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Research project:

The Quality of the Academic Profile Reached through the BA in English Teaching of the Students of the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Main Campus, Semester I, 2016.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Arguably, the University is the place where students come to cap their education, in this case a professional education. The University as well is the place where people is expected to develop fully their intellectual skills to better personal and professional outcomes (Perry 1970, 1981). The University of El Salvador, for this matter, stresses these goal in its mission and vision. However, coming to study at the University poses so many challenges for students: for one simple thing, the instructional format the University uses is somewhat different from that the students are familiar with from High School. This means that the students seeking a University degree must develop ways to manage themselves to do independent learning, to make their own decisions regarding most of the curricular choices. Some of this implies learning to manage their studies and learning in a fashion that was not the case before, where they had all curricular aspects arranged for them by other individuals or agencies. Following is a short elaboration of this point.

In Primary school and High School the curriculum was all set for the students to just follow through. The academic rules and the like had all been decided beforehand by the Ministry of Education or related agencies, usually in conjunction with other knowledgeable experts in what a High School program was about. The decisions on what to study in the different courses, and under what regulations had already been arranged. The curriculum itself is mostly about having courses in which the teacher presents the lesson or talks to the students, and the students just listen passively with little room for independent action. This situation ends up making the students passive individuals who arguably want their teachers at the university to behave much like their previous teachers in High School. (Sanders et al, 2005)

The University of El Salvador is the one public university of the country. Its students come from the most populated and poor areas of the country and are usually the first in their families to come for an undergraduate college degree. They have attended public school in which teaching is arguably of bad quality and school facilities are in bad shape. There is often a lack of adequate and updated study and teaching materials, including books, for the students to complement their classroom learning (Flaitz, 2006). Under these circumstances, it goes without saying that the students have come to just accept those precarious given and become passive entities in a process that theoretically requires them to be engaged individual with good learning material and related educational resources. Many students still behave as if they are still in High School and expect their new life at the University to be the same.

High School demands little *self-regulation* (Bandura, 1990) from the student, as the student was the subject of a preplanned system that only demanded from him to comply. University life is for students to manage themselves differently, but they cannot do so as they are hardly ever instructed or oriented for this new life. If the students are to learn and fulfill what the end-of –program of studies regularly outlines, the students are expected to become active and autonomous learners seeking for much self-learning and guided by their teachers and the curriculum. This expectation is dulled however by what their previous schooling imposed on them and which is worsened by the lack of systematic orientation from the part of the University of El Salvador on what the expectations and academic responsibilities of a successful student and future graduate must be (Altonji, Blom & Meghir, 2012)

During or about their third year of studies, an average student of the University of El Salvador majoring in English teaching is expected to have consolidated an academic "pack" of key information and ideas that can serve her well to be a competent professional in English teaching or related work areas. In general, this "pack" of courses broadly cover the areas of English teaching theory and practice, General Pedagogy, general English linguistics, English syntax and phonology, Research Methods, and Applied Statistics (BA in English Program, 1997). When taught to the studies, these courses are mostly presented via photocopied hand-outs and teacher-led lectures from which the students take down abundant notes. Tests and quizzes are based on the contents of these handouts and the lectures teachers give. Also, some courses lend themselves to the presentation of hands-on activities, especially in the courses where the students develop their English language competency.

Finishing college and earning a degree is the end of a long and difficult road for many students, especially because of the demographics that the students to come to study English teaching. This situation is one of many which have never been researched systematically so that interested parties had a documented end-of-program list of competencies that the undergraduates finish with, their academic profile so to speak. So it is that to fill in this gap, this study seeks to measure the students' "academic profile", which the researchers have operationally defined as "the amount of academic information from their upper level courses that the students can recall on a 90-yes/no-question test.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is normal to think that quality of student preparation is an important objective for anyone who seeks any given kind of education. This is truer today when the need for mastery of contents, the development of competencies in specific areas, and a focus on principled work is not only wished for but specifically expected by education patron and the like. Making sure undergraduates end their college instruction with the required competencies, attitudes, and principles is mandatory. The BA in English teaching program at the University of El Salvador currently engages about 400 students. According to data provided the Academic Administration of the School of Sciences and Humanities. Classrooms where the fourth and fifth years of students take their academic courses are usually crowded, with an average of 60 plus students per class. Classes are usually taught in lecture format, with students listening to the teacher, and taking notes from the notes the teacher writes on the board. The contents the teacher presents are taken from photocopied textbooks or parts thereof that the teacher personally chooses for his course or have been recommended by a fellow teacher. Academic or "theoretical" exchanges between students and teacher are not very common, as most students simply follow suit on what the teacher tells them. After many generations of students graduate with English teaching degree from the Department of Foreign Languages, it is still not known how much the students learn from these academic area courses, as the students simply take the course on a fail/pass basis. How successful the inclusion of these courses in the program has so far not been ascertained, as no measure of any kind in this respect has ever been undertaken by the Department of Foreign Languages, as it has simply been taken for granted that the students just must learn some content if they have taken the afore mentioned academic courses. The

curricular areas that the researchers have used to conform the "academic profile" of the undergraduate students and which this research addresses are English linguistics, English teaching methods, and research methods.

1.1.1 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the quality of the academic profile reached through the BA in English Teaching of the students of the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Main Campus, 2016?

1.1.2 SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the level of knowledge of Linguistics of the students finishing their BA in English at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Semester II 2016?
- What is the level of knowledge of English teaching methodology of the students finishing their BA in English at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Semester ii 2016?
- What is the level of knowledge of research methods of the students finishing their BA in English at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Semester II 2016?
- What are the personal factors of the students that intervene to produce a different score in the level of theoretical course content among the students finishing their BA in English at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Semester II 2016?

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD OF ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION

Knowing how much content the students remember from the theoretical courses they have taken can provide an understanding of the practical worth or necessity of these courses in the curriculum. There is the possibility that these courses simply provide information for the students to memorize to just answer questions on a test; or they can find difficult to relate these contents to the job of English. (Landeta et al, 2011) in a study that explores college academic performance in Higher education in Mexico asserts that there is little connection between theoretical contents and the application of that content for real life purposes (because of) the "overspecialization of curricular plans".

If that turned to be the case for the curriculum of the BA in English teaching, the results obtained can help the administration of the Department of Foreign Languages to redesign the curriculum in such a way that such array of courses can become meaningful to upcoming groups of students. If the students remember little from the contents in these courses that means they were not engaged much with those contents probably because they found them alien to the job of an English teacher.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to test the students of the 5th year of studies of the BA in English teaching at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador on the curricular areas of English Linguistics, English teaching theory, and Research Methods to determine the level of knowledge of the academic or theoretical topics included in the

courses taught in these three broad curricular areas of the English teaching preparation program, during the year 2016.

Even though English teaching is generally seen as a practical profession in which the amount of practice teaching the students engage in is apparently more important that the working through theoretical courses on linguistics, teaching, and research, English teaching preparation at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador programs were designed so that these programs include not only the practice teaching that is no doubt key to teacher preparation but also the theory driven coursed that inform that preparation. That is why these theoretical courses are also important for the students to take.

The theoretical areas of linguistics, teaching methodology, and research, methods by the nature of being theoretical pose a challenge for both teachers and students. It is a challenge for teachers because arguably most teachers do not have a specialization on these areas and tend to teach by the textbook, which makes the presentation of contents mostly and informative activity. Being this generally the case, the students seek to memorize the contents the teacher presented in class, as these contents are the ones they are tested.

There is no narrow or broad idea of what good these theoretical courses are good for as part of the curriculum; which means that apart from the fact that different classes of students take these courses every year there has been no measurement to indicate how much the students "remember" of the content areas covered, much less how much they can apply these content areas. This study examined how much the students remembered, with the idea that the much they remembered can possibly be extrapolated to real life use of

these contents. The students were given a questionnaire with 90 assertions split by content area to which the students had to answer yes or no, based on what they remembered. The students tested were 114 students taking their fifth and last year of studies. Fifty-seven were female and 55 male. Their ages were 24 or 25 years of age. Then each questionnaire was graded based on the hits that were obtained in each content area. The average number of raw hits for each content area was obtained.

The statistical treatment of the data so obtained will give the general achievement of the content areas studied, which will at the same time provide with a broad picture of how profitable such courses are for the students to take at various states of their 5-year program. A second level of analysis will be that of finding out the factors that make up for any differences in the averages that may be found overall or for each of the content areas.

1.3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To establish the end-of-program academic profile of the students of the BA in English teaching program administered by the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Semester II, 2016.

1.3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To establish how much English linguistic knowledge the students have by answering questions about the contents of the English linguistics, Phonology and Morphology, and Syntax courses, as outlined in their respective syllabi.

2. To establish how much English teaching knowledge the student has by answering questions about the contents of the Didáctica General, English Teaching I, II, and III, as outlined in their respective syllabi.

3. To establish how much Applied Research knowledge the students have by answering questions about the contents of the Research Methods, Applied Statistics, and Seminar Courses, as outlined in the respective syllabus.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

The questionnaire was only yes / no, which leaves room for guesswork. There are other possibilities indeed for measuring the academic profile of the students. However, the task of obtaining such measurements become more complicated as much more student cooperation is needed. The assortment of questions is the questionnaire could have provided more room for the students to answer other question in other formats, such as essay, case study, and others. Doing so could have reduce the uncertainty of basing the construct of academic profile only on yes/no questions.

1.5 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

- **Academic Profile:** The score reached on the "theoretical or academic courses" in the BA in English teaching program (version 1998) by the senior students participating in this research. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **Curriculum:** The content and specifications of a course or program of study or, in a wider sense, the totality of the specified learning opportunities available in one educational institution (as in 'the school curriculum'); or, in its very widest sense, the program of learning applying to all pupils in the nation (as in 'the national curriculum') (Oxford University Press, 2015.

- **Linguistic component:** All courses in the BA in English Teaching Program (version 1998) directly related to linguistics or the Linguistics courses in the program themselves that were included on a test-like format for the students to respond and show how much about these contents they could recall. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **Research Methods component:** All courses in the BA in English Teaching Program (version 1998) directly related research or the Research Methods course itsself in the program that were included on a test-like format for the students to respond and show how much about these contents they could recall. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **English Teaching Methodology component**: All courses in the BA in English Teaching Program (version 1998) directly related to English teaching or the "English teaching didactics" courses in the program themselves that were included on a test-like format for the students to respond and show how much about these contents they could recall. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **Quality of Academic Profiles:** The average score of the Linguistic component, Research methods component, and the English teaching methodology component. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **Knowledge of English Linguistics content:** The average score of the English linguistics and related courses in the BA in English teaching program (version 1998) on the test-like questionnaire administered to a sample of senior students. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **Knowledge Research Methods:** The average score of the research related courses in the BA in English teaching program (version 1998) on the test-like questionnaire administered to a sample of senior students. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **Knowledge of English teaching methodology:** The average score of the English teaching methodology and related courses in the BA in English teaching program (version 1998) on the test-like questionnaire administered to a sample of senior students. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **English Teacher Preparation:** The implementation of the BA in English teaching program (version 1998) at the Department of Foreign Languages, of the University of El Salvador, Main Campus. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

- **Theoretical course:** A course in the BA in English teaching program that deals with conceptual and research-based information about English teaching, Research methods, and Linguistics. (Ad-hoc definition built by the researchers).

The construct academic profile was built only with the subjects that belong in the 3 areas or linguistics, English teaching and research methodology. An academic profile can be built with more than simply the recalling of definitions, or loose ideas from the courses in focus. Not all theoretical courses in the curriculum were made part of the concept of student academic profile as some of the courses left out were not considered typical within each category which constitute the concept under study.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

English teacher preparation programs should have as a major goal the enabling of their students to serve with the best level of competence that can be. The competencies that an effective English teacher is expected to have are those that will make him a professional teacher, not just a teacher. Teacher education programs must move away from teacher-training to teacher education as "there is more to teacher preparation than (teachers´) skills training (McIntyre 1980). The status of teaching as a profession is a contested gray area; for many, teaching is not a profession, but an occupation, or a craft (Hargreaves and Flutter, 2013). The basis for this idea is that in general profession are said to have an organized body of knowledge, with a formal period of preparation, and a required continued professional growth, and a professional organization that serves the professional development of their members. There is prestige and status, as well. For English teachers, the years of preparation include learning and training in several academic areas such as, English teaching methodology, English linguistics, and applied research methods, among others.

2.1 THE ENGLISH LINGUISTICS COMPONENT.

The English linguistics courses area is composed of 3 courses: general English linguistics, Phonology and Morphology, and Syntax. These courses are thought to provide a broad panorama to the scientific or academic study language. It could arguably be mentioned that besides the general English linguistics course, that deals broadly with most of the areas that study language, Phonology and Morphology and Syntax are broad

academic extensions of the English pronunciation and grammar courses which can help understand how these two major elements of language work (Baynham, 2000).

For the most part, these courses are taught in lecture format where the teacher presents the topics and the students listen and take notes. (De La Fuente, et al. 2011) Generally the students used photocopied materials for studying the contents presented by the teacher. Often, teachers also make an effort to apply class contents thorough hands-on activities to potential scenarios the students may find in their future role as teachers; on most occasions, though, the students memorize the course contents for the tests they take during the length of the semester. Being the course theoretical and directed more at informing the students about the course contents themselves, and having little teacher-student's discussion to clarify concepts and ideas, and using memorization mostly for dealing with the course contents, it goes without saying to question the extent to which actual learning of linguistics content does happen. If knowledge of and the capacity to apply the linguistic content studied is key to the preparation of English teachers, the quality of their academic end-of-program profile with be highly compromised in the short term when they teach.

2.1.1 Importance of Linguistics in the BA in English teaching program

The foremost reason to include Linguistics as part of the components of the BA in English teaching program is that Linguistics provides the knowing-about-language element that can enable future English teachers to deal professionally and academically with whatever English teaching content the student will find himself or herself teaching. (Hall

and Eggington, 1998) It addresses this issue directly while arguing for the importance of linguistics in teacher education. "A field such as linguistics offers many competing views on the nature of language structure, its functions, and its patterns of variation; not all linguistic perspectives will be equally relevant for teachers, and it is the responsibility of teacher educators to promote the most relevant aspects of linguistics to prospective teachers rather than the aspects that are most theoretically current...". It is as if Linguistic provides the academic understanding for the content that the teacher is to teach by providing the scientific framework for his or her work as a teacher. Linguistics, in short, should provide the natural, broad comprehension of what language as a specific human trait is about. Such broad academic comprehension of that phenomenon will constitute the de-facto backdrop on which the English language content they teach should fall within. From this perspective, a good grasp of general English linguistics is a mandatory component of in any given English language teacher preparation program.

2.1.2 Linguistics and Applied Linguistics in the preparation of English teachers

It seems to go without saying that an English teacher preparation program that intends to professionalize their graduates must consider seriously the inclusion of academic knowledge that can give the students the edge to understand it and apply it properly when at work. It can be argued that English teachers need Linguistics to strengthen their understanding of the English language and their mother tongue (Spanish) in general so they become more effective teachers. This idea has been prevalent in the work of Stern (1983), Fillmore &Snow (2002) and other academics; however, “there has been little systematic

research on the effect of applied linguistics instruction on language teachers' knowledge and practice" (Bartels, 2002, and Borg (2003). This void makes room for the need of researching this area in such a way that the true need for linguistics content shows, lest we "may be imposing practices of the applied linguistics discourse community on language teachers during their teacher education which are not helpful for the practice of language teaching (Bartels, 2003, and others).

The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), arguably the biggest organization of English teachers with chapters in many countries around the world, is one of those patrons which promote the inclusion of Linguistics is the preparation of teachers. The "Preparing Teachers of English Language Learners: Practical Applications of the PreK-12 TESOL Professional Standards" guidelines (Fenner and Kuhlman, 2006), in its "Domain 1: Language" establish as its components the areas: "Language as a system" and "Language Acquisition and Development". These areas constitute "the content that is at the core of being an (English) teacher who works with ELLs". The knowledge of this content "goes beyond having a grasp of English grammatical rules to having and understanding of language as a system of rules---and beyond"; knowledge "that includes awareness and understanding of the separate components of the language as a system, such as phonology, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics or discourse".

The role of the knowledge of Language in the context of immigrants and language minorities in the United States is also stressed by Fillmore & Sow (2000). Even though there is an apparent focus on language as a manifestation of culture; something akin to applied language, or the need to empathetic to the ways of other cultures expressed through language, the need for linguistics or applied language studies in the curriculum is also

strong. The areas of Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics, and others attest to the fact that language use (English) is more than being able to exchange messages in a new code. Viewed in this fashion, the inclusion of Linguistics or Applied language studies for new English teachers cannot be overlooked. For teachers to be more adept at fostering effective language learning Fillmore & Snow (2000) they need "a thorough understanding of how language figures in education" in an area they call "educational linguistics"; and are that includes courses ranging from Language in general to Discourse and Text Analysis.

2.2 THE ENGLISH TEACHING COMPONENT.

The English teaching component exists in the BA in English teaching program to make sure that the students become knowledgeable in the theory and practice of teaching English. The courses that belong in this area are one on "English teaching methods", and 3 other courses in "English Didactics" (Didactics I, Didactics II, and Didactics III). These courses broadly cover most content about English teaching in general. The emphasis is at the beginning of the courses is to help the students grasp the overarching theory of the "methods" and approaches to teach English, classical methodologies are covered, (Boyle, A. Hutchinson, D. 2009) but the overall emphasis is on the Communicative Approach.

The other "English Didactics" courses are more theoretical in nature and include advanced methods, curriculum planning, teaching the various English subskill and the like. Sometimes they also include how to teach children and/or specialized English courses. There is apparently a more hands-on focus on the "English teaching methods" course than on the other Didactics courses (Carlino, P. 2003); which bring back the problem of how to

really make the students to apply the theory studied so they find it meaningful (Vigotsky, 1976). Memorization of course content play again a major role here, mostly with the purpose of working out the course tests that they must take.

The English teaching component is the one that seeks to develop the professional framework for teaching competency required of an undergraduate in English teaching. However, being the courses mostly theoretical, and students essentially memorizing content to pass written tests, how much they capitalize on these courses to become informed practitioners is important to find out. (De la Fuente. et. Al. 2011b).

2.2.1 Importance of the English teaching component

There cannot be an English teaching preparation program without a how-to-teach English component. All English teaching preparation programs should include the know-how to teach plus the hands-on element to seek the adequate profile for the professional practice of the teachers in preparation: This is reason enough for the inclusion of such a component. The elements of teaching approaches, teaching strategies, and teaching techniques (Richards, 1976) must be a necessary part of in the teacher preparation program. There are many roads to learn. People bring different talents and preferences for learning to college. Students need opportunities to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. Then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily. (Chickering, and Gamson 1987)

2.3 THE RESEARCH COMPONENT.

To conclude academic preparation of the BA in English teaching program, the students must take several other courses from the research component area: a course in Applied Statistics to Education, a course in Research Methods, and two Seminar courses in which they carry out an original piece of research on a topic about English teaching and learning or related areas. The Applied Statistics course, and the research methods course are taught to provide the data analysis tools to work out the data collected and provide analytical thinking for better drafting of the research proposal or research report. The Research Methods course gives the students basic instruction on research theory and research methods applied to English learning or teaching... (De la Fuente. et. Al. Martinez. 2011c) The Seminar I and II courses cover the theory and practice of designing a piece of research from the ground up.

The research project itself consists of lectures and hands-on activities with the purpose of coming up with a good set of research questions around which to build a research proposal, which is executed in the second Seminar course (Gargallo et. Al. 2010). The research project is arguably the only learning experience in which the students test themselves for overall mastery of previous courses, as it requires them to come forward with an original, though modest, piece of research.

One issue to grapple with in this area is how much the contents presented mean something in the overall framework of their understanding of the subject matter they have studies over that last 3 or 4 year. The students find these courses somewhat off topic as they are more used to courses in which the teacher talks to them about course contents via

classroom lectures. The courses in this area are designed to make the students think about all of the subject matter they have studied and take issue with it, so to speak (Hernandez Piña.F.2003). This idea alone is alien to the average student of these courses as they have not addressed any previous course content in like manner. So, the problem here is not that the courses are too theoretical to come to terms with them, but that the "problematizing" the courses themselves require the students to do on the reality of the contents studied is one thing they find very hard to approach.

The three components briefly discussed above provide for a very good technical and cohesive curricular whole: The linguistics component broadly covers the scientific study of language that the student needs to become informed or literate in that area; the English teaching courses are meant to help the students deal with the teaching knowledge, teaching competencies, and the attitudes that teachers are expected to have to become principled and qualified teachers (Kember 1996). However, all of the above is all in only in writing, as a plan that must be worked on to become real. This is where the learning issue arises because a curriculum as a plan only established how the various parts of the curriculum hold together. And then all is left in the hands of administrators, and teachers who should intervene to make the curriculum as a plan come alive, if at all. Teachers teach their courses and students learn what they teach, but how engaging and learnable do the contents become thought the teachers 'plan and intentions? This is the issue that this research seeks to find out.

2.4 BACKGROUND AND NEED

There is much planning that goes into the preparation of an educational program; such is the case in the preparation of the curriculum for English teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador. All of the curricular components of that program seem to fit together very tightly, but that in no way means that the expected learning results, or expected end-of-program should be taken for granted. The English teaching preparation program has been running for years since the 1970s, first as an AB level program, and later al the BA level, what is called a licensure degree. These programs have been successful in the sense that it has been empirically observed that most teachers land a teaching position either in the private or public sector after they graduate. Many of them as well have followed on successful teaching careers. However, the Department has never carried out research to measure how well prepared the students finish their studies. So far the Department is not aware of what makes a teacher well prepared as referenced in a piece of research where some technical measurement of this trait and others has been carried out. Various authors (Henderson & Hawthorne, l995) presented strong arguments that outdated strategies (the implementation of curriculum) had to be discarded and ineffectual methodology eliminated. Concurring with these views that change was not only necessary but imminent.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out to measure how much the students "remember" from the academic courses the students of the BA in English teaching program take and which are meant to give them the professional support that many English teaching practitioners lack. The research question addressed was "What is the quality of the academic profile of the students finishing their BA in English program at the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of El Salvador, during the year 2016? The ensuing subsidiary questions (3) are: "How much academic content do the students remember from the courses of the English linguistics area, English teaching methodology area, and Research methods area of their program of studies?

This was a non-experimental, quantitative, descriptive study. There was also some work to try to explain the differences in the "recall" of academic information by relating some personal information of the students to the final score reached; however, the thrust of the study was on how much the students remembered from those courses, which was operationalized with the term "academic profile". The sample was 114 students from the 5th years of studies of the BA in English teaching program administered by the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador, Main Campus, San Salvador. The students answered a questionnaire of 90 yes/no questions split into 4 sections: one about personal information, one on English linguistics, one on English language teaching methods, and one on Research methods. The questions were processed via IBM SPSS software to obtain the averages reach both per academic area (linguistics, teaching methods, and research methods) and a general score, or the academic profile posited as the topic for this research.

3.1 SETTING

The study was a survey conducted in the classrooms allocated to the Seminar II students of the Department of Foreign Languages, Semester II, 2016. Some of these classrooms are in the building where the Department of Foreign Languages administrative and teacher offices are held; the other classrooms are scattered around this building. The students surveyed were students taking the Research Seminar courses, which is taught to fifth year students.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

A non-random, convenience and purposive sample of students was used. The students chosen for this study were those taking the last two courses of the BA in English program, and who have already taken all the "academic" or theoretical courses in their program. The students who answered the questionnaire were only those that willingly said they wanted to answer it. The students were from 2 of the 3 classes taking Seminar II. Altogether the sample was made up 114 students, which includes 57 women and 55 men.

El 61% es menor de 24 años. La mayoría (94%) ingresaron a la universidad a partir del año 2009. Solo el 12% tiene beca. El 48% dijo que vive con ambos padres. El 66% tiene CUM arriba de 8.0. El 53% no ha reprobado ninguna asignatura. Trabaja el 52 %. El 30% de ellos tiene un padre o una madre o ambos con grado máximo de estudios de Bachillerato; el 19% es graduado o graduada universitario.

3.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The only data collection instrument used was a questionnaire. The questionnaire had 4 parts: one for personal information, and 3 other parts with questions dealing with English linguistics, English teaching methods, and Research methods. All the questions in parts 2, 3, and 4 were yes/no questions. All together, these 3 parts made up the "academic profile" of the students. The questionnaire was a test for how much they could recall from their academic courses already taken. The questions were drafted based on the course objectives and contents for every one of the courses that went in each of the academic areas already mentioned. The questions were very general and did not seek to address very specific information. The idea behind the drafting of the questions was that they were to be answered not because they had memorized information but because they could relate them to something meaningful in their overall learning process. The questions were designed yes/no type because of the constraints that answering a more thorough and elaborate instrument can bring. That is why a yes/no type of instrument, even if it may not show the whole profile, was used.

3.4 PROCEDURE

The data were collected via a 4-part questionnaire dealing with personal and academic content questions. The students were surveyed during the time they were taking their Seminar II class; for which permission from the teacher in charge of that course had already been sought. The students as a class were asked told the purpose of the data collection activity and whether they were willing to answer the questionnaire. Only those

who willingly accepted answering the questionnaire were kept in the class, the other students left. The students responded the questionnaire in about 20 minutes and in a single sitting. The information collected was then brought into an IBM SPSS statistics data base. Then a data analysis was carried out to determine (first) the characteristics of the sample, (2) then the yes/no frequencies for each of the academic content section of the questionnaire.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The first stage of analysis was to produce a descriptive analysis of the data collected, which were processed via the statistical software IBM SPSS version 19. Initially a frequency count was called for every one of the questions in the questionnaire, as most data were categorical. Then the demographic data section (first part of the questionnaire) was analyzed to obtain the description of the sample. Then the questions from the various academic courses included (Applied Statistics, English Phonology, Research Methods, English Teaching Methods, English Syntax, and English Didactics) were grouped into three single areas: English Linguistics, English Teaching Methodology, and Research Methods. This is the curriculum areas that make up the "academic profile", the focus of this study. The data for this section were binomial, which can be analyzed either on a categorical scale or an interval scale (Argyrus, 2005); for the purposes of the research the data were considered interval to obtain averages per section or a composite average for the whole "profile".

The second stage of analysis was to produce a simple inferential analysis. This analysis was performed with the aim of establishing the relationship between personal traits

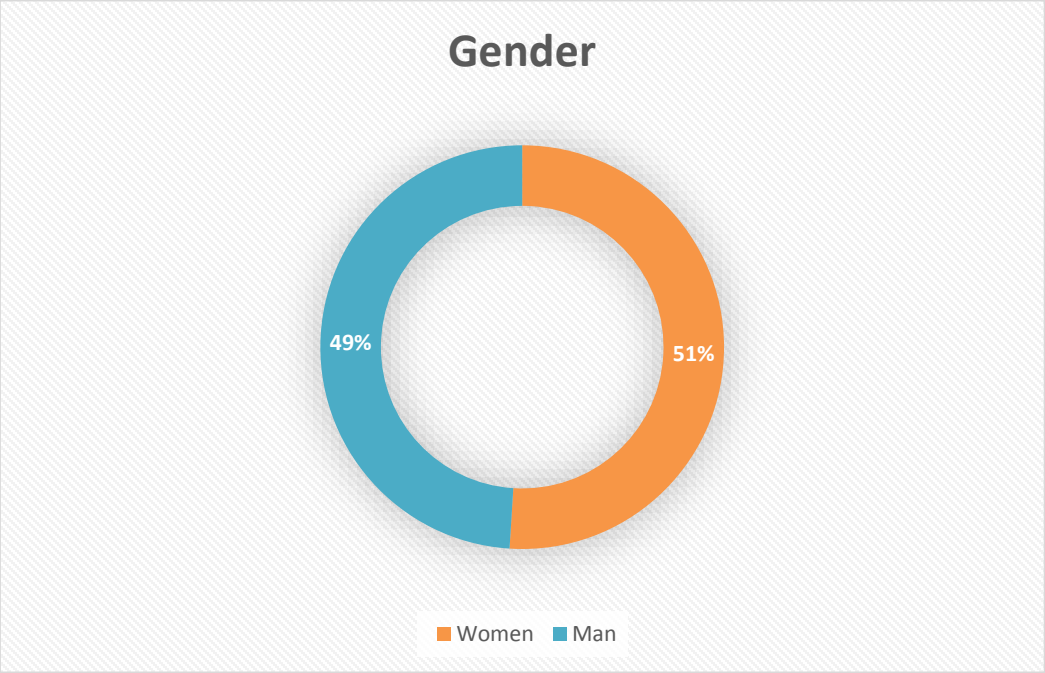
and the “academic profile” the students reached. A simple linear regression analysis was carried out for this purpose, with the demographic data of students as the independent variable(s), and the general score on the profile as the dependent variable. The results of this analysis indicate that out of the variables in the personal profile of the student, the only variable that has a bearing on the students score is whether the student works or not.

4. RESULTS

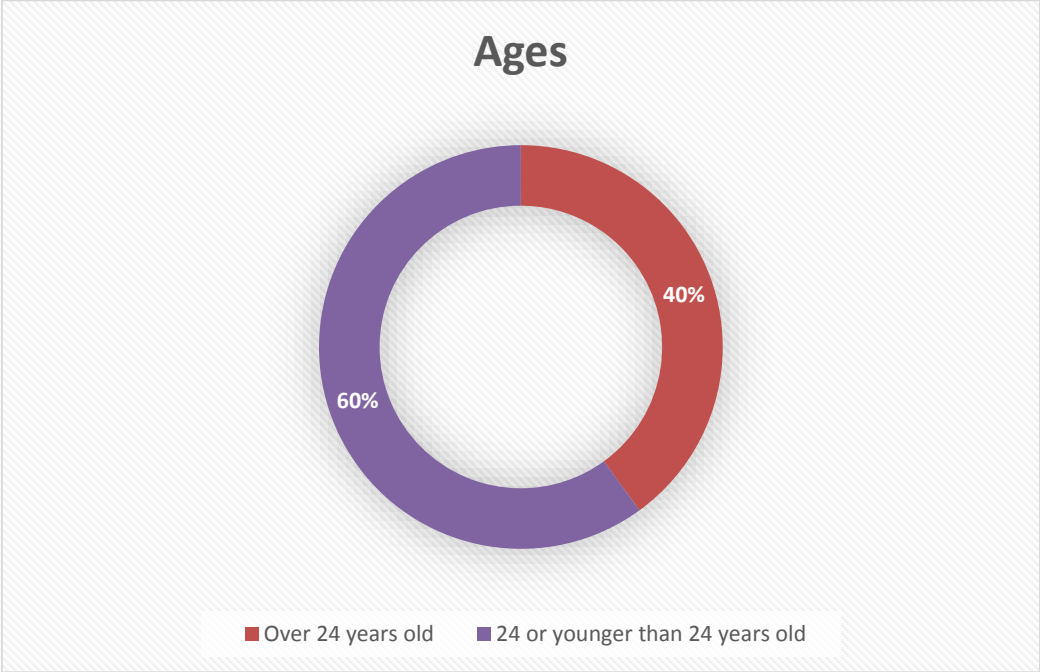
Following are the results obtained from the data in its descriptive form. First goes the description of the sample, then the averages per academic area, and last the general averages. The last part of these results is the regression analysis connecting the personal or demographic profile of each student and their corresponding score on all of the areas.

4.1 THE SAMPLE

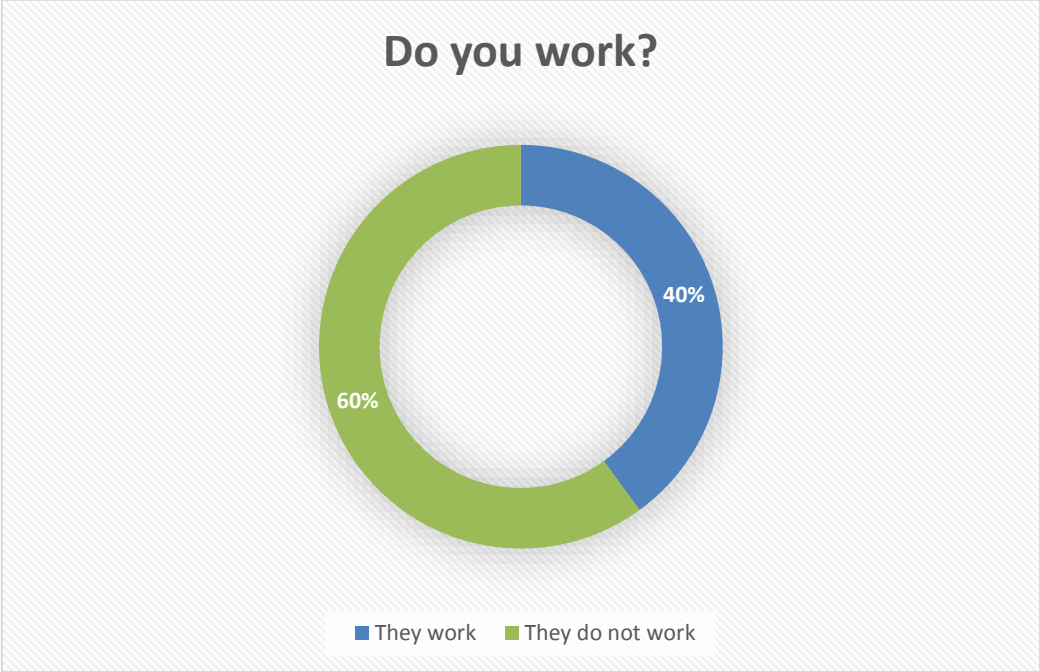
- Out of the students surveyed, 51% are women, whereas 49% are men.



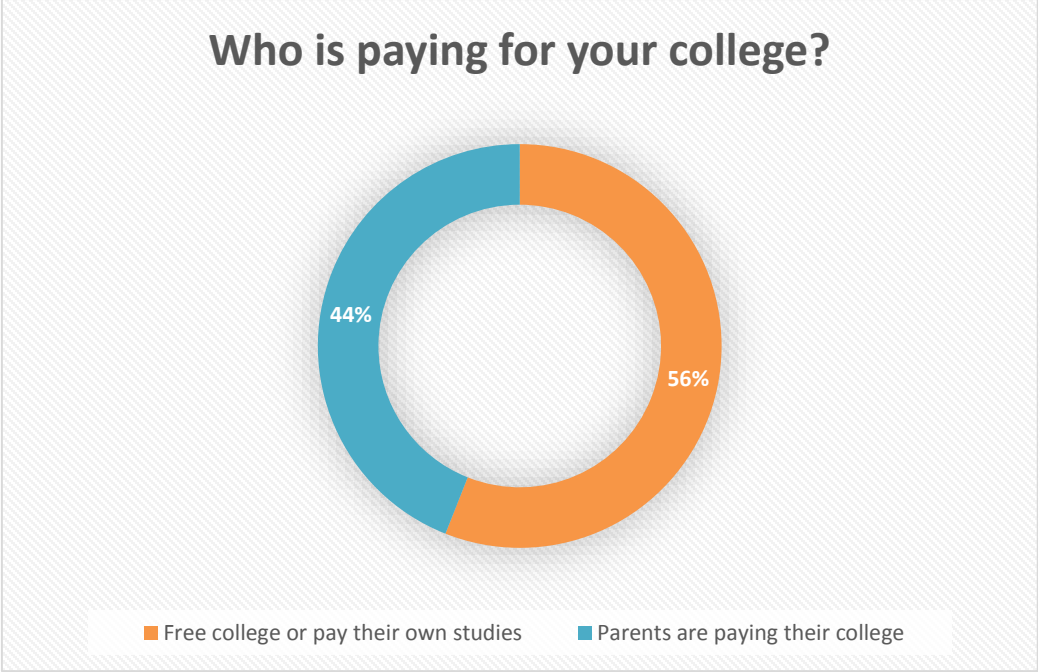
- Sixty percent are or are younger than 24 years old.



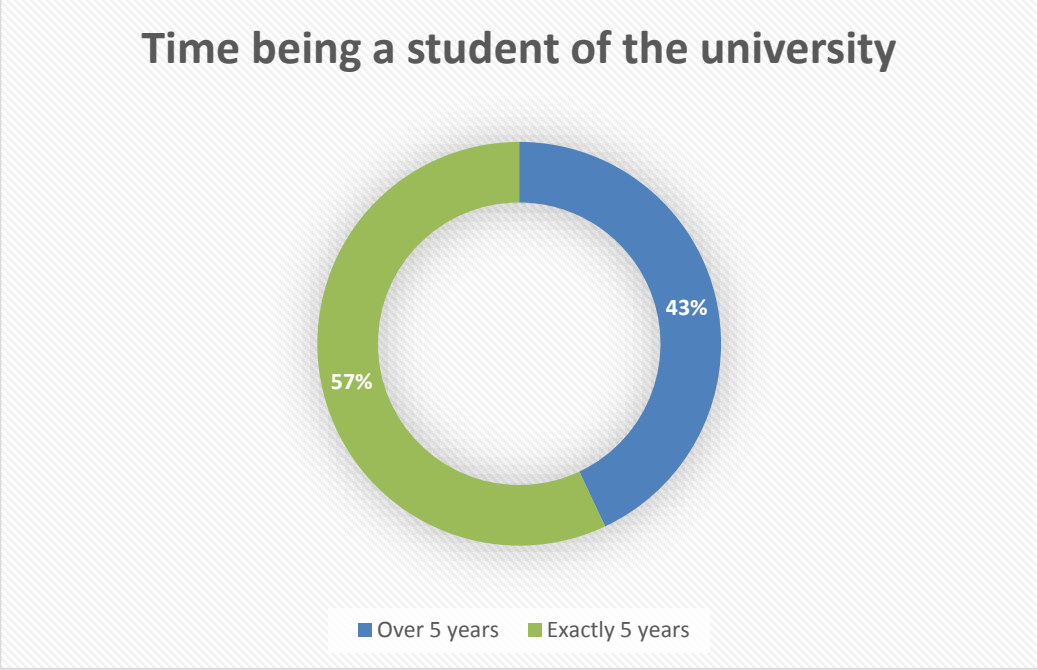
- Forty percent of all surveyed say they work; 60% say they don't.



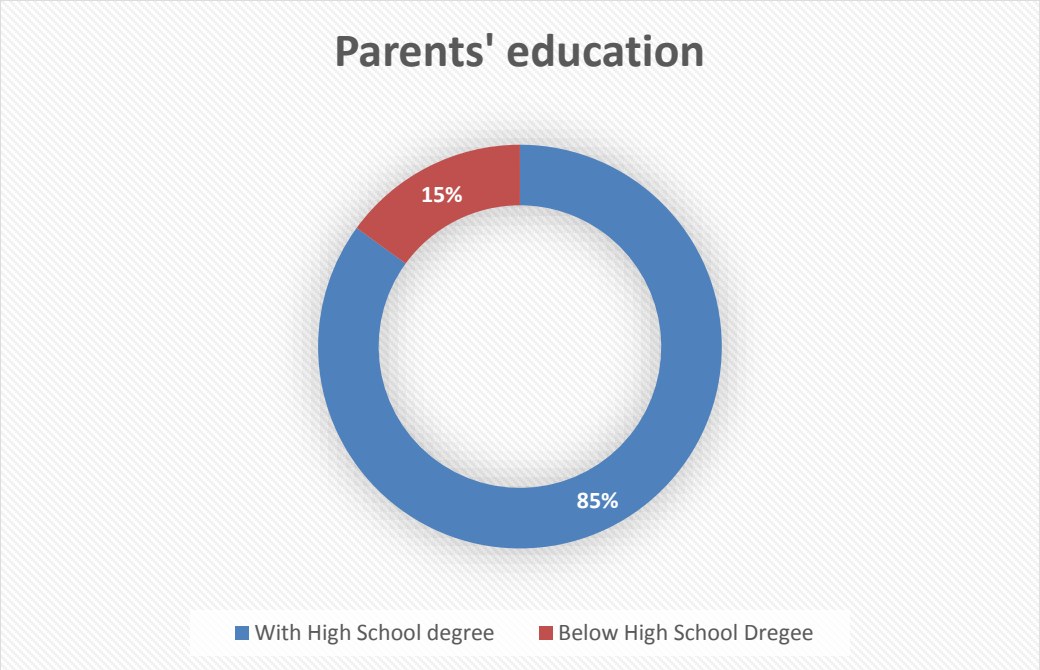
- Fifty-six percent say the University grants them free college tuition or they pay for it themselves; the rest, 44% say their parents pay for their college tuition.



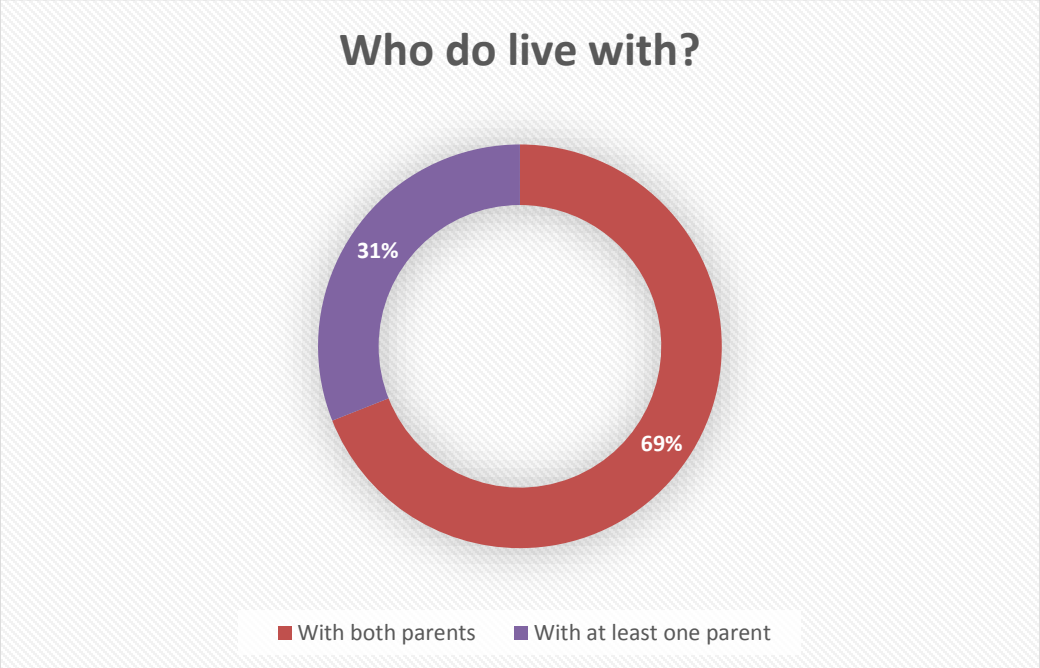
- As to the time they have been regular students of the University, 43% have more than 5 years as a student of the University.



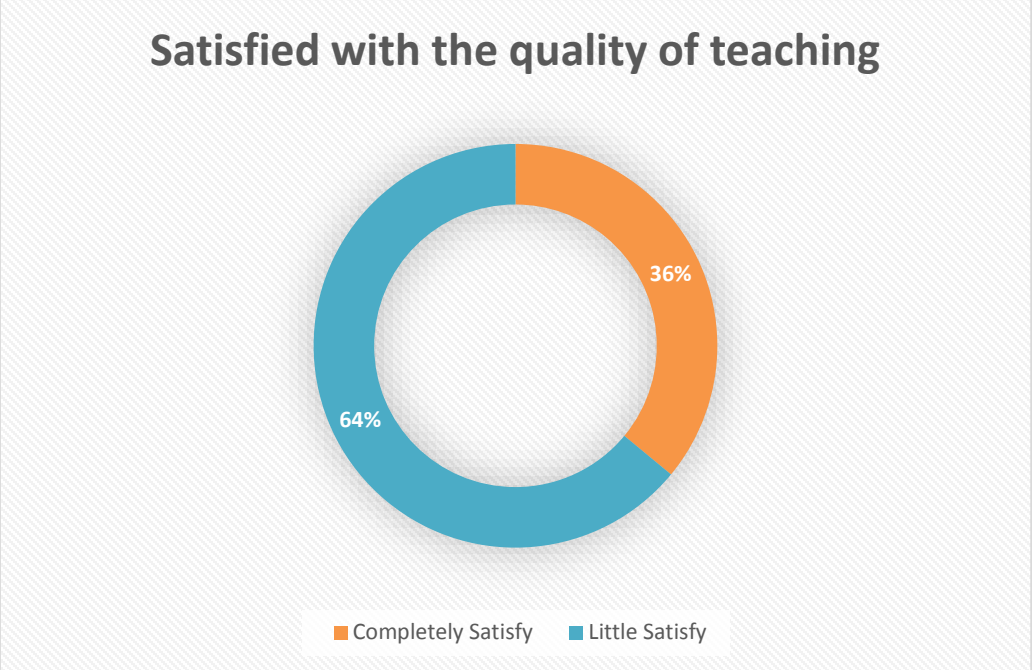
- The students' parents have a High School diploma in 85% and the others have less degree.



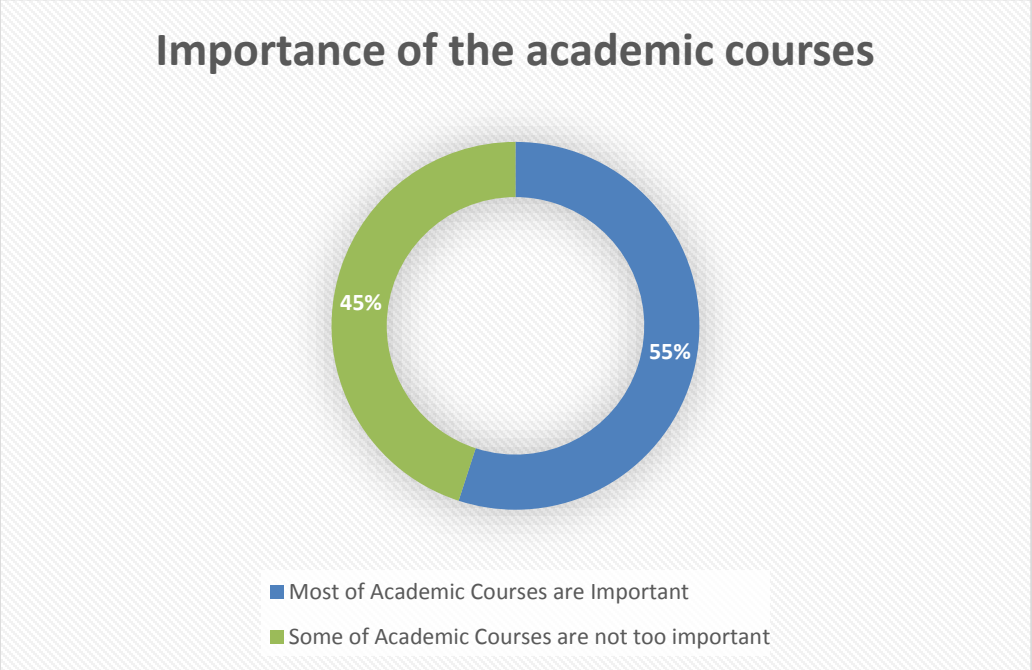
- Sixty nine percent of students live with both their parents.



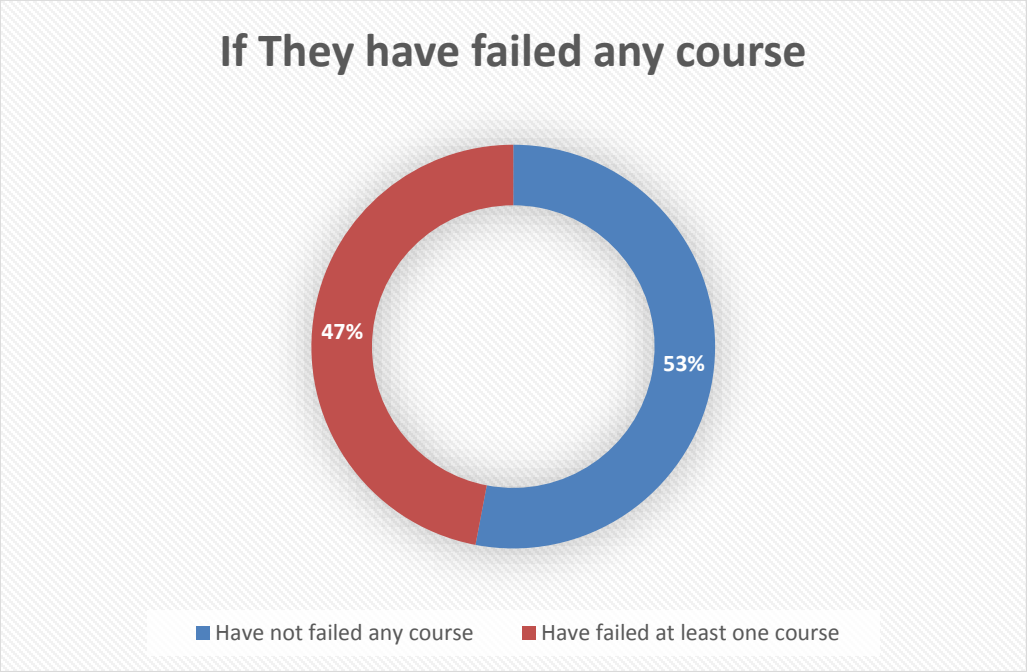
- Only 36% of students said they are satisfied with the quality of teaching they received, while 64 say they are little satisfied with it.



- Fifty-five percent say that most of the academic courses received are important.



- Regarding the number of courses, they have failed, 53% have not failed any course, whereas 47% have failed at least one of these courses.



4.2 TABLE 1.

DATA SUMMARY TABLE

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Scores reached in each of the three academic areas: English teaching methodology, Research Methods, and English Linguistics

		English teaching methodology	Research Methods	English Linguistics
N	**Valid**	114	114	114
	Lost	0	0	0
Mean		5,3905	6,0673	6,27
Median		5,4839	6,2500	6,29
Mode		5,48	6,25	6
Standard deviation		1,14732	1,06343	1,029

The table shows the mean, median, and mode of each of the components of the academic profile: English teaching methodology, Research methods, and English linguistics. The table shows that there are slight but significant differences among the three components, the weakest being English teaching methodology; the highest being English linguistics. The differences are also sustained by the other Measures of Central Tendency (Median and Mode) that show a measure close to the Mean.

4.3 TABLE 2

ACADEMIC PROFILE SCORE OF STUDENTS

Statistics		
Academic Profile Score		
N	**Valid**	**114**
	Lost	**0**
Mean		5,9113
Mean		5,7778
Mode		5,67
Standard deviation		,80058

This table presents the overall academic profile where the three previous components are brought together into a single score. The quality of the academic profile is shown to be 5.9, which is below percentile sixty, 0.09 short of reaching 6.0, the "passing grade required to pass a given course at the University of El Salvador.

4.4 TABLE 3

REGRESSION MODEL TO TEST FOR STUDENTS' PERSONAL PROFILE INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PROFILE

Summary of regression model				
Modelo	R	R cuadrado	R cuadrado corregida	Error típ. de la estimación
1	,403[a]	,162	,038	,81798

a. Variables predictores: (Constante), quien paga mis estudios, tiempo que tiene de ser estudiante de la UES, Nivel de satisfacción con la calidad de enseñanza, sexo de la encuestada, nivel de escolaridad de madre o padre, Importancia de las asignaturas teóricas cursadas, CUM, el estudiante vive con, trabajas, edad de la encuestada, asignaturas reprobadas

b. Variable dependiente: Academic Profile Score

The regression model with R-squared .038 gives the amount of common variance that exists among the independent variables included in the model. The amount of variance (.038) is too small to conclude that the variables included in the equation have a bearing on the profile (Argyrus, 2001).

4.5 TABLE 4

COEFFICIENTS FOR EACH PERSONAL PROFILE VARIABLES INCLUDED IN THE REGRESSION MODEL

Coefficient[s]						
Modelo		**Coeficientes no estandarizados**		**Coeficientes tipificados**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	Error típ.	Beta		
No	Constante	4,102	1,450		2,828	,006
1.	CUM	,107	,216	,061	,494	,623
2.	El estudiante vive con	-,145	,222	-,078	-,653	,516
3.	Asignaturas reprobadas	,166	,234	,099	,706	,482
4.	Nivel de escolaridad de madre o padre	,072	,216	,038	,336	,738
5.	Importancia de las asignaturas teóricas cursadas	-,190	,193	-,110	-,985	,328
6.	Nivel de satisfacción con la calidad de enseñanza	,256	,212	,146	1,203	,233
7.	Tiempo que tiene de ser estudiante de la UES	,202	,218	,120	,928	,357
8.	Sexo de la encuestada	,319	,183	,192	1,743	,085
9.	Edad de la encuestada	,079	,221	,047	,359	,721
10.	Trabajas	,403	,208	,241	1,936	,057
11.	Quien paga mis estudios	-,363	,207	-,217	-1,755	,083
a. Variable dependiente: Academic Profile Score						

Regression is a technique that helps relate a set of independent variables (the personal profile) with a dependent variable (the "academic profile). Eleven variables were included in the regression equation (see table 1 above), and only three of them "sex", "age", "work", and "college tuition" come *close* to be significant and the variables that the model predicts that influence the academic profile; however they all stop short of showing a the significant level of .005 (Argyrus, 2001), and are all discarded as potential influencers. Conclusion: None of the variables proposed in the regression model has a bearing on the academic profile score of students.

The academic profile posited turned out to be slightly below the 6.0, the minimum grade required to pass a course at the University of El Salvador. When this score is split into the three components of the profile: English linguistics, English teaching methodology, and Research methods, there were significant differences in the averages, being English linguistics the area with the highest score: 6.27. In summary, the quality of the academic profile is represented by a performance of 59% which is below the 60% performance require to pass a course at the University of El Salvador. When seeking to find an explanation for this score, a regression equation with 11 variables of personal attributes of the students in the sample ended up not showing any special effect on the variable "academic profile" or score reached by students.

5. DISCUSSION

Measuring how much is learned in each academic endeavor can serve as a means for curriculum alignment or restructuring by interested parties. All courses in a curriculum should serve the purpose of enabling the students to reach the goals originally established and measuring learning should be an inevitable process; however, the measurement of how much is learned in a given program is very rarely carried out. The measurement of overall learning of the students finishing their undergraduate studies at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador has never been done. Filling in this need is what this study intends to do by testing a sample of students in their 5th year of studies on the contents of the academic courses taken during their 3rd, 4th and 5th years of studies. These courses are included to fill the need for academic or theoretical support for the English language teacher in preparation, so he or she can perform as a true language professional. The design for this study is non-experimental, quantitative and descriptive.

The academic profile was made up of three components: English linguistics, English teaching methodology, and Research methodology. The scores of 6.3 in English linguistics, 5.4 for English teaching methodology, and 6.1 in Research methods show clear and significant differences among them. Intuitively in these scores were expected to show the same performance they are all theoretical courses which most students approached them as unnecessary and boring. The differences in performance show that this belief was not totally true as the differences among them may indicate that students approach the courses in these three areas differently. It was argued in the Literature Review that the English methodology courses were the ones that provided the academic and hands-on practice to support for a teacher's job. The results do not show that in the academic part, which the

weakest of the three areas of the academic profile produced. One reason for this weakness can the teacher's effort is focused more in making the students to learn to teach English, without giving them the academic theory to support such effort. The lack of this academic support is that which produces practitioners but not professionals Ruth Helyer, (2015).

The previous discussion was about explaining away the "negative" difference that English teaching methodology has in comparison with the other two areas. However, each of the three scores are below the percentile 60, which indicates a low performance overall, especially if the questions that the students answered in every content area of the questionnaire were of the knowledge domain (Bloom, 1959), where the students are asked to simply recall information. Chances are that the 5.9 or 59% overall score for the general "academic profile" might have been lower had the entire question been in the "application" or above format in the Bloom and associates (1959) cognitive skills domain. Regardless of the question type format, these results do present a picture of how much the student academically profit from them.

To be fair, however, the burden should not be left only on the shoulders of the students. All educational endeavors bring together both students and teachers; and it is contingent on the teachers to make their teaching active and meaningful so the students find the contents important and necessary. So, the teacher's role in these student-teacher dyad is something that can surely give a better picture of why the students' academic knowledge is so low, given that the BA studies are said to be professional studies, and not technical studies.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- To do a complex and detailed investigation, where time is enough to evaluate all areas that are part of the students' academic profile.

- Based on the research already done, to study the points at which students are failing to reinforce those weak points.

- To test the different areas part of the education pyramid, which are besides Knowledge: Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation. This with the main objective to get a complete Academic profile handle by the 5th Year Students of the BA in English Teaching at the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador

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7.2 APPENDIX

7.2.1 Questionnaire

Universidad de El Salvador

Facultad de Ciencias y Humanidades

Departamento de Idiomas Extranjeros

Generación 2016

Presentación:

Este cuestionario busca conocer **qué tanto recuerdas de los contenidos** de las asignaturas "teóricas" que tomaste en tu plan de estudio de Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés. Tus respuestas pueden dar la pauta para medir la pertinencia de estas asignaturas en un nuevo plan de estudios de esta carrera.

En la primera parte por favor responde según corresponda a tu situación personal; en la segunda marca YES o NO, dependiendo del contenido de veracidad que recuerdes de cada afirmación. Gracias por tu colaboración.

Información personal:

Por favor marca el número de la opción de cada pregunta con la información que corresponda.

P1. Año de ingreso a la Universidad (escribe el año por favor) _____

P2. Sexo: (1) femenino (2) masculino

P3. Edad: (1) menor de o igual a 24 años (2) mayor de 25 años P4. Trabajas: (1) Si (2) No

P5. Mis estudios son pagados por: (1) beca (2) mis padres (3) un familiar (4) mí mismo.

P6. Vivo con: (1) mi mamá (2) mi papá (3) mamá y papá (4) yo solo

P7. CUM: (1) menor a 8.0 (2) mayor a 8.0

P8. Cantidad de asignaturas reprobadas: (1)ninguna (2)una (3)más de una

P9. El más alto nivel de estudios alcanzado por mi madre o padre es:

(1) 6º grado (2) Tercer Ciclo (3) Bachillerato (4) Técnico (5) graduado universitario.

P10. Marca la importancia que consideres tienen las asignaturas "teóricas" que cursaste en tu programa de estudio:

(1) La mayoría son importantes (2) algunas son importantes (3) ninguna es importante

P11. La razón por la que estas asignaturas no las consideras importantes es porque:

(1) Los contenidos no son pertinentes (2) no se enseñan bien (3) no son pertinentes y no se enseñan bien.

P12. Marca tu nivel de satisfacción con la calidad de la enseñanza recibida:

(4) muy satisfecho (3) poco satisfecho (2) nada satisfecho (1) muy insatisfecho

Preguntas sobre ESTADISTICA APLICADA A LA EDUCACION

La estadística es la ciencia que trata de la investigación científica.	SI	NO
Las medidas de tendencia central están siempre referidas a la curva normal.	SI	NO
La base de la teoría estadística es la probabilidad.	SI	NO
Estudiar una muestra da **exactamente** los mismos resultados que estudiar una la población completa.	SI	NO
El objetivo de la estadística es dar las herramientas para hacer gráficos de barras, de pastel, etc.	SI	NO
Una hipótesis alternativa es lo mismo que una hipótesis nula.	SI	NO
La medición de la proficiencia en inglés según el ACTFL está dada en escala ordinal.	SI	NO
Hay dos tipos de variables en estadística: cualitativas y cuantitativas.	SI	NO
Toda encuesta lleva un margen de error y un nivel de confianza.	SI	NO
La operacionalización de una variable nos dice cómo medir esta variable.	SI	NO
Con el programa estadístico SPSS cualquier estudiante puede hacer análisis de datos.	SI	NO
La escala en que se mide una variable determina la prueba estadística que se deberá usar.	SI	NO

Questions about ENGLISH PHONOLOGY

Language was created by God in the beginning of times.	YES	NO
Phonology is the study of the characteristics of speech sounds.	YES	NO
To describe a consonant sound, we need its place or articulation,		

manner of articulation, and voicing. YES NO

The upper teeth and the lower lip are places of articulation. YES NO

/p/, /t/, /k/ are voiced sounds. YES NO

/ə/ is a sound that represents all vowels in English in unstressed position. YES NO

Phonology is about the unconscious sound patterns of language speakers use when speaking. YES NO

Allophones are meaning-distinguishing sounds in a language. YES NO

If a phone is substituted for another phone of the same phoneme a minimal pair occurs. YES NO

Assimilation and liason are articulatory processes that are normal in speech. YES NO

Syllables should always contain a vowel sound. YES NO

Phonemes are abstract units of sounds. YES NO

Allophones are “families” of phonemes . YES NO

Affricates, glides, and stops are examples of places of articulation. YES NO

Vowels and produced with restricted flow of air from the mouth. YES NO

The “flap” [ɾ] in words like “city”, and “pretty” is an allophone of /t/. YES NO

The process of vowel reduction produces weak forms. YES NO

British English and General American are two dialects of English. YES NO

To articulate consonants, a closure in the vocal tract is needed. YES NO

Vowels are described in terms of the position of the tongue inside the mouth. YES NO

Prosody deals with the intonation of “whatever we say” when we speak. YES NO

A minimal pair exists when two words are identical except for a contrast in one phoneme. YES NO

Animals cannot speak but can communicate. YES NO

Assimilation and dissimilation are examples of phonological processes. YES NO

A dialect has its own grammar, lexis and phonology. YES NO

From a linguistics point of view British English is better than American English. YES NO

Questions about RESEARCH METHODS

Science is about describing, explaining, and understanding the empirical phenomena in the world. YES NO

All research requires hypotheses. YES NO

A given research topic can be studied with various methods. YES NO

All scientific research must be empirical research. YES NO

Questionnaires and surveys are both methods of research. YES NO

Anything and everything can be studied scientifically. YES NO

Pertinent citations in the research report are evidence that the literature was consulted. YES NO

Survey research requires having a control group and a experimental group. YES NO

Concepts and variables in research cannot be measured unless they are operationalized. YES NO

The results of a research project represent for sure the reality studied. YES NO

All research can be carried out by means of surveys. YES NO

The key to good research is to structure it around a valid research question or valid working hypothesis. YES NO

All research is about finding the causes of the phenomena studied. YES NO

Questions about ENGLISH TEACHING METHODS

According to Second Language Acquisition there is a “critical period” for acquiring a foreign language. YES NO

Audiolingualism was a language learning theory based on habit-formation. YES NO

Noam Chomsky proposed the distinction between language acquisition and learning. YES NO

Communicative methodologies forbid the use of memorization as a tool for learning. YES NO

In English teaching theory, a method is the practical realization of an approach. YES NO

PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) is the best way to teach English. YES NO

English teaching methods are about teaching good lessons. YES NO

Bloom's taxonomy is about the proficiency levels that students can achieve as learners of English. YES NO

Method and methodology are the same thing in English teaching. YES NO

The eclectic approach is the best method to teach English. YES NO

ABCD is an acronym for a way to write teaching objectives. YES NO

The Total Physical Response method can be used at any level of English learning. YES NO

Questions about ENGLISH SYNTAX

Syntax is a branch of grammar inspired in the 1980s by Stephen Krashen. YES NO

The phrase "small boys and girls" is a structurally ambiguous phrase. YES NO

There are 3 basic types of rules: Phrase structure rules, lexical rules are and transformational rules. YES NO

The smallest syntactical unit is the syllable. YES NO

Syntactically, a question is a type of sentence. YES NO

Constituents are strings of words that syntactically and semantically behave as a unit. YES NO

Not all English sentences can be analyzed in Syntax. YES NO

The main objective of syntax is to draw sentence trees. YES NO

"John loves Rita" and "Rita is loved by John" have the same surface structure. YES NO

Inflections are ways to signal grammatical properties. YES NO

"We met and English history teacher" is an ambiguous sentence. YES NO

S $\longrightarrow$ V NP (PP)(ADV) is a phrase structure rule. YES NO

Questions about ENGLISH "DIDACTICS"

In time, every English teacher develops his or her **method** to teach English.	YES	NO
The Grammar-Translation method was invented by the US military.	YES	NO
Georgy Lozanov invented the Audio-Lingual Method.	YES	NO
The era of the "methods" for English teaching is dead.	YES	NO
Communicative language teaching stresses the use of speaking alone to develop proficiency.	YES	NO
The Common European Framework uses an inverted pyramid to show the various levels of English.	YES	NO
The teacher has to correct at all times all of the errors students make.	YES	NO
Intensive reading is about reading lots of English books, magazines, and the like.	YES	NO
Cohesion and coherence are two key concepts in English composition.	YES	NO
Listening and reading are productive skills.	YES	NO
Suggestopedia says that English is learned best through learning its grammar and translating.	YES	NO
Interlanguage is a term that describes the English that learners speak.	YES	NO
The classroom is the best place to acquire a foreign language.	YES	NO
Choral repetition is absent in new approaches to teach English.	YES	NO
Grading a composition, a student has written is an example of objective testing.	YES	NO
"To teach the simple past forms of verbs" is a well written objective for an English class.	YES	NO
Learners can take a "proficiency test" based on what was taught on a course.	YES	NO
Assessment is the same as testing.	YES	NO
Nowadays, many textbooks used to teach English are based on the Common European Framework.	YES	NO