formative, cultural, and sports activities within the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, the curriculum adopted by any educational institution shall consider the following parameters and adjust itself to them:

- The aims of education and the objectives for each level and cycle.
- The technical norms such as standards for curriculum in the mandatory and fundamental areas of knowledge or other instruments for quality evaluation.
- The curriculum guidelines.
The syllabus, which is the structured frame of the mandatory, fundamental, and optional areas with their respective subjects and is a part of curriculum. It must contain at least the following aspects:

- The intention and identification of contents, themes, and problems of each area and its corresponding pedagogic activities.
- The time allocation and sequences of the educational process with a statement of the grade and period in which the activities will be executed.
- The achievements, competences, and knowledge learners should achieve and acquire at the end of each semester in each area according to their definition in the Institution’s Educational Project (PEI) within the technical norms for curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education. Likewise, it shall include the criteria and procedures to evaluate the learning and performance and the development of learners' capabilities.
- The general design of special support plans for learners with difficulties in their learning process.
- The methodology applicable to each area with a statement of the use of didactic material, textbooks, laboratories, audiovisual aids, educational software or any other means which orients or supports the pedagogical action.
- The performance indicators and quality goals which allow to the institution to perform its self-evaluation.

Having in mind that the design of a syllabus is the main point to be taken into account in this project, I will state the concepts to be considered in the research regarding vital aspects as part of a syllabus based on Task Based Learning Teaching. It includes definitions and types.
As syllabus is one central concept in this research, in the paragraphs below I will state the concepts to be considered in the project regarding vital aspects in syllabus design such as its definition and types.

1.2. SYLLABUS

Hutchinson and Waters (1991) define it at its simplest level as a statement of what is to be learned and it reflects language and linguistic performance. By expanding the definition further based on our reading, we may see it as a standpoint on the nature of language, learning, and teaching as well as a summary of contents that acts as a guide for both teacher and learner.

Designing a syllabus also means to decide the order in which contents should be taught. Therefore, the choice of a syllabus implies a major responsibility and should be done paying attention to as many factors as possible regarding learner as the center of the educational action. Taking that idea as a point of departure makes teachers consider a process-oriented syllabus called learner-centered, which is concerned with the pedagogical process of how I will achieve our expected outcomes by taking into consideration the diverse learning styles and aiming at making learners independent.

Syllabus design is concerned with the selection, sequencing and justification of the content of the curriculum. Traditional approaches to syllabus development were concerned with selecting lists of linguistic features such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary as well as experiential content such as topics and themes. These sequenced and integrated lists were then presented to the methodologist; whose task was to develop learning activities to facilitate the learning of the pre specified content.

According to Widdowson (1989), the syllabus is the specification of a teaching program or pedagogic agenda which defines a particular subject for a particular group of learners.
Such a specification provides not only a characterization of content, the formalization in pedagogic terms of an area of knowledge or behavior, but also arranges this content as a succession of interim objectives. (Nunan.1988)

1.2.1 TYPES OF SYLLABUS FORMAT DESIGN

A design involves a series of actions performed by researchers, whose intention is to find the most suitable scheme in terms of approach, planning, and procedures. They must be coherent and interrelated in order to provide a general view and implementation plan that will allow teachers to achieve the goals proposed at the beginning of the project.

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) present the way of organizing the contents of the syllabus. They propose five possible types which can be adapted according to the objectives of the proposal and the type of syllabus selected. The types of format that these authors consider will be explained in the following lines:

The modular format This is used to work on thematic or situational language content where skills are of crucial importance. In this format, it is also important the role played by the materials, which are considered to allow as much flexibility as possible. The tasks are organized according to the skills to be developed. The integration of the skills cycle and the thematic unit constitutes a module.

The cyclical format Throughout this format teacher and students work on the same topics many times taking into account an order which goes from simple to more complex levels. The idea of recycling gives the opportunity to continue with the introduced subject matters without dropping them and at the same time to work on different aspects during the course.
The matrix format The matrix allows to work around different factors. In it the topics can be selected from a set of possibilities where the strict order is not too important. The tasks also incorporate different options to develop the situational content that is the most appropriate to manipulate this format.

The story-line format The consideration of building up syllabus in terms of elements that ensure coherence is focused on the story, which makes it possible to derive different aspects from it.

Based on this research intention, I think the modular format is the one that agrees with the current teaching practice in our University, where special attention is given to the four skills individually and as a whole. Besides, there is a work organized by modules in our context that is appropriated for the thematic language content.

1.2.2 BASES FOR THE SYLLABUS DESIGN

As I have chosen to work under the task-based syllabus, I will follow the criteria and guidelines set by Dubin and Olshtain (1986) and Nunan (1988) that are helpful when starting this type of design.

Needs analysis

According to Nunan (1988), needs analysis has to do with the techniques and procedures for collecting information to be used in syllabus design, it deals with learner analysis and tasks analysis. Needs analysis embraces the needs, purposes, and expectations of all the participants in the teaching learning process and involves societal expectations and constraints and the resources available for implementing the syllabus.
Setting objectives

Establishing certain learning goals or objectives is an important point to consider and they have to be related to all aspects of the syllabus, the contents, tasks and materials. It is also crucial to bear in mind the possibility to perform the objectives, which means that it is better to consider goals that are in accordance with the resources and are not difficult to translate into real facts. The goals or objectives can be addressed to the learners, to the teacher or to the contents; it will depend upon the type of syllabus and its proposals.

The goals also have to project the individual needs involving the needs and wants of the society as well as the academic, professional or occupational ones. To establish the objectives, Tyler, quoted by Nunan (1988), proposes four different ways:

- Specify the things that the teacher or instructor is going to do.
- Specify course content (topics, concepts, generalizations, etc).
- Specify generalized patterns of behavior (e.g. "to develop critical thinking").
- Specify the kinds of behavior which learners will be able to exhibit after the Instruction.

Selecting the content of the course

The contents vary according to the type of syllabus adopted and the things that are emphasized.

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) distinguish three subcomponents that are common to all syllabi and they are categorized in terms of their specificity. The first one is related to the content of the language itself, which includes structures and grammatical forms. The second subcomponent is the thematic content, which refers to the topics of interest and areas selected as themes to talk about or read in order to use the target language. At this
point learners’ age constitutes a matter of great importance with their social environment. The third aspect is the situational content that is closely related to the background in which the learning process is going to take place. Besides, it is important that the context provide the tools to develop the situations. These considerations must be analyzed when selecting the contents, taking into account their adaptation to the design and the objectives.

**Selecting materials**

Two aspects are important here: the existing materials, and creating them. Dubin and Olshtain (1986) propose the evaluation of the existing materials to include them in the improvement of all the constituents of the program. While surveying the materials, the authors cited above, state the way for evaluating them:

- The setting and the people involved in material creation.
- The harmony between materials and the syllabus.
- The alternatives provided for teachers and learners (learner-tasks, learning styles, presentation techniques, expected outcomes, etc.). There must be an integration of skills closely related to the goals of the syllabus.
- The authenticity of the text types included in the materials.
- The feeling of students and teachers towards the materials they have used.
- The audience: the learners’ differences and similarities, needs, and interests.

**Methodology and activities**

Considering the definition of syllabus, there is a diverging point between the authors who place methodology as part of the syllabus, and the ones who consider it as a separate unit. For the former, the methodology is the procedure to follow while developing the
syllabus. Such methodology is selected according to the syllabus and the work that is going to be carried out in the classroom.

In the same way, the activities will be designed and selected according to the methodology and to the proposed objectives. Each activity has to include the tasks to be developed. Such activities can involve the negotiation with the students to select the most suitable in order to get a successful development and the achievement of the objectives.

**Evaluation**

It needs to be preferably designed to consult the students’ and teachers’ opinions about the process. It is necessary to include the achievements and products of the students taking the tasks and the activities done by them, the processes translated in the way that syllabus is put into practice and the syllabus itself in terms of its goals and objectives. This evaluation must be constant and formative and will include a report that will allow, if necessary, to make changes as regards the plans made and the results at the end of each stage.

Breen and Candlin (1987) propose the questions to focus the evaluation:

- What am I (are we) doing?
- Why am I (are we) doing this?
- How do I (do we) act about this?
- What can this be used for?

**1.2.3 TYPES OF SYLLABUS**

There are several sorts of syllabus such as:
• Process-oriented syllabus (Widdowson, 1987)
• Product-oriented syllabus (Widdowson, 1987)
• Procedural syllabus (N. Prabhu, 1984)
• Content syllabus (Widdowson, 1987)
• Functional-notional syllabus (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983)
• Analytic syllabus (Wilkins, 1976)
• Task-Based syllabus (Nunan, 1988).

**Process-oriented and product-oriented syllabus**

Whereas a process-oriented syllabus is concerned with learning experiences and a development and growth in terms of skills and performance, a product-oriented syllabus focuses on specific items referring to vocabulary or grammar and pays special attention to the measurable outcomes of the knowledge involved therein. (Widdowson 1987)

This kind of syllabus is focused on the processes that the learners will carry out in their learning process. Process-Oriented Syllabus developed as a result of a sense of failure in product-oriented courses to enhance communicative language skills. It is a process rather than a product. That is, it focuses not on what the student will have accomplished upon completion of the program, but on the specification of learning tasks and activities that they will undertake during the course (Widdowson, 1987).

**Procedural and content syllabus**

The focus of this syllabus is based on meaning. This syllabus is proposed in order to replace the linguistic syllabus with a syllabus of tasks which are graded conceptually and grouped by similarity. The tasks and activities are planned in advance but not the linguistic content. The emphasis here is on meaning rather than form. The learner is preoccupied
with understanding, working out, relating, or conveying messages, and copes in the process, as well as he can, with the language involved. There is no syllabus in terms of vocabulary or structure and no presentation of language items (Syllabus Design. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1988).

Content syllabus differs from task-based syllabi in the experiential content which provides the point of departure for the syllabus. It is usually derived from some fairly well defined subject areas and these may be other academic subjects in an institution curriculum or other specialized subjects (Widdowson, 1987).

**Functional-notional syllabus**

The broader view of language provided by philosophers of language and sociolinguists was taken up during the 1970s by those involved in language teaching, and began to be reflected in syllabi and course books. This is not to say that functional and situational aspects of language use did not exist in earlier syllabi, but that for the first time there was a large-scale attempt to incorporate this broader view of language systematically into the language syllabus. In particular, it gave rise to what became known as functional-notional syllabus design.

In general, functions may be described as the communicative purposes for which we use language, while notions are the conceptual meanings (objects, entities, states of affairs, logical relationships, and so on) expressed through language.

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) suggest that functional-notionalism has the merit of placing the students and their communicative purpose at the center of the curriculum. They list the following benefits of adopting a functional-notional orientation:

- It sets realistic learning tasks.
- It provides for the teaching of everyday, real-world language.
- It leads us to emphasize receptive (listening, reading) activities before rushing learners into premature performance.
- It recognizes that the speaker must have a real purpose for speaking, and something to talk about.
- Communication will be intrinsically motivating because it expresses basic communicative functions.
- It enables teachers to exploit sound psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, linguistic and educational principles.
- It can develop naturally from existing teaching methodology.
- It enables a spiral curriculum to be used which reintroduces grammatical, topical and cultural material.
- It allows for the development of flexible, modular courses.
- It provides for the widespread promotion of foreign language courses.

**Analytic and synthetic syllabus planning**

Wilkins (1976) described a synthetic language teaching strategy as one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up. It means that the whole set of language is broken down into smaller units which are graded based on their level of difficulty and the pertinence of contents in that particular setting.

Analytic syllabi, on the other hand, are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes. (Wilkins 1975) This means that the main factor considered is communicative purpose of the language based on the way in which it is used.
Such consideration is useful to us since the students’ oral skills will be taken into account in the tasks assigned to them.

As I am going to privilege communicative purposes, it is necessary to address the TBS concept syllabus.

1.3. TASK-BASED SYLLABUS

Language is a complex communication system with a multi-dimensional and integrated nature and is situated within social and cognitive contexts. This is why there is an interaction of choices concerning each of the many levels of language use and the resources at one level should be used in conjunction with those at other levels. Consequently, activities should not concentrate on a single dimension of language, but bring the different dimensions together inside and around communication tasks, which is made possible through the implementation of a task-based syllabus because its main unit is the task and its center is the learner and his skills. Besides, the students will have a much more varied exposure to language free of control and a natural context is developed from their personal experiences with the language that is relevant to them.

Task-based syllabi represent a particular way of communicative language teaching. Instead of beginning the design process with lists of grammatical, functional-notional, and other items, the designer conducts a needs analysis which yields a list of the target tasks that the targeted learners will need to carry out in the ‘real-world’ outside the classroom. (Nunan.1988)

In order to have a clear understanding of this type of task, which is the one our innovation will use, it becomes necessary to define a task, its types, and how to work with it.
1.3.1 TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING

Since Task-Based Language Learning is an approach that takes into account task as a central point for the development of the learning process, the following paragraphs include the definition of TBLL, the guidelines and stages for the creation of this kind of lesson, and advantages brought by its implementation in the classroom.

According to Willis (1996), in TBLL (Task-Based Language Learning), learning is fostered through performing a series of activities as steps towards successful task realization. This means, learners use language in similar ways as needed in the real-world context, what makes learning authentic. Thus, in task performance the focus is on using language as a vehicle to respond to real-world needs. This means that, in TBLL, the language needed is drawn from the learners with help from the facilitator to meet the demands of the activities in a task. Carrying out TBLL relies heavily on learners actively experimenting with their store of knowledge and using skills of deduction and independent language analysis to exploit the situation fully. But of course, the participants are previously prepared for the task, so that they will be aware of the language they will need in order to carry it out successfully.

In this approach, motivation for communication becomes the primary driving force. It places the emphasis on communicative fluency rather than the hesitancy born of the pressure in more didactic approaches to produce unflawed utterances. Exposure to the target language should be in a naturally occurring context. This means that, if materials are used, they are not prepared especially for the language classroom, but are selected and adapted from authentic sources.

Currently, the study of task-based learning is most likely to be structured around five main themes. The first one concerns the pedagogical and historical bases for the use of
tasks within the language curriculum, including the role of tasks within pedagogical theory, early projects in task-based language teaching, and a consideration of three main ways in which tasks can be used within the syllabus. (I) In task-based syllabi, the syllabus is defined by a sequence of tasks, and tasks provide the central context for learning; (II) in task-referenced syllabi, tasks are used principally to define the target teaching and learning outcomes; (III) in task-supported syllabi, tasks serve only as one pedagogical tool among many, to achieve goals defined in other ways. The second main theme concerns empirical research into pedagogical tasks. This is likely to be divided into socio-cultural and cognitive approaches to the study of tasks.

Cognitive approaches to the study of language learning tasks are then currently conveniently divided into four main subsections. (a) Tasks and language features, considering the impact of task selection on the students' use of particular features of discourse and the lexical-grammar. (b) Tasks and interaction patterns, focusing on the extent to which task design can impact on the ways in which students interact in the classroom. (c) Tasks and language processing, considering the ways in which tasks can influence the way in which learners focus on fluency, accuracy and complexity. (d) Tasks and task repetition, exploring ways in which variants on the same task can be used to exploit learners' familiarity with it, in order to extend their awareness and control of language.

The third theme is the extent to which interpersonal involvement and negotiation can impact on the quality of learning. A fourth theme is the use of tasks in tests, drawing on studies of task data to study the impact of task design on performance. The last theme, task complexity, is a section which draws together the material studied so far, with a view to considering ways in which differences in task complexity can be exploited pedagogically within schemes of work, through the syllabus and at different levels of proficiency.
In the framework, the focus of attention is upon a final task. This task is defined as an undertaking that is authentic to the needs of the learners. It places emphasis on the value of the information and experiences, which participants bring to the language learning sessions. As participants share their knowledge, experience and opinions, they will be using previously acquired language, be exposed to new language and develop a variety of strategies for improving their oral language skills.

TBLL also allows the facilitator to use authentic topic material, which is relevant to the participants’ needs and encourages the development of skills necessary for the successful completion of real-life tasks.

In TBLL, lessons are based on the completion of central tasks and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it. The following principles would apply in the task-based approach to lesson planning, and would serve as guidelines:

A. Course structuring in terms of a series of tasks (or activities) that are linked to each other in terms of skills and sub skills;
B. The tasks to be sequenced in terms of increasing complexity, culminating in a synthesizing tasks (or activity);
C. Clear orientation, modeling, practice, and assessment criteria as part of the preparation for task performance;
D. Peer and instructor feed-back;
E. Continuous emphasis on initiative and participation;
F. Movement from teacher- to student-led activities;
G. Constant use of small group work;
H. Utilization of one’s background knowledge and experience;
J. Informal learning/social activities.
1.3.2 DEFINING A TASK

According to Nunan (1988), a task is an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding the language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task.

We distinguish between tasks, exercises and activities. A task is a communicative act that does not usually have a restrictive focus on a single grammatical structure. It also has a non-linguistic outcome. An exercise usually has a restrictive focus on a single language element, and has a linguistic outcome. An activity also has a restrictive focus on one or two language items, but also has a communicative outcome. In that sense, activities have something in common with tasks and something in common with exercises. (Nunan, 2001)

We must distinguish between real-world or target tasks, which are communicative acts that we achieve through language in the world outside the classroom, and pedagogical tasks, which are carried out in the classroom. (Nunan. 1988).

**Real-world or target task:** A communicative act we achieve through language in the world outside the classroom. (Nunan, 2001)

**Pedagogical tasks:** A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than forms. They have a non-linguistic outcome, and can be divided into rehearsal tasks or activation tasks. (Nunan, 1988)

**Rehearsal task:** A piece of classroom work, in which learners rehearse in class a communicative act they will carry out outside the class. (Nunan, 1988)
**Activation task:** A piece of classroom work involving communicative interaction, but not one in which learners will be rehearsing for some out-of-class communication. Rather they are designed to activate the acquisition process. (Nunan, 1988)

**Communication activity:** A piece of classroom work involving a focus on a particular linguistic feature but also involving the genuine exchange of meaning. (Nunan, 1988)

Here it is important to consider the principles which regulate the design of tasks in foreign language teaching and their role and use in teaching situations.

### 1.3.3 PRINCIPLES TO TASK DESIGN

According to Nunan (2013), in describing, analyzing and creating tasks, it is useful to think of the four essential dimensions of “tasks”. These are the dimensions of language, procedure, learner and learning process. In each of these dimensions there are several key principles. These are:

**The authenticity principle**

Authentic tasks provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources: The task affords learners the opportunity to examine the problem from a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives, rather than a single perspective that learners must imitate to be successful. The use of a variety of resources rather than a limited number of preselected references requires students to detect relevant from irrelevant information (e.g., Young, 1993; Spiro, Vispoel, Schmitz, Samarapungavan, & Boeger, 1987; Bransford, Vye, Kinzer, & Risko, 1990; Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1990b)
In terms of language, the aspect that should be considered is the extent to which linguistic data that the learners work with are authentic, and to what extent the relationships between form and communication function are clear to the learner. Considering the purpose of this project, I can say that authentic data are samples of spoken and written language that have not been specially written for the purpose of teaching language. Nevertheless, we teachers have to make sure the tasks we assign are comprehensible to our students. The advantage of using authentic data is that learners encounter target language items in the kinds of contexts where they naturally occur.

The form - function principle

When designing tasks, the second key consideration concerns teaching language in ways that make form and function relationships match. In the case of the active / passive voice, the exercises in which learners are asked to carry out linguistic transformations (changing active sentences into passives and back again), may be fine for teaching new linguistic forms, but not for showing them how to use the forms for making meanings. In the previous case, the implicit message for the learner is that the two forms are alternative ways of saying the same thing. The main point in activating this principle is to design tasks that require learners to use inductive and deductive reasoning to develop their own understanding of the relationship between form and function. This is a developmental process, and it usually takes learners many years to develop an accurate understanding of a particular relationship.

The task dependency principle

In relation to what learners actually do regarding the data they are working with, the key question is: What principles can we teachers draw on in order to arrive at an instructional sequence in which tasks flow logically from one to the next? In this case, what can be done is to design tasks in such a way that each succeeding task in the
instructional sequence flows out of, and is dependent on the one that precedes it. In this way, a series of tasks in a lesson or unit of work forms a pedagogical ladder that enables the learner to reach higher and higher levels of communicative performance.

Another way to sequence tasks is from reception to production: listening and reading tasks usually come before writing and speaking. This way the former tasks can act as models for learner, providing them with language and content to draw on when they come to produce their own language. In this case I am dealing with reproductive tasks; the student reproduces language provided by the teacher, the textbook, or the tape.

In contrast, there are creative tasks that require the learners to come up with language for which they have not been specifically cued; they are asked to put together familiar elements in new or novel combinations. This is specifically appealing to learners' motivation, as they will be able to incorporate an experiential philosophy of learning by doing, by having the opportunity to contribute their own ideas, and by making their own choices.

The European Framework of Reference (2001) presents an extensive production on language-using tasks that a learner may be required to tackle in order to deal with the exigencies of the situations that arise in the various domains. For instance, the Threshold Level (1990) gives examples of tasks in the personal domain: Personal identification: learners can say who they are, spell their names, state their address, give their phone number, say when and where they were born, state their age, sex, marital status, nationality, what they do for living, describe their family, state their religion, likes and dislikes, describe other people, understand similar information from others. Tasks are, indefinitely large in number, so it is not possible to specify all the communicative tasks that may be required in real-life situations.
Teachers should reflect upon the learners’ communicative needs to specify the communicative tasks they should be equipped to face; learners should also be engaged in the process as an aspect of awareness raising and self-direction.

In the educational domain it may be helpful to distinguish between the tasks which learners are equipped / required to deal with as language users and those in which they engage as part of the language learning process itself. For instance:

* Types of tasks: simulations, role play, and classroom interaction;
* Goals: group-based learning goals;
* Outcomes: artifacts, texts, summaries, tables, presentations, and learning outcomes: negotiation, decision making; monitoring and evaluation of the relative success of the task conceived and as carried out, regarding relevance, difficulty, and constraints.

### 1.3.4 TASKS AND THEIR ROLE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Nunan, David (1989) sets: Tasks are a feature of everyday life in the personal, public, educational or occupational domains. Task accomplishment by an individual involves the strategic activation of specific competences in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a clearly defined goal and a specific outcome. Tasks can be extremely varied in nature, and many involve language activities to a greater or lesser extent, for example: creative (telling a story), taking part in a discussion, giving a presentation. A task can be very simple or very complex, it can involve a greater or lesser number of steps, and communication is an integral part of tasks where participants engage in interaction, production, reception or mediation, or a combination of two or more of these. Communicative pedagogical tasks aim to actively involve learners in meaningful communication, are relevant, and challenging, but feasible, and have identifiable outcomes. Classroom tasks, whether reflecting real-life use or essentially pedagogic in nature, are communicative to the extent that they require learners to comprehend,
negotiate and express meaning in order to achieve a communicative goal. The emphasis is on successful task completions and consequently the primary focus is on meaning as learners realize their communicative intentions.

In considering task performance in pedagogical contexts it is necessary to take into account both the learner’s competence and the conditions and constraints to a particular task (which may be manipulated in order to modify the level of difficulty of classroom tasks) and the strategic interplay of learner competences and tasks parameters in carrying out the task.

Furthermore, tasks require the activation of a range of competencies such as knowledge and experience of the world; socio-cultural knowledge (concerning life in the target community and essential differences between practices, values, and beliefs in that community and the learner’s own society. Intellectual skills (mediating between two cultures), learning skills, and everyday practical skills and know-how; the learner will need communicative language (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic knowledge and skills).

Successful task accomplishment may be facilitated, by the prior activation of learner’s competence. In the initial problem posing / goal setting phase of a task, provide / raise awareness of the necessity of linguistic elements, by drawing on prior knowledge and experience to activate the learners’ appropriate schemata, and by encouraging task planning rehearsal. In this way the processing load during task execution and monitoring is reduced and the learner’s attention is freer to deal with any unexpected content or form-related problem that may arise, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful task completion in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

In assigning task-based activities, it is essential to take into account that learners comprehend the task assigned involving the strategic interplay of a range of learner competences and task-related factors. Individuals may differ considerably in their
approach to the same task. Consequently the difficulty of any particular task for an individual, and the strategies which he/she adopts to cope with the demands of the task, are the results of a number of interrelated factors arising from his or her competences and individual characteristics, and the specific conditions and constraints under which the task is carried out. Besides that, there are affective and cognitive factors that should be considered, as mentioned before. Tasks realization should not affect the learners' self-esteem, but promote positive self-image and lack of inhibitions. Therefore, for reluctant participants, it is recommended to have them work in small groups until they gain more confidence.

Interaction and production demand support, time, clear goals, predictability, physical conditions, and participants. This includes going through a preparatory phase (training to assure the type of response required). The selection and organization of themes, sub-themes and specific notions is to be determined in the light of the assessment of the communicative needs on the learners concerned. (Common European Framework, 2001. Nunan, David 1989).

1.3.5 TASK DIFFICULTY

As mentioned before, individuals may differ considerably in their approach to the same task. The difficulty to any particular task for an individual, and the strategies which he or she adopts to cope with the demands of the task, are the result of a number of interrelated factors arising from his/her competences (general communicative) and individual characteristics, and specific conditions and constraints under which the task is carried out. For these reasons the ease or the difficulty of the task cannot be predicted with certainty. In language learning context consideration needs to be given to ways of building flexibility and differentiation into task design and implementation. This means taking into account the specific competences of the learner and factors that affect tasks difficulty, and
manipulating task parameters in order to modify the task according to the needs and capabilities of the learner. (Common European Framework, 2001)

1.3.6 THE ADVANTAGES OF TBL

Task-based learning has some clear advantages:

* Unlike a Present Practice Production approach, the students are free of language control. In all three stages they must use all their language resources rather than just practicing one pre-selected item.

* A natural context is developed from the students' experiences with the language that is personalized and relevant to them.

* The students will have a much more varied exposure to language with TBL. They will be exposed to a whole range of lexical phrases, collocations and patterns as well as language forms.

* The language explored arises from the students' needs. This need dictates what will be covered in the lesson rather than a decision made by the teacher or the course book.

* TBL is a strong communicative approach where students spend a lot of time communicating during a task-based lesson.

* It is enjoyable and motivating.

Furthermore, TBLT is believed to promote language acquisition by:

a. Providing learners with opportunities to make the language input they receive more comprehensible,
b. Furnishing contexts in which learners need to produce output which others can understand, and

c. Making the classroom closer to real-life language situations.

Nowadays, more and more designers of communicative syllabi attempts to organize communicative language teaching around a specification of communicative tasks. Some classroom activities are often designed to focus on completing tasks that are mediated through language or involve interaction or negotiation of information and information sharing.

Given the fact that types of learners, learning styles and learning strategies are related to this aspect and they are other key terms in my project, I also need to define them and use the insights provided by the authors who have worked on them.

Therefore, the terms "learning style" and "learning strategy" and their implications are pertinent to my study. The former refers to the manner in which an individual prefers to approach learning depending on his/her cognitive structure, personality traits, and socio-cultural and educational factors. The latter is concerned with the mental processes employed to learn and use the target language. The distinction between these two concepts will help me define and understand more thoroughly the types of learners I will deal with and the methodology that will be more suitable in their case.

1.4. ENGLISH LEARNING STYLES AND LEARNERS TYPES

- Learning styles

Learning styles may be thought of as "cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (Keefe, 1979) or more simply as "a general predisposition,
voluntary or not, toward processing information in a particular way.” (Skehan, 1991); Learning styles are the general approaches—for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual—that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. These styles are “the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior” (Cornett, 1983, p. 9). I perceive as one central aspect the fact that physical, affective, and cognitive factors combine to represent the world and determine our learning styles and this is why the data collected about this issue will help me shape my instructional design.

Since there is a very long list of identified styles depending on the author (Ausbel, Hill, and Dunn to name a few), I will use the categories defined by Rebecca Oxford (1991). She identifies five domains in which the types act at study and work:

- How learners use their physical senses (Three styles: visual, auditory, and hands-on.)
- How learners deal with other people (Two styles: extroverted and introverted.)
- How learners handle possibilities (Two styles: intuitive-random and concrete-sequential.)
- How learners approach tasks (Two styles: closure-oriented and open.)
- How learners deal with ideas (Two styles: global and analytic)

- **Learner types**

Following the idea of the possible correlations between learning preferences and biographical variables, Willing, (1988) led a study in which he found that learners could be categorized by type according to the pattern of their responses on a questionnaire. Those learner types and their preferences are set as follows:
Concrete learners: they tend to like games, pictures, films, video, audio material, talking in pairs and practicing English outside class.

Analytical learners: they like studying grammar, reading, studying alone, finding their own mistakes and working on problems set by the teacher.

Communicative learners: they like to learn by watching, listening to native speakers learning new words by hearing them, learning by conversations, and using English in real situations.

Authority-oriented learners: they prefer the teacher to explain everything and like to have their own textbook, to study grammar, to write everything in a notebook and to learn new words by reading.

The preceding concepts are a source of ideas for reflection and lead to methodological implications in terms of the options and activities I will consider in my lesson plans due to the deeper understanding of our population I will gain.

Concerning another fundamental term presented previously, i.e., learning strategies or the specific ways to approach a problem or task and handle information, I will consider Oxford's strategy classification system mainly because it seems more comprehensive to us and encompasses them in a clear and thorough diagram which is helpful to locate them with a simple overview. However, I will also consider Brown (1994), who shows an interesting division explained by O'Malley, Chamot et al. (1989) who classify them into three main categories: metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. "Metacognitive" is a term that indicates an executive function and involves planning for learning, thinking about the process as it is taking place, monitoring of production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after the completion of an activity. "Cognitive" strategies refer to specific learning tasks and involve a direct manipulation of the learning material. "Socio-affective" strategies are related to social mediation and transactions with others.
All the previous concepts and considerations are essential both as a theoretical foundation and a guide for the application as regards the issues on which I have reflected in this work. Curriculum is the starting point as a blanket covering the educational process; then, syllabus is dealt with as it embodies an order and sequence for pedagogical action grounded on theory. After having made this choice as to the type of syllabus to be implemented for the teaching purpose specified, I defined what a task is and its types. This led me to consider the definite use of tasks in TBL in order to start conceiving the creation of the proposed syllabus. Besides, psychological aspects referring to learning were included in terms of motivation, learner types, and learning styles and strategies, all of which encompass a great part of what is involved in students’ behavior in a second language learning process.
CHAPTER II
METODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH METHOD

This is a mixed study using qualitative and quantitative instruments.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon.

Qualitative Research

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as involving “… an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.”

2.2 TYPE OF RESEARCH: ACTION RESEARCH

Action Research is “practitioner research aimed at improving one’s own practice” (McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead 1996:7). According to Cohen and Manion (2000:226-27), action research is “a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention”. Cohen and Manion (1985) cited
by Nunan (1992) provides another definition saying that it is “first and foremost situational, being concerned with the identification of problems in a specific context”. They also identified collaboration as an important feature of this type of research as Kemmis and McTaggart (1988 p.9) put it, “The linking of the terms action and research highlights the essential feature of the method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvements and as a means of increasing knowledge.”

Action research was my choice because it involves processes of reflection and analysis in the classroom as a means to change or improve conditions of learning. Besides, in a small scale project as the one I am requested to do as a requirement for graduation, this model suits the purpose I intend to fulfil in terms of time and procedure.

**Description and application of the Research Method**

To carry out this investigation, Action Research under the model offered by Cohen & Manion (1985) was chosen as it provided the steps needed to contemplate the achievement of the goal:

1. Identify and formulate the problem
2. Discuss and negotiate with interested parties
3. Review literature
4. Modify or redefine the initial problem as necessary
5. Select research procedures and methods
6. Select evaluation procedures
7. Implement the project over the required time period
8. Interpret the data obtained

Initially, I had observed a classroom situation on which I wanted to intervene in order to bring changes to it. The specific issue was my students’ performance in classroom activities that were set too high for their level. Such fact was reflected on their tests marks,
and it will eventually affect their FCE scores (First Certificate English) too. Thus, I identified the problem as a research question in terms of the students’ abilities and I formulated a proposal which intended to find out whether a syllabus redesign under a task-based approach might help my students feel more motivated when seeing a more consistent understanding and then becoming more proficient.

The core of the decision process was intersected by discussion and negotiation; therefore, I had preliminary analyses of the situation as well as a consideration of the viability of the project regarding the chronogram and the research design following the action research cycle within the time available for my graduation project. Then, I started looking for theory on the basic and ancillary constructs of my project, namely: curriculum, syllabus, types and design, TBL, learner types, learning styles and strategies. Simultaneously, I gathered more relevant information about research in EFL, the methods for data collection I would use and the techniques for analyses and interpretation.

Given the fact that research is an ongoing cycle and that a research question becomes redefined as one advances during the process due to subsequent delimitations and specifications, the need to make several modifications emerged along the way. For instance, the idea of selecting the task-based type arose after some advances as it seemed the most appropriate choice and it was followed by the use of TBL, which came as a result of that decision. Next, I selected the research procedures and methods as regards the approach that will be taken and the objective or purpose of the study, which are stated in the chapter explaining the research design.

After that, the evaluation procedures were considered due to the important of this systematic process that will determine the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by pupils. Besides, it will help us take decisions to solve any shortcomings in the program after having obtained information about the key issues: needs analysis, content, implementation methodology, resources, teacher, learner, assessment, and evaluation.
2.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

- **Questionnaires:** They were applied to determine what they knew about the existing English program in the University and provided teacher-researchers with data, judgments and opinions from the learners as a whole without considering a representative sample from the population.

- **Survey:** One survey was designed. It was applied to enquire about the type of learner I can find in my classroom.

- **Evaluation and co evaluation formats / Final evaluation format:** The information from their formats, which they will register during the implementation, will let me know what they think and how they feel as regards my work with the lesson plans. These evaluation formats were administered after each one of the lesson plans during the implementation. The final evaluation format will give me information about their feelings during the whole process and the suitability of my implementation.

As Nunan (1992) puts it, a questionnaire “enables the researcher to collect data in field settings, and the data themselves are more amenable to quantification than discursive data such as free-form field notes, participant observers’ journals, the transcripts of oral language.” The items in these questionnaires were chosen because I can collect and analyze responses more easily. In the categories set by Youngman (1986) cited by Bell (1987), the type of questions used was the scale, in which learners indicate to what extent they feel a certain attitude or behavior.

Surveys are helpful to obtain an immediate picture of attitudes and conditions at a definite moment without trying to modify anything when collecting the data; therefore, I chose this instrument to start gathering data of my project. The sampling was selected taking into account the fact that this is a small-scale study, so I used the purposive
strategy, in which “subjects are handpicked by the researcher on the basis of his/her own estimate of their typicality” (Nunan, 1992).

Evaluation and co-evaluation formats are tools that display descriptive free-flowing entries written in narrative form. They are subjective, deal with feelings, opinions, and personal experiences and comment on what occurs in the classroom.

Since this research project will contain insights from the students, they will have to observe their feelings and thoughts and be aware of them. Therefore, the introspective tool known as evaluation format will be useful, too. As the students will also be participant-observers and research informants, having them keep this tool will lead to an interesting interaction beyond the classroom by interpreting the data gathered through the students’ recording, identifying, reflecting, and brainstorming. These processes will deal with facts and difficulties in the classroom and suggestions for improvement.

2.4 TECHNIQUES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the product of all considerations - sifting, organizing, summarizing, and synthesizing the data - involved in the design and planning of the research so as to arrive at the results and conclusions of the study. (Seliger and Shohamy, 1995.) Given the fact that the data analysis technique depends on the other components of the research, there must be a valid relationship among data analysis, the data collected, the research design, and the research problem. Thus, in a qualitative type of research the set of techniques used must suit the design and be valid for the purpose stated at the beginning.

In qualitative research, where qualitative data have been collected by procedures such as surveys, questionnaires, and journals, the data are kept in the form of written words. Then, at different stages of the analysis the researchers identify, delimit, and sort the
relevant data to see categories emerge. This is why a set of categories for dealing with data will be derived. This is an inductive procedure. Thus, once the categories have been established they are applied to the remainder of the data; this leads to refinements of the categories and the discovery of new patterns which serve as an ordering system for the data content.

An important procedure is validating the results in terms of their reliability and validity because of the possible subjectivity associated with the analysis and interpretation of the results.

2.5 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Berger, C. and Kam, R. (1996) stated that “Instructional Design is the systematic development of instructional specifications using learning and instructional theory to ensure the quality of instruction. It is the entire process of analysis of learning needs and goals and the development of a delivery system to meet those needs. It includes development of instructional materials and activities; and tryout and evaluation of all instruction and learner activities”.

The problem the students of first level of English at Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia faces is the lack of a syllabus to follow the learning process. This problem has been coped through the design of a Task Based Syllabus. It contains four didactic units that were put in practice in and out the class room which the intention to make the students develop communicative skills. The material used to carry out the activities was adapted according to the topics of the units. At the end, the students evaluated the process by answering surveys and a questionnaire. The result was positive if having in mind students’ opinions that demonstrate the process was successfully carried out.
The results obtained from this study will be considered in a broader perspective as they may lead to further steps taken by those who will benefit somehow, namely the teachers at Universidad Cooperativa in subsequent action research cycles born from their initiative. The levels of interpretation of those results may be conclusions, implications, and recommendations (Seliger and Shohamy, 1995.) The conclusions given present the statements formulated by the researcher as generalizations that go beyond the specific study carried out. The implications consider the consequences of the results as interpreted by researchers in the light of a theoretical and conceptual framework of the topic. The recommendations are statements advising on the usefulness and applicability of the results.

In order to overcome problems that arise from relying on a single form of evidence or perspective such as intrinsic biases, I combined diverse sources for information through time triangulation. Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identify four types of triangulation: Methods triangulation - checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods. It is common to have qualitative and quantitative data in a study. These elucidate complementary aspects of the same phenomenon. Often the points where these data diverge are of great interest to the qualitative researcher and provide the most insights. Triangulation of sources - examining the consistency of different data sources from within the same method. Analyst Triangulation - using multiple analyst to review findings or using multiple observers and analysts. This can provide a check on selective perception and illuminate blind spots in an interpretive analysis. The goal is not to seek consensus, but to understand multiple ways of seeing the data. Theory/perspective triangulation - using multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret the data.

First, I applied the questionnaires for the needs analysis. Then, I analyzed and coded the data from these questionnaires and compared that set of data to the one gathered from teachers. After that, questionnaire number two was used to find out the type of learners they are and the information was analyzed.
Finally, I collected students’ evaluation and co evaluation formats after the implementation of the first two didactic units as well as the final evaluation format, which shows their feelings and the suitability of our implementation. All the previous process became a kind of cross check to verify the soundness of our project and the accuracy of the decisions taken.

2.6 CONTEXT

The context is a penetrating and powerful strength in any learning process. However, the instructional design models are low in orientation on how to fit contextual factors to enhance learning and transfer. This is why this instructional design defines and describes the issues necessary to let me design a Task Based Learning Syllabus to be carried out in the classroom with the students of First Semester at Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia.

The following aspects make me realize the situation established in the English learning process.

Needs Analysis

After applying a survey at the beginning of the English course to the students of first level at Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia in order to discover their feelings about the process while learning English as a foreign language, they expressed that the syllabus carried out by the English teachers in the classroom is not based on communicative competences, they say the course design does not involve assignments which emphasize development of communicative skills, there is not active learning environment with lively and engaging class sessions; they think teachers must involve reading, story-telling and role play activities as well as warm ups, also students believe that the methodology followed by teachers is not the appropriate that let them make an approach to the learning
of the language; about the evaluation they think tasks, exams and quizzes do not reflect important aspects of the course; instructional materials are not effectively used in the classroom and finally class size is not large enough for the development of the subject. Considering that students ought to perform further activities in the "Rosetta Stone" platform, they think that this is not consistent with the requirements of the content mainly carried out in class because they are extensive and the time they must spend is quite long and they have no the language skills capacity to carry out this process. This situation means that they do not feel motivated enough to undertake the process of learning English.

Thinking about the situation, I was capable to determine that what students need to be succeed during the process is a language program meeting. That is why I decided to design a Syllabus based on Task Based Learning to be carried out in the classroom that let them appropriate themselves of their learning, this way they are able to develop skills to communicate in English in real situations.

A. Who are the learners?

The research-population consists of students in the first semester of English. There are about 800 students in the first semester in the English courses, but I selected 11 to carry out the study under investigation. In addition, students in the research-population are attending different school programs and studying the specific language to be tested for a defined minimum period of academic levels as a requirement for graduation.

Students are at an average age between 16 and 50. Strata are 1-2 - and 3. Strata 1 and 2 are the majority.
Students attend classes in two shifts: morning and evening. In the morning hours the students are teenagers who do not have a defined job while in the evening are adults who mostly work.

B. Who are the teachers?

The Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia is staffed with 10 teachers working full-time between men and women respectively. These teachers are in the age range within 27 and 48. There are 4 women and 6 men whose level of professional education is in the range of specialization the majority and master the minority.

The work experience of teachers varies between 5 and 20 years in higher education institutions. The average years they have worked at Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia is 9 years.

C. Why is the syllabus design necessary?

The term design implies a systematic or intensive planning and ideation process prior to the development of something or the execution of some plan in order to solve a problem. Designing is a type of solving problem.

The lack of a syllabus that allows achieving communicative competences in the English class at the Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia is a problem that has to be solved through designing a strategy to tackle the situation created.

In 2010 the university decided not to continue English classes with the guiding text that had been used by teachers and students for five years. Instead it was decided to implement some guides designed by teachers who do not have expertise to do this kind of material to cope the teaching process without developing a syllabus but following some
thematic instructions. It became a problem for teachers who recognize that a syllabus involves the integration of subject matter (what to talk about) and linguistic matter (how to talk about it), that is, the actual matter that makes up teaching, it is necessary to have a pertinent syllabus design that matches what is going to be taught and also that reflects the needs of students considering what they think must remain in the syllabus, what should be removed and what should be included considering their likes and dislikes and what can prove to be useful thinking about the everyday changing world of today. That’s why designing an EFL task-based syllabus is a must.

D. Where and how the syllabus will be implemented?

There are different issues to be considered in order to achieve a successful implementation. They are as follows:

- Social factor analysis
- Institutional analysis
- Teachers analysis
- Students analysis

Social Factor Analysis

Lately, globalization has become a common factor in our society and throughout the world. Since language has become an important issue, people need to be competent in the English language seeing that it is one of the most spoken languages in the world. Because of this, there is a need to learn the English language regardless of issues such as social class, economical factors, among others, that may have an impact on the access to education.
To cope with globalization from an academic perspective and to approximate students in learning the English language, the Universidad Cooperariva de Colombia adopted the Common European Framework for teaching English (2001) in order to make students acquire communication skills that enable them to be not only professional in their area of study, but a bilingual professional who can perform in different areas of social life, work and personal and to achieve this students must be prepared taking into account the domain of language they should possess.

The Common European Framework (2001) divides learners into three broad divisions that can be divided into six levels; for each level, it describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing. These levels are:

- A1 Beginner.
- A2 Elementary.
- B1 Intermediate.
- B2 Upper intermediate.

These descriptors can be applied to students taking into account the following factors:

- The program the student is enrolled.
- The year the student began the learning process.
- The academic situation of the students at the moment of start the English course.

To understand the above it is necessary to say that the academic programs at the university have different requirements students must comply with in order to get a professional degree. That is why the levels of the courses of English are not the same for all the students. They vary according to the program´s needs. Some of the students have to get level A1 and some level B2. None level C1.
The English language teaching in Colombia is regulated by the MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional) with a specific publication (Lineamientos curriculares en idiomas extranjeros); and lately with the inclusion of Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras in order to point out what concepts ought to be the average standard for the Colombian learners to acquire.

Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia has been concerned about providing the best education to its community so that they can have access to the good program that it offers considering quality, methodology, and resources.

**Institutional Analysis**

The University Cooperativa de Colombia, from the first half of 2011, creates the Subdirectorate nationwide of multilingualism. In the context of globalization, the Department of Internationalization of the Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, with the aim of concentrating efforts at cooperation, and provide guidelines to training programs, teachers and students have tools and building institutional capacities to be based on context knowledge overall, it has created five service lines that will be helpful for management excellence of the 18 seats in mobility issues.

Fernanda Caballero, Mobility Specialist Internationalization National Cooperative University of Colombia, Bogotá spoke for the institution, on these five lines:

International cooperation: This line helps programs or different areas of the university to manage international conventions, to which they can access all the teachers, students and managers nationwide, regardless of which of the 18 seats the agreement is signed.
Information for Internationalization: this line meets the needs and strengths of the programs of each of the venues nationwide. It is also responsible for preparing the college information that will be released internationally.

International Mobility: This line helps national and international student mobility, teacher or manager and also students and professors mobility applying to any of the national headquarters.

Internationality and Multilingualism: a program that was born in the National Directorate of Internationalization, but is now a completely separate area, which leads the national strategy the Global Festival, annual event that shows a country and all its cultural context to the institution, this strategy seeks to develop intercultural skills among students and the international community to carry out their academic goal in this area.

Internationalization of the academy: this line help in motivating teachers to have bibliographies in another language in order to contextualize the student in the international arena. Similarly, the online virtual discussions with invited foreign lecturers and physical movement of the same.

In addition to the lines of work, the Department of Internationalization offers national talks called "Talks Passport" which call for students and teachers to get involved in issues of international mobility as Colciencias and ICETEX.

Thus, the Cooperative University of Colombia, in search of excellence, has multiplied the mobilization of hundreds of members of the academic community, from the creation of the Department in 2011, with more than 466 students, 569 teachers and 203 administrative which carry high the name of the institution, both in Colombia and in the world.
This unit comprises the set of objectives and actions that improve the knowledge and use of foreign languages in the members of the University community. In the perspective of a society of knowledge and to be an active part of this, the individual must acquire communication skills that enable her/him to interact in a global world. Therefore, the Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia, seeks for its University community to acquire the multilingual competence and increase and improve its language skills and be able to use them proactively interrelates with society.

Subdirección de Multilingüismo

The Lingua program is the Open Institutional response to the needs of teaching and learning of foreign languages of the members of the university community. Open Lingua is directly coordinated by the Division of Multilingualism whose office is attached to the Directorate of Planning and Development and the Academic Vice.

To achieve organizational goals and to respond to national and international requirements for learning foreign languages particularly English; Open Lingua program has a mixed methodology (blended learning) which aims to combine the best of traditional classroom education with the best of virtual education in an environment that facilitates the teaching and learning a foreign language. Thus, the program establishes a component of class 3 hours per week and one virtual, who are living through freelance work 3 hours per week, therefore, students take a weekly commitment of 6 hours for four levels of English training. The component of autonomous work is done through the educational platform Tell Me More, which guarantees students the Open Lingua program the opportunity to practice and develop communication skills in a foreign language.
To develop competence in a foreign language, the Open Lingua program bases its principles on the communicative approach, which states that the main objective is for students to develop skills promoting negotiation of meaning rather than grammar, thus seeking a real interaction with their environment. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, therefore places special emphasis on developing communicative tasks using authentic materials and the environment. The Open Lingua program then seeks to the end of each course, students can use the language to communicate in specific situations.

At the time, the Open Lingua program operates in 17 of the 18 campuses of the University, except Paragraph headquarters. The approximate average number of students per semester is 10,000, who attend classes in different groups and schedules, which are attended by 110 teachers.

**Teachers Factors Analysis**

The teachers' profile at Universidad Cooperativa bears in mind teachers who have a very solid and professional preparation, who are updated in the teaching and learning fields. There are 10 English teachers. In general, they have different levels in the English language. This is due to the different background that they have as a result of the training they have received in their own educational institutions, and also, to the fact that these teachers have been exposed to the language in different ways such as traveling abroad, or taking English programs at different institutions. They have been teaching English for more than 5 years. Half of the teachers distribute the preparation time throughout the school year meanwhile the other half do not. They prepare classes in one semester or quarter. However they consider the distribution of time to their preparation needs is not appropriate due to they have many other duties that have nothing to do with their classes. As part of the duties they have to deal with is provide tutorials to students which take part of their assigned teaching load. Teachers say that it is a situation that has changed over the past three years. In the way teachers have changed their teaching since they have
started teaching they agree that they are teaching a greater range of English courses; the student population and its needs have become more challenging; they have less time available to work with individual students in class also to work with students outside class.

On the other hand, most of the teachers say that they manage workload pressures changing their assignments so they are simpler to mark; change their teaching methods to save time; they give less individual or written feedback on student assignments; they adopt more holistic approaches to marking; they eliminate extracurricular involvement. To workload stress and cope strategies teachers describe the teaching of English today like students are more inclined to raise personal or sensitive issues in the English classes than they are elsewhere in school; half of English teachers are routinely expected to deal with literacy issues in their school whereas the other half are not; most of the teachers feel the high level of verbal exchange in English classes makes English teaching particularly not stressful. Teachers work 40 hours per week, with an average of 9 groups each of three hours per week. Within their duties must serve students, provide advice and tutorials. In addition there are 15 hour professorships in charge of school covering those hours that full-time teachers are not enough.

**Learners Factors Analysis**

The learners, who are eleven students of first semester, share a similar background. They are between 18 and 22 years old. There are 7 men and 4 women who come from families with a lower middle standard of living. Most of them come from public schools.

There can also be found different learners’ characteristics which affect the learning process such as the attitude from some students to the academic responsibilities which need to be fulfilled by them such as homework, workshops, attendance to class, and attitude in class, which are not shown by some of them.
After applying questionnaire number 1, I found the following relevant information concerning most of the students in the group: they said that their learning process of the English language had been fairly good. I also found that more than half of them have taken English courses.
CHAPTER III
PROPOSAL

In this chapter the design, implementation and evaluation of the proposal is presented.

3.1 SETTING OBJECTIVES

Task-based language teaching can make language learning in classrooms closer to the natural route and may reach a higher rate of language acquisition because it provides learners with a clear communicative goal, interaction is needed to reach the goal, and comprehensive input can occur, and then language acquisition is facilitated.

To find out how learning process of English as a foreign language might be impacted by the design and implementation of a Task-Based Syllabus, the following are the objectives set:

- To communicate goals in real contexts.
- To make students become confident and independent.
- To increase motivation and make learning enjoyable.

3.2 SELECTING CONTENTS

The contents selected are organized in four didactic units. The four didactics units presented in this proposal are to be developed as follows: each didactic unit is composed by three lesson plans. Each lesson plan takes at least a total of two classes of 90 minutes and four didactic units are proposed to be worked in the 3 terms that comprise a full course. What I present in these two first units is the implementation that took place during
the second semester of 2014. These contents are related to the ones on the platform “Rosetta “Stone” previously “Tell Me More”.

For the two initial units of the syllabus of the implementation I selected a set of topics related to the world our students will soon face and the language forms that might be present when developing the tasks around those notions. Such topics were:

- Meeting people
- Places to visit

These topics were developed in the tasks that were implemented in the classroom. Two other sets of topics were proposed for further planning and implementation:

- Family Ties
- Home

For the two last units I chose the topics that could be the complement of the two first units as a sequence of the situations they face every day as a routine that is simple to be followed by the students.

3.3 SELECTING MATERIALS

In order to select the materials, the following aspects were considered:

- The setting and the people involved in material creation.
- The harmony between materials and the syllabus.
- The alternatives provided for teachers and learners (learner-tasks, learning styles, presentation techniques, expected outcomes, etc.) There must be an integration of skills closely related to the goals of the syllabus.
• The authenticity of the text types included in the materials.
• The feeling of students and teachers towards the materials they have used.
• The audience: the learners' differences and similarities, needs, and interests.

In order to design the tasks, I used: a CD player, CD’s, computers, handouts, magazines, newspapers, construction paper, the multimedia lab and markers.

3.4 METHODOLOGY

To set up the topics chosen to be followed by the students in the classroom, I designed four didactic units which content were related to the ones they have to work on line through the virtual platform “Tell Me More” now called “Rosetta Stone” which is a must for the students; this platform has been implemented as a tool they have to develop as part of their learning process.

All the units consist of three lesson plans. Each one follows the same framework bearing in mind that the main idea is the learners are able to make an approach in language learning situations in real contexts. To do this, the lessons were designed considering the methodology used to Task Based Learning as follows:

✔ Pre-task
✔ Task preparation
✔ Task realization
✔ Post task

In the approach of the task-based language learning, motivation students have to communicate is their main motor. Emphasis on the ease with which communication is achieved and leave out grammatical and repetition stereotypes is made. The use of language should be a natural, real, everyday context. In this line of thought, the materials
used for the activities carried out during the process must be selected, preferably authentic materials that serve as a model and allow students to develop their skills spontaneously.

In the Task-based approach there is no prior determination as to what language will be used because the lesson is developed around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what occurs as the students complete it. These are the stages its implementation follows according to Jane Willis (1996):

✔ **Pre-task**

The teacher introduces the topic and gives the students clear instructions on what they will have to do at the task stage and might help the students to recall some language at may be useful for the task. The pre-task stage can also often include playing a recording of people doing the task. This gives the students a clear model of what will be expected of them. The students can take notes and spend time preparing for the task.

✔ **Task**

Students complete a task in pairs or groups using the language they know while the teacher monitors, supports, and encourages them.

✔ **Planning**

Students prepare a short oral or written report to tell the class what happened during their task. They then practice what they are going to say in their groups.
Meanwhile the teacher is available to clear up any language questions that may arise.

✓ **Report**

Students report to the class orally or read their report. The teacher gives the order of presentation and some feedback on the content. A recording of others doing the same task may be played for the students to compare.

✓ **Analysis**

The teacher then highlights relevant parts from the text of the recording for the students to analyze. They may ask students to notice interesting features within this text. The teacher can also highlight the language that the students used during the report phase for analysis.

✓ **Practice**

Based on the needs of the students and what emerged from the task and report phases, the teacher selects language areas to practice. The students then do practice activities to increase their confidence and make a note of useful language.

To make this possible, it is necessary to create a scenario that can be used during the process and here come into view the following aspects to be considered:

✓ **Activity**: It is part of the process to be developed by students.
✓ **Collaborative learning**: activities developed by students in pairs or groups. They work together to support themselves.
✓ **Language facilitator**: the person who is capable to facilitate learning to students.
✓ Learner centered: puts the students in the center of the learning.

This methodology tends to make the learning process be focused on the students and their needs and interests.

3.5 ACTIVITIES

Since speaking often seems the most important of all the four skills to foreign language learners, an important component of a language course should be the inclusion of classroom activities that develop learners’ ability to express themselves through speech remembering also the other skills in an integrated way. Nunan (1989/2000) proposes three general ways of characterizing activities: rehearsal for the real world (authenticity), skills use, and fluency and accuracy.

According to Penny (2000), an effective speaking activity includes these four conditions:

- Learners talk a lot.
- Participation is even.
- Motivation is high.
- Language is of an acceptable level.

We should also consider some problems learners may face when dealing with speaking activities. They are:

- Shame or fear
- Nothing to say.
- Low or uneven participation.
- Mother-tongue use.
And these are some strategies that may help a teacher solve them:
- Use group task.
- Base the activity on easy language.
- Make a careful choice of topic and task to stimulate interest.
- Give some instruction or training in discussion skills.
- Keep students speaking the target language.
- Use role-play and related techniques.

I considered all these aspects to include a number of activities in the tasks which they may develop appropriately. In order to work on the speaking skill, the following types of activities are used and recommend:

- Information gap
- Ranking
- Jigsaw activities
- Guessing games
- Problem-solving
- Role-play
- Discussion
- Presentations

As to the listening skill, we took into consideration the following:

- Predicting/speculating
- Labeling
- Completing charts
- Reading through questions
- Making lists of possibilities/ideas/suggestions
- Marking items in pictures
- Seeking specific items of information
- Matching pictures with what is heard
- Multiple-choice questions
- Gap-filling

### 3.6 DIDACTIC UNITS

For giving a solution to the problem four didactic units were design and implement as follows. They are going to be describe and explain in this part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting people</th>
<th>Places to visit</th>
<th>Family ties</th>
<th>Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To have students capable of introducing themselves to the class</td>
<td>To make students being able to describe different places and different countries</td>
<td>To give students the tools that help them being able to make a description of their families: appearance and character</td>
<td>To be sure students are capable to locate and describe their homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Getting to know each other</td>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Knowing different places</td>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Gathering the family</td>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Home sweet home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks: 1. Introducing your partner 2. Writing a description of someone 3. Drawing a picture of you and your partner</td>
<td>Tasks: 1. Writing a description of a place of origin 2. Talking about countries and cities 3. Reading a text about famous cities 4. Listening conversation to answer the questions related to places</td>
<td>Tasks: 1. Making a description of your family 2. Writing a paragraph describing the members of your family</td>
<td>Tasks: 1. Describing family’s home 2. Locating your home 3. Talking about the rooms in your house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1. Summary of Didactic Units based on Task Based Syllabus. (Own source)**
3.6.1 DIDACTIC UNIT 1 “MEETING PEOPLE”

Students of foreign languages are most of the time afraid of speaking with other people because they feel they do not have the abilities to cope the situations in real time. This led to me design the first didactic unit with the purpose the students feel more comfortable when talking about themselves by providing simple personal information.

**Objective:** To have students being able of introducing themselves to the class.

**Tasks:** Learners give a presentation, write a description of someone, make a picture of him/her and a partner.

**Contents:** This unit was designed for the purpose that students know the language forms which in turn allow them to develop communicative skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students use language forms such as Simple Present, Auxiliary Verbs, WH Questions, Demonstratives, Possessive adjectives as well as Pronouns to provide basic personal information related for asking for and giving information.

**Activities**

- The students are to work individually having in mind personal information they will to tell the class.
- Students will make a report to the whole class about descriptions they do orally while their partners listen and the teacher gives feedback if needed.
- Students will report to the whole class the activities they like and do not like doing in their free time while their partners listen and the teacher gives feedback if is considered a need.
- Students will prepare an oral presentation to introduce their classmates to the English class.
3.6.2 DIDACTIC “UNIT 2 PLACES TO VISIT”

Bearing in mind that students have already introduced themselves to the class, I considered it was time them to mention places of origin and interest with the intention they were more confident by giving some personal information, then I designed unit 2 to make them read, write and talk about their hometowns and touristic places as well.

**Objective:** To make students being able to describe different places in different countries.

**Task:** Learners write a description of the place of origin, talk about countries and cities.

**Contents:** The target of this unit is to make students to use the language forms that may make them develop communicative skills as follows: listening, speaking, reading and writing through the usage of language forms: Vocabulary, WH Questions, Possessive adjectives, Pronouns, the verb To Be, Qualifying Adjectives and demonstrative adjectives: There is, There are.

**Activities:**
- Students will write and report orally the description of a place.
- Students read information about a famous place which will be useful to make a description of the place they will give information about to the classmates.
- Students will report to the class their descriptions orally whereas their classmates listen and the teacher makes comments as necessary.
- Students do a presentation by talking about a place.

3.6.3 DIDACTIC UNIT 3 “FAMILY TIES”

This unit was thought having in mind students were ready to prepare a talk about the members of their families, also to encourage them to use the vocabulary related to the
topic and the language points needed to do a presentation by continuing the themes seen in the previous two first units in order to make students develop skills that allow them feel more confident about their learning process.

**Objective:** To give students the tools that help them being able to make a description of their families: Appearance and personality.

**Task:** Learners show a picture of their family and make a physically and personality description of them.

**Contents:** In this unit, students work on communicative skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing throughout language forms as: Simple present, auxiliary verbs, WH questions, demonstrative adjectives: this/these, that/those; possessive adjectives, pronouns, possessive case and have got.

**Activities:**

- Students will report the class the description of their family members.
- Students draw a picture of their family members where they will be asked and required information while interacting with the classmates.
- Students will tell their partners about their work and activities they are used to doing.
- Students will report their partners stuffs related to their daily activities.
- Students tell the class what they do as everyday routine meanwhile they will be required for information while interacting with the classmates.
- Students talk about jobs where they will be asked for information while interacting with the classmates.

**3.6.4 DIDACTIC UNIT 4 “HOME”**

In this unit, the students see advances in their learning process they have got after having developed the three first units because they can feel that after have talked about
important things related to them like giving personal information as well as information of their families and places they come from or touristic places, they can see they have achieved what they now are able to put in practice in real life.

**Objective:** To be sure students can locate and describe their homes.

**Task:** Students will describe their homes whilst showing a picture of it.

**Contents:** This unit is built up to encourage students to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills by using language forms such as simple present, auxiliary verbs, WH questions, have got, adjectives, prepositions of place and there is/there are adverbs.

**Activities:**

- Students will talk about their homes in the English class.
- Students describe their homes whilst showing a picture of it where they will be asked for information while interacting with the classmates.
- Students will tell their partners about their rooms in their homes.
- Students show a picture of their rooms while describe them where they will be requested for information while interacting with the classmates.
- Students will tell their partners about the furniture they have got in their houses.
- Students describe the furniture in their homes while showing a picture of it where they will be able to interact with the classmates.

All the activities were led in class and had follow-up and support by the teacher. Feedback is made in the next session to ensure that the tasks were developed taking into account the parameters proposed in class. The complexity of the units is in accordance with progress on the topics proposed in each session of class. The main advantage of carrying out English classes based on Task Based Learning is related to opportunities students have to develop communicative skills that they can put in practice in real
situations. The material developed in each sessions, was adapted taking into account the objective as well as the topic in the Didactic Units and their contents. (See Annex 1 – Materials).

3.7 EVALUATION

What is Needs Assessment?

Assessing student needs is the process of determining the presence or absence of the factors and conditions, resources, services, and learning opportunities that students need in order to meet their education goals and objectives within the context of an institution’s mission (Upcraft and Schuh, 1996). A systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about program or organizational improvement and allocation of resources. The priorities are based on identified needs (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995, p. 4).

The type of evaluation applied for this investigation was Needs assessment because it may be used to determine the needs for the program, justify it, and design it. Needs Assessments are used to identify strategic priorities, define results to be accomplished, guide decisions related to appropriate actions to be taken, establish evaluation criteria for making judgments of success, and inform the continual improvement of activities within organizations.

Needs Assessments are used to identify strategic priorities, define results to be accomplished, guide decisions related to appropriate actions to be taken, establish evaluation criteria for making judgments of success, and inform the continual improvement of activities within organizations. Thus, from training to systems engineering, Needs Assessments play an active role in the accomplishment of individual, team, organizational, and even societal results.
Evaluation models have been developed in the social sciences. It has been used to test the effectiveness of social service providers, program administrators and legislators. They use it to consider the ‘effectiveness’ of new and existing programs, procedures and/or interventions at producing some form of ‘outcome’ or ‘change’. The findings from evaluations focus on the strengths and weaknesses of various aspects of innovations as well as their overall ‘outcome’. This information is, in turn, used to consider how such interventions might be modified, enhanced or even eliminated in the effort to provide a better service, fulfil a particular need or meet a specific challenge. In education evaluation has served a somewhat similar purpose, and has been applied to major programs of ‘whole-school reform’ or specific curriculum changes, and more limited projects to try out innovations.

The Planning-Evaluation as is designed to make a set of actions or programs requires an evaluation phase that allows to both, planner and evaluator to visualize the stages necessary to build a planning phase. These stages are: The formulation of evaluation (needs analysis); conceptualization of how to measure the program, outcomes, and target population; design coordination the components of the evaluation; analysis of evaluation data and utilization of results in decision-making. The final product or the Planning Phase contains the formulation of the problem, conceptualization of possible alternatives, actions or strategies or them all, detailing of alternatives and their implications, evaluation of alternatives and selection of best and the implementation of selected alternatives. William M.K. Trochim. (2006.)

A “Needs Assessment” is a systematic approach that progresses through a defined series of phases. Needs Assessment focuses on the ends (i.e., outcomes) to be attained, rather than the means (i.e., process). In education, the kinds and scope of methods are selected to fit the purposes and context of the needs assessment. Needs assessment sets priorities and determines criteria for solutions so that planners can make sound decisions. Needs assessment sets criteria for determining how best to allocate available

Having the above in mind, the type of evaluation applied for this investigation was Needs assessment because it may be used to determine the need for the program, justify it, and design it.

The teacher can conduct a feedback session to discuss the success of the task and consider suggestions for improving it. Participants can discuss such issues as working together, performing in a group, reactions to the topic, amount of language input, things they enjoyed doing, things they didn’t enjoy and so on. Evaluation of the task will provide useful information for facilitators when planning further tasks.

**Reflection upon task realization:**
- Was it useful?
- Was it enjoyable?

**Language reflection:**
- Further exploitation of material for language
- Error correction
- Reflection by learners

The teacher designed an evaluation format for oral presentations to consult the students’ opinions and perceptions about the process, which she expected to be constant and formative. This is why it was applied after every lesson. It included the performance, achievements and products of the students based on the tasks and processes performed by themselves. It also focused on what and how they felt and the progress they had.
Below is a chart of the instruments applied before, while and after completing each session, through which students gave their opinions and shared feelings on the process of learning English.

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**Table 2. Evaluation Moments**

To carry out the investigation, interviews and questionnaires were applied to the students who made part of it to know their opinions in order to find out the way that allowed me to cope their abilities, interests and attitudes during the learning process when acquiring a second language.

**Interviews**

The type of interviews used were open questions that allow students elicit a number of responses that gave me a good idea of the variety of responses and feelings students have about the process. It motivated them to think and talk and express their feelings and views more freely.

**Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were used as a tool for collecting information about the particular issue of interest to me and the students; in this case questionnaires were led to find out if the
lack of a syllabus would be a real problem to follow the English classes and if so the students´ responses might give me the view to propose a solution. They were mainly made up of a list of questions and also included clear instructions and space for answers. These questionnaires had a definite purpose related to the objectives of this research. Respondents were told how and when they will receive feedback on the findings.

a) Learning Style Survey

This questionnaire was designed with the purpose to assess students´ general approach to learning. It does not predict their behavior in every instance, but it is a clear indication of their overall style preferences. It contains nine major activities representing different aspects of their learning style. Students think about what they usually do when learning. It helps them indicate immediate feeling. It was applied before the learning process began.

b) Student Perception of Task-Based Language Teaching

This questionnaire was designed to examine EFL learners´ perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with reference to classroom practice. It is divided in four sections. Section I. General and demographic information; section II Learners´ understanding of Task and TBLT; section III Learners´ views on implementing TBLT; section IV Reasons learners choose or avoid implementing TBLT. It was applied before the learning process started.

c) Intrinsic Motivation

According to (Ryan and Deci, 2000), Intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. When
intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external products, pressures or reward.

Having in mind the little motivation from the students towards the learning of a foreign language, this questionnaire was designed with the objective to ask students how they felt about vocabulary during the learning process. It was applied before the learning process began.

d) Students interviews opinions of task-based language teaching - performance

These interviews were conducted after completing the process in order to obtain the views of students regarding how they felt performing designed activities through Task based syllabus, also they were asked to choose between the traditional vocabulary learning techniques and task-based learning. Students answered the interviews after the learning process had finished.

e) Achievements

During the process, four questionnaires were proposed to the students in order to know their point of views with respect to each one of the four Didactic Units. The questions were led to find out interest on the topic; improvement on their communicative skills; usefulness of the topics related to grammar and vocabulary and their opinions about the class what they liked and disliked. Students answered these questionnaires during the process, at the end of each Didactic Unit.

f) Outcomes

These questionnaires were led to address learners’ views on implementing TBLT in and outside the classroom. Here the questions let them think how much they developed
communicative skills. Students answered these questionnaires after finished the learning process.

**g) Students opinions and perceptions about the process**

This questionnaire is designed to examine EFL learner’s perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching with reference to classroom practice. It is split into nine constructs each one with sample items to help students a better understanding of the situations experienced in class. This questionnaire was applied after the learning process was finished.

**h) Learning Styles Skills**

This questionnaire was designed to find out about important issues necessary to approach the syllabus designed to carry out the learning process. This questionnaire was applied after the learning process had ended.

The questionnaires and the interview were given out mostly by males because there was a major number of them in the classroom.

The majority of the audience for my questionnaires were in a range of age between 29-35 years old.

**3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Considering the results of the instruments designed and used to find out students’ perceptions, performance and effectiveness of learning since the implementation of TBLT in the classroom, a triangulation of these three constructs is made in order to know if the proposal on designing a syllabus based on tasks might work and allow students to
visualize their difficulties when starting their learning process, their outcomes after having carried out the proposal and finally but not least if the syllabus achieved the objective which was designed for.

To establish students’ perceptions and effectiveness it was necessary to design questionnaires through what they could express their opinions before and after the learning process. According to Willis, (1996) in TBLL learning is fostered through performing a series of activities as steps towards successful task realization. This is what was proposed in the Didactic Units to carry out the learning process supported with material adapted to be developed in the classroom. This helps students use language in real contexts, what makes learning authentic.

A. First Evaluation Moment: BEFORE (Annex 1, 2, 3)

A perception implies quick and often sympathetic discernment (as of shades of feeling), the way a person thinks about or understands someone or something, the way that someone notices or understands something using one of her/his senses. (Adapted from Merriam Webster Dictionary).

The process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them. Though necessarily based on incomplete and unverified (or unreliable) information, perception is equated with reality for most practical purposes and guides human behavior in general. (Adapted from Business Dictionary.com).

Having in mind these definitions, it is good to say that what learners express by answering the questionnaires (See Annex 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9) related to these topics and which were applied before and after the learning process is what they felt at the beginning and when they have finished it. At the beginning, they described their feelings through a
survey designed to assess their own learning style and to approach to learning. Also, a scale given to choose the items learners’ understandings of tasks and TBLT, learners´ views on implementing TBLT and reasons why learners choose or avoid implementing TBLT that they strongly agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree they perceived. Also, constructs like clarify, consolidate, control, challenge, care, confer, class efficacy, cooperative learning and positive pedagogy were suggested to examine learners´ perceptions.

The following is a relation of the surveys designed to find out learners´ perceptions as well as the results:

- Assessing your own learning styles. Learning Style Survey (See Annex 1)

This survey was designed to students´ general approach to learning. It was designed in English and guided by teacher and it does not predict learners´ behavior in every instance, but it is a clear indication of their overall style preferences. This survey was applied before starting the learning English process. There are nine major parts representing different aspects of their learning style. Each one has five indicators of response categorized as follows: 0= Never; 1= Rarely; 2= Sometimes; 3= Often; 4= Always. Students will think about what they usually do when learning a foreign language and choose the answer that best describe them. (Adapted from Oxford, Rebecca, 1998).

Part 1. How I use my physical senses

-Most of the eleven students say they often use their physical senses like eyes, ears, speech by visualizing pictures, watching videos, listening to music and discussing things, when learning a foreign language whereas some of them say they always do it. According to this result, we can identify that the domain described by Rebecca Oxford (1991)
considered as “How learners use their physical senses” (Three styles: visual, auditory, and hands-on.) is often representative in the students learning process.

Probably, a few students express that they do not have the ability to use all their senses because they have not had the opportunity to explore learning through authentic materials that let them develop skills such as reading, listening, writing or speaking.

**Part 2. How I expose myself to learning situations.**

The majority of the students express their opinions by saying that sometimes they prefer or like to learn exposing themselves to some different situations such as learning while working or studying better with others in a large group in the classroom.

I believe that learners are not very interested in learning a new language and they reflect this situation if they have to do activities that demand them an extra effort such as working in groups. Neither they are capable to learn by themselves by practicing; they prefer to learn under the guidance of a tutor.

**Part 3. How I handle possibilities.**

Most of the learners say that they often handle possibilities like using their imagination, discovering things by themselves and following directions carefully. Others sometimes prefer things presented in a step-by-step way. They find it difficult to handle possibilities.

I think most of the students are not afraid of doing new things or explore new ways to learn. Also it is inferred that other students prefer to learn in a traditional way.
Part 4. How I deal with ambiguity and with deadlines.

The majority of the students say that they often like to plan language study sessions carefully and in an organized way, but at the same time they are not worried about comprehending everything or feel the need to come to rapid conclusions about a topic. I think as students do not show interest in the learning, they are not worried about the process itself.

Part 5. How I receive information.

Most of the students say that they often prefer short and simple answers than long explanations at the time of receiving information; they need very specific examples in order to understand fully, whilst some of them say that they are always good at catching new phrases or words when they hear them.

I believe that students learn better if they receive the minimum information when learning a new language because that way they feel they understand and might be confident about the process itself.


Opinions about this item are divided among students. Half of the learners say they often like to go from general patterns to the specific examples in learning a target language, also they like to learn rules indirectly by being exposed to examples of grammatical structures and other language features. The other half sometimes figure out rules based on the way they see language forms behaving over time.

I believe, at this point that what students express about following rules is because of the only way they have had the chance to learn English is by following strict rules but not
through developing skills. They are accustomed to learning through grammar rather than through communicative tasks.

**Part 7. How I deal with multiple inputs.**

Most of the students say they often make sure to produce messages orally and written by using grammar structures correctly whereas a few students when speaking or writing feel that focusing on grammar is not as important as paying attention to the content of the message; to them is a challenge to focus on communication.

I can notice that students deal with multiple inputs but the most important to them is grammar input. It might be because through their lives the only way they had the opportunity to learn is by the traditional method.

**Part 8. How I deal with response time.**

The majority of the learners say that they often react quickly in language situations; go with instincts in the target language, jump in, see what happens and make corrections if it is necessary; they need to think things through before speaking or writing and attempt to find supporting material in mind before setting about producing language.

I think that students deal with response time in a good way because they have the ability to react according to the situations they face during the learning process.

**Part 9. How literally I take reality.**

Most of the learners often find that building metaphors in their mind and learning things through metaphors and association with other things like stories and examples help them
learn; most of them sometimes take things at face value they like language material that says what it means directly.

I believe that students prefer to use their mind to create their own stories or metaphors that help them during the learning process to using materials that might not help them learn.

- Student Perception of Task-Based Language Teaching. (See Annex 2)

This questionnaire is designed to examine EFL learners’ perceptions of TBL with reference to classroom practice. It is split in four sections. Section I General and Demographic Information. Section II. Learners´ understandings of Task and TBLT. Section III. Learners´ views on implementing TBLT. The indicators are: SA (strongly agree); A (Agree); U (undecided); D (disagree); SD (strongly disagree). Section IV. Reasons learners choose or avoid implementing TBLT.

Section I. Most of the students are male within a range of age 25–29.

Section II. This section is led to know students´ opinions about Task and TBLT.

Here most of the students say that they agree that a task is communicative goal directed, involves a primary focus on meaning, it is any activity in which the target language is used by the learner; TBLT is consistent with the principles of communicative language teaching, it is based on the student-centered instructional approach and includes three stages: pre-task, task implementation, and post-task. A few students were Undecided about these items as well.

Section III. Learners´ views on implementing TBLT.
Most of the students agree that they are interested in implementing TBLT in the classroom; TBLT means relaxed atmosphere, pursues development of integrated skills, psychological burden to teacher as a facilitator, approaches required much preparation time, controlling arrangements and the materials and purposeful are based on the learning. A few students disagree or were undecided about TBLT some issues.

In these items I find that the students consider a task as a tool that can help them develop communicative skills.

- **Intrinsic Motivation – Annex 3**

Having in mind the little motivation from the students towards the learning of a foreign language, this questionnaire was designed with the objective to ask students how they felt about vocabulary during the learning process. Most of the students express that they were undecided about using vocabulary while learning process, they do not consider vocabulary tasks as funny or relaxed activities. We can infer that the gaps of meanings in English make them not to enjoy the language learning. In that way, intrinsic motivation is a real challenge in this group of students in order to develop tasks by using vocabulary in different contexts.

**B. Second Evaluation Moment: WHILE (Annex 5,6)**

A speaker’s actual use of language in real situations; what the speaker actually says, including grammatical errors and other nonlinguistic features such as hesitations and other disfluencies (contrasted with linguistic competence). (Adapted from The Free Dictionary by Farlex).

The questionnaires related to performance are called Achievements and Outcomes. At this point, students’ opinions about the development of the process were important
because through these it can be seen if the proposal conducted through the Didactic Units was successfully carried out during the learning process.

Below the results of these two questionnaires are shown.

- **Achievements. (See Annex 5)**

  This questionnaire was designed having in mind the process students have already ended, it was applied taking into account the didactic units proposed in the syllabus with the objective of seeing if students have achieved the topics worked in class. The topics were: Meeting People, Places to Visit, Family Ties, Home.

  I was interested in knowing if the students found these topics: very interesting, interesting or not very interesting. All the eleven students found these topics very interesting. The skill they found gave them the opportunity to improve was speaking over the other ones: reading, writing and listening. The majority of the learners say that the class was useful for learning new vocabulary and they strengthened their pronunciation. Their opinions about what they liked or disliked these classes vary but most of them liked the activities carried out during the process.

  I noticed in this questionnaire students captured their views on the activities proposed in class taking as reference the work developed from communicative tasks.

**Outcomes (See Annex 6)**

  The objective of applying this instrument at the end of each didactic unit was to know the points of view of the students regarding the topics proposed during the learning process and achievements got by the students.
The statements are intended to know the learners´ perspectives on the implementation of TBLT in the classroom regarding the following topics: Meting people, Places to visit, Family ties, Home.

Five students strongly agree that they can greet and say goodbye when meeting new people, while six agree; five students agree they can introduce their partners to the English class meanwhile three strongly agree, two disagree and one is undecided.

Eight students agree they are able to make a description of someone, two strongly disagree and one disagree; seven students agree they can give personal information, two strongly agree and two disagree; seven students agree they are able to talk about free time activities whilst three strongly agree and one disagree.

Seven students agree they can make a description of their hometown while four strongly agree; eight students agree they are able to give information of a famous person whilst three strongly agree; seven students agree they set up their preference for a specific
place to visit, three strongly agree and one disagree. Five students agree they participate in a conversations related to places, two strongly agree whilst four disagree.

Nine students agree they can show a picture of their family and make a description of them one strongly agree and one is undecided; ten students agree they give and ask for information of family members and one strongly agree; six students agree they interact by using short dialogues to describe a daily routine, three are undecided and two strongly agree; nine students strongly agree they talk about their jobs whilst two agree.

According to the students´ opinions it is observed that a task is a communicative act that does not usually have a restrictive focus on a single grammatical structure and it also has a non-linguistic outcome (Nunan, 1988). The task the way it was built is the correct one needed to make them develop communicative competences related to the topic suggested.
Five students strongly agree they make a description of their home while five agree and one is undecided; six students agree they give directions to get their home, three strongly agree, one is undecided and one disagree; six students agree they can make a description of their room, three strongly agree whilst two are undecided; seven students agree they are able to talk about things they have in their room, two strongly agree and two are undecided.

Students’ points of view demonstrate that the communicative skill was well developed due to the structure of the task was well created.
Through the students’ responses, it is noticed that the internal structure of the proposal to be carried out during the process was well designed. The program is tailored to the learning needs for students to first level. I took into consideration for each theme the use of vocabulary related to the topics to accomplish the activities to be implemented. The outcomes results show that TBLT offer some advantages for the students group:

* English class provided a natural context where students developed their experiences with the language that was personalized and relevant to them.

* The students had a much more varied exposure to language with TBL. They were exposed to a whole range of lexical phrases, collocations and patterns as well as language forms.

* TBL is a strong communicative approach where students spent a lot of time communicating during a task-based lesson.

* It was enjoyable and motivating.
In other words, TBLT allowed students to acquire opportunities to make the language input they received more comprehensible, it furnished contexts in which learners need to produce output which others can understand, and it made the classroom closer to real-life language situations.

C. Third Evaluation Moment: AFTER (Annex 7, 8, 9)

Effectiveness of learning crosses improving outcomes and requires efforts of both sides: teachers and learners. To make this possible, learners must be supported by involving them to improve their learning through the use of precise tools which can help them achieve their learning goals. One of the tools that can be used during the learning process when learning a foreign language is the implementation of a Task-Based Syllabus. This tool is designed to foster students learning process with the objective to make them develop communicative skills.

To find out if the syllabus was successfully implemented, some questionnaires were applied to know students opinions and perceptions about the process. The constructs that are part of the surveys were built taking into account the development of tasks as the main point of the process.

Students Opinions and Perceptions about the process (See Annex 7)

This questionnaire was designed to examine EFL learners’ perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching – TLBT - with reference to classroom practice. Below the constructs considered for the design of the survey.

CLARIFY: Nine of eleven students say that the teacher always explains difficult things clearly meanwhile one student says mostly yes and one says that it never happens; and eight students know when the class understands; three say that mostly. According to this
results, the proposal allowed a closer teachers-students’ relationship which facilitated a better comprehension of topics.

![Graph](image)

**CONSOLIDATE**: Nine students say that always the comments they get help them know how to improve, two say mostly; eight students think that the teacher takes the time to summarize what they learn each day while three say mostly yes and six think when s/he marks their work on their papers it always helps them understand, three think mostly yes and two say that maybe. The feedback given to students made them feel a real English learning because at the time the situation happened they understood the errors and were able to correct them.
CONTROL: Ten of the students agree that their classmates behave the way the teacher wants them to, one strongly agree; seven students agree that their class stays busy and does not waste time, three students strongly agree meanwhile one is undecided; eight students agree that if they behave so badly in class it slows down their learning, two strongly disagree and one disagree; seven students think that everybody knows what they should be doing and learning in this class; three strongly disagree and one is undecided. The demanding of the task made the students to be alert and they were constantly expected about the procedure they had to get involved, to do their best.
CHALLENGE: Ten students say that they always learn to correct their mistakes meanwhile one student says mostly yes; six students think the teacher pushes them to think hard about things they read and work hard four think mostly yes and one maybe, sometimes; nine learners think that in class they always have to think hard about the writing they do and two mostly; four students say that their teacher always accepts nothing less than their full effort, three say mostly yes, two say never and two maybe, sometimes. According to results, students show more engaged in the task development, they felt more competitive to achieve the communicative task. However, it was hard for a few students to follow instructions which made them have difficulties at the time to complete the task. Taking into account that the main skill proposed in the syllabus was speaking, I found that writing skill became into a complex task that deserves being more appreciated in the first level.
CARE: Eight students agree that they like the way their teacher treats them when they need help whereas three strongly agree; six students think that their teacher is nice to them when they ask questions and five strongly agree; eight students say they make them feel that she really cares about them, while three say that they strongly agree; six students strongly agree the teacher encourages them to do their best, four agree and one strongly disagree; eight students agree that the teacher gives them time to explain their ideas and three strongly agree. The task based syllabus proposed made the students feel more confident to ask questions that let them to have clear ideas about the situations they were working on.
CONFER: Eight students agree that when the teacher teaches them, s/he asks them whether they understand meanwhile three strongly agree; six students agree that the teacher asks questions to be sure they are following along when s/he is teaching as four strongly agree and one is undecided; seven students agree that the teacher checks to make sure they understand what s/he is teaching them while four strongly agree; five students strongly agree that their teacher tells them what they are learning and why, five agree and one is undecided; nine students agree that the teacher wants them to share their thoughts and two strongly agree; six students agree students speak up and share their ideas about class work, four strongly agree and one is undecided; six students agree that the teacher wants them to explain their answers, four strongly agree and one is undecided. Focus learning through communicative tasks allows students and teacher maintain permanent contact which makes feedback helps the students to learn more about the theme developed in class.
CLASS EFFICACY: Six students strongly agree that they feel comfortable asking their teacher for individual help about the things they are learning whereas four agree and one is undecided. Although the results of the survey shows that not all students feel comfortable asking for help from the teacher when they do not understand the subject, it becomes obvious that the process of learning through tasks allows them to make an approach and encourages them to ask for help when they consider it necessary.
COOPERATIVE LEARNING: Six learners strongly agree that the teacher encourages them to work together while five agree. Students learnt to work in a cooperative way which allowed them to interact between new classmates, share new ideas, work together having in mind the same goal in order to achieve an effective result. This aspect was not literally considered at the moment I design the task-based syllabus, however, the classwork showed me the importance of this construct and the advantages it has to the development of the task.
**POSITIVE PEDAGOGY:** Five students agree that they are encouraged to use their imagination, four strongly agree and two are undecided.

In relation to the previous questions and students’ opinions, I think they now are ready to start practicing their abilities by developing communicative skills achieved in class. The majority of eleven students exercised leadership over their learning process. They show a strong commitment at the time they were developing the different activities they faced during the process.

Learners’ perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching – TLBT – with reference to classroom practice provided an interesting point of view from the practice in the classroom, taking into account the teacher handling and guidance for this pedagogical exercise.
These interviews were carried out after students have finished the learning process in the classroom. It had two single items: Feelings about the use of TLBT in class and their preferences between learning vocabulary through traditional method and techniques and task-based learning.

To the question: 1. How do you feel about the use of task-based learning in class? These are students’ responses.

- Two students say that this is the first time they experience this method. They find it exciting.
- One student says that some tasks are fun and challenging.
- Two students like doing those activities and working in groups.
- Two students think that it is interesting to compare answers between them.
- Two students say that they like this atmosphere of learning very much because they feel the time passes quickly and they are not tired and bored.
- Two students say that they are not used to do this way of learning. They felt embarrassed.

**Graphic 14. Interviews Results Question 1**

According to the answers above given by the students, it is easy to infer that they felt good by using TBL in class during the learning process, it shows that they liked to work in groups also.

To the question: 2. If you were given the choice between the traditional vocabulary learning techniques and task-based learning, which would you prefer? Why? These are students’ responses.
Most of the students think this method is interesting and help them work in groups and learn more new vocabulary which let them be more confident at the time they have to do the tasks.

The two items were focused on different aspects of the process carried out in the classroom; I consider this activity a great help because it shows feelings and beliefs of the students and provides a tool to have in mind when preparing materials to be developed in class.

- **Learning Styles – Skills (See Annex 9)**

This survey is carried out to find out important issues necessary to approach the syllabus designed to the English classes. Students rate their level of agreement with nine aspects of the syllabus each one characterized by five indicators of response: Strongly disagree; disagree; neutral; agree; strongly agree. The Questionnaires mentioned below
were applied with the purpose to find out learners´ opinions about the topics seen in class during the learning process.

This survey was applied after classes have finished and students expressed opinions about different aspects of Task Based Learning Syllabus.

Most of the students agree that when explaining new skills or ideas in class, their teacher tells them about common mistakes that they might make; at the end of each lesson, s/he reviews what they have just learned; makes them apply what they are learning to real-life situations; encourages them to share their ideas or opinions about what they are learning in class; is able to answer students´ questions about the subject; students need extensive practice applying specific grammar, usage and mechanics skills, few students are neutral to this item; most of the students say that they learn English best in class with students of similar abilities; are engaged in a writing process; work with the teacher in guided reading or writing practice; complete English reading exercises from a text or worksheets; complete written assignments from worksheets; create multi-media presentations; answer objective questions.

Having a general view over the students´ opinions on the items below, I believe that they agree with the elements that make up the syllabus carried out during the learning process in the classroom.

Learning Style Survey assess learners general approach to learning whereas Learning Styles Skills assess the important issues necessary to approach the syllabus designed to follow the learning process in the classroom.

These surveys are related bearing in mind that learners´ behavior while the learning process and the aspects of the syllabus carried out have a connection to the way they develop communicative skills.
Learning Style Survey was applied with the objective to know students’ behave when learning and Learning Styles Skills to find out the aspects of the syllabus led in the classroom.

The importance of the relationship between these two surveys is that after making the respective analysis and according to the results achieved from students, they allow us to visualize aspects to design a program taking into account the behavioral needs and abilities of them.

Bearing in mind the perspective of the students as well as their expectations during the learning process, I am confident that the process aimed to carry out suggested through the syllabus was clearly shown by students.

The triangulation of these surveys let me know that students are encouraged to use their imagination, to work together and to have the guidance of the teacher during the learning process.

Students show through the responses to the questionnaires that they feel comfortable by asking their teacher for individual help about the things they are learning.

Task-based syllabi represent a particular way of communicative language teaching. Instead of beginning the design process with lists of grammatical, functional-notional, and other items, the designer conducts a needs analysis which yields a list of the target tasks that the targeted learners will need to carry out in the “real-world” outside the classroom. (Nunan. 1988). The findings shown in the surveys applied to the students, allow me to confirm that the theory used to frame this research was the one needed to design a syllabus based on tasks to be implemented in the English classes. Thus to design a TBLT syllabus curriculum is an important issue as Smiths (1996) says that the ways of approaching curriculum theory and practice are set in the light of Aristotle’s influential
categorization of knowledge into three disciplines: the theoretical, the productive, and the practical. These three disciplines are of a great importance since they are the base the syllabus must be supported on. Hutchinson and Waters (1991) define it at its simplest level as a statement of what is to be learned and it reflects language and linguistic performance.

To design a syllabus it is relevant to know learners’ needs, that is why needs analysis becomes a very useful tool as according to Nunan, (1988), needs analysis has to do with the techniques and procedures for collecting information to be used in syllabus design, it deals with learner analysis and tasks analysis. Needs analysis embraces the needs, purposes, and expectations of all the participants in the teaching learning process and involves societal expectations and constraints and the resources available for implementing the syllabus. This was used to find out learners’ styles and intrinsic motivation to make an approach to achievements and outcomes as well as to know their opinion and perception about the learning process. Other important stage of this research that I consider of interest had to do with evaluation as Breen and Candlin (1987) propose the questions to focus it: What am I (are we) doing? Why am I (are we] doing this? How do I (do we) act about this? What can this be used for? These items were taken into account in the surveys to consult the students’ opinions about the process. It was very important to incorporate the achievements of the students having in mind the tasks and the activities carried out by them. The evaluation was constant and became part of their formative learning process, also it permit to observe the student´s outcomes that allow to make the necessary changes at the end of each stage.

Considering the results obtained in the surveys applied to the students, I can say that having developed TBLT syllabus in the English classes, it became an innovation as beginners learners changed their habits when learning; its implementation allowed them to develop communicative skills, they were aware of their own learning process, they used the language in real context. Carrying out activities through communicative tasks let them
to be more confident to cope with vocabulary which was one of the most difficult aspects they had to deal with. Another plus point to bear in mind is the fact that they learned to work together through cooperative learning. They changed their attitude towards the English class as they noticed that they were able to communicate in an easy way, something that was unexpected to them before.
CONCLUSIONS

The findings shown in the surveys applied to the students, allow me to confirm that the theory used to frame this research was the one needed to design a syllabus based on tasks to be implemented in the English classes.

Having carried out this research with English learners of first level became a challenge, since changing the conditions of teaching a foreign language with students who are accustomed to traditional teaching is not easy, on the contrary it requires a lot of patience and perseverance to achieve it. Students are encouraged to develop communicative skills in a spontaneously simple manner. They feel comfortable by saying and sharing ideas with their classmates in and outside the classroom.

Students said they felt very comfortable during the process of learning English as a foreign language after developing the topics of the didactic units designed based on Task-Based Learning proposed in this research. They said they felt very confident as have learned new vocabulary generated them more confidence to communicate and interact with their classmates.

The implementation of TBLT in the classroom makes students being conscious of the importance of learning a foreign language, they are more interested about having new communicative skills that allow them to empower themselves and make them feel more confident.

Needs assessments constitutes a useful tool to understand the questions and concerns that students have during the learning process and the results allow the researcher to make appropriate corrections to improve the learning process.
The findings shown in the surveys applied to the students, allow me to confirm that the theory used to frame this research was the one needed to design a syllabus based on tasks to be implemented in the English classes.

I decided to carry out an Action Research because it involves processes of reflection and analysis in the classroom as a means to change or improve conditions of learning. Besides this model suits the purpose I intend to fulfil in terms of time and procedure.

Having carried out this research with English learners of first level became a challenge, since changing the conditions of teaching a foreign language with students who are accustomed to traditional teaching is not easy, on the contrary it requires a lot of patience and perseverance to achieve it.

The learning processes, as they are continuous, require the teacher to be updated on the issues that have to do with their doing, such as pedagogy, didactics, methodology. This makes the teacher able to carry out his teaching task knowing that he will get his students to acquire the skills for which the program is designed.


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