

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



RESEARCH PROJECT PROFILE

A REVISION OF THE CURRENT ELECTIVE COURSES OF THE B.A. IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE
DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR, SEMESTERS I
AND II - 2018: A PROPOSAL FOR CURRICULUM CHANGE

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INTRODUCTION

The present research was carried out by students of the B.A of English Teaching as part of the graduation process during semester's I-II of the year 2018. The topic addressed this time was: *A revision of the current elective courses of the B.A in the English Teaching at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador Semesters I-II 2018: a proposal for curriculum change.*

The University of El Salvador has different requirements for students to earn a degree and offers all of the required courses every semester. When it comes to taking college classes there is a certain degree of planning and forethought required. Nowadays, college degree programs are becoming critical aspects of a successful career. Therefore, in the University of El Salvador students require a blend of both core courses that are focused on their degree program and elective courses that expand on their interests and fundamental critical thinking skills. Core courses include subjects that teach necessary and valuable information that are directly related to their field of study.

On the other hand, the elective courses are those offered throughout the major as per student's election, which means that a group of courses is presented out of which the student can freely choose which ones to course base on their academic needs or personal bias. Furthermore, the need of making a revision on the elective courses offered on the major of English in every specific semester is really essential due to the fact that most of the syllabi provided by a college or university have direct consequences on the learning development of the students and; therefore, these courses have to be aligned with the current society demands and laws. There are some reasons

why some elective courses should be considered to be added on the current curriculum of the B.A in English. One of the strongest reasons is that some elective courses provide ways for students to increase their knowledge in a specific area on the foreign language. Moreover, some elective courses are the key for students to make a decision on studying a master's degree (for example a master's degree in translation).

On the other hand, it is considered that some of the elective courses offered by the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador do not really provide the support required to the students the way they should in enhancing the English teaching field. As an example, offering Sociology or even Drawing as elective courses for a major intended to make students evolve into English teachers does not really contribute to the development in the area.

This present research project was developed with the purpose of gathering information from both alumni and undergraduate students in order to propose a revision of the current elective courses within the curriculum. In addition, to find out why the authorities from the FLD must consider some elective courses, and why some elective courses should be taken out of the current curriculum with the purpose of providing with much useful tools so that students have a better preparation to face the real world on the English teaching area, as they become teachers.

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Karina Rosibel Cardoza Alvarado

I. RESEARCH TOPIC

“A Revision of the Current Elective Courses of the B.A in the English Teaching at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador Semesters I-II 2018: A Proposal for Curriculum Change”

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A perspective of the history of the University of El Salvador, the School of Sciences and Humanities and the Foreign Language Department, is presented. It includes historical information since their foundation with data gathered from different sources such as: historical documents from different personalities that were involved in some crucial moments of the history of the University, the School and the Foreign Language Department.

According to Salazar & Rodriguez (1998) it was in 1948 when the language academy was founded with the main purpose to teach Foreign Languages such as English and French, but in a complementary way for other schools as an optional subject. This remained until the year of 1955 when the first restructuration of the “Facultad de Humanidades” was made which led to the creation of the languages school, but it was until one year later that the Foreign Language Department was founded. The same year the Foreign Language Department offered its first Technical Major which was “Técnico en Traductor Interprete” which lasted 4 years consisting of 16 subjects.

This Technical major was served for 12 years in the Foreign Language Department. The reason why this was no longer taught was that there were not many professionals in this field to teach the subjects, and there were not so many students and, finally, it was expensive because of all these things. The Technical major did not last more than 12 years, and only 28 students graduated from it.

According to Salazar & Rodriguez (1998) in 1968 when the technical major disappeared, there was a period of 2 years in which the Foreign Language Department almost disappeared because it only worked giving support to other schools of the university. It was in 1972 that some projects were presented about the creation of the major “Bachelor in English”, but due to a military intervention, a delay occurred in the approval of the curriculum. It was not until one year later that the Consejo Superior Universitario, on August 13th, 1973 approved the “Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés” and the “Profesorado en Idioma Inglés”.

Later in the first semester of 1993, a new curriculum was implemented for “Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés”; but it was until October 2nd, 1996 that “Consejo Superior Universitario” approved it. By this time M.A. Rolando Labrador retired from the Department and this entailed M.A. Ana Maria Glower to be elected as the new director of the Foreign Language Department. In the administration of M.A. Glower de Alvarado, the teachers from the Foreign Language Department continued with their specialization inside and outside the country which led to the necessity to create a master degree program.

After considering many possibilities as to what kind of program could be created for a master specialization, the M.A. in Translation was created in 1998. In the same year, the “Ministerio de Educación” (MINED) began the new “Profesorado en Inglés para Tercer Ciclo de Educación Básica y Educación Media Plan MINED” With the new curriculum proposed by the Ministry of Education, the Foreign Language Department began the query in order to have a modification of the Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza’s curriculum which was completed and put into action in the second semester from the year 1999. After three years, a new major was created and named Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas: Especialidad Francés e Inglés, totaling three majors that are under the administration of the Foreign Language Department.

In 2007, a Master’s degree major was created “Maestría en Didáctica del Idioma Inglés” a master degree program, but also a “Diplomado en Traducción Inglés/Español Español/Inglés” being this one in charge of M.A. José Ricardo Gamero, and the “Diplomado en Metodología para la Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés” and for this one Mauricio Contreras, M.A. Ludwig Cornejo, and M.A. César Guzmán. At present, a new proposal is on the table that was sent in 2012 to the Board of Directors of the School of Arts and Sciences and it will lead to the change and restructure the Foreign Language Department to start a new beginning as a Language School.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Even though there are many Elective Courses being offered at the Foreign Language Department, they all are part of the curriculum that was designed for the B.A of English Teaching Major in 1996 this has arisen reactions against its efficiency and continue to be debated in order to promote an effective way to the professional and integral formation of students according to the most part of active students. Elective Courses are a great opportunity to offer greater knowledge to students and form them as more integral professional; therefore, they should be of great help for students if the subjects offered were reviewed, or even replaced.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are elective courses offered in the current curriculum preparing students to perform a successful professional experience?
2. What are the most common weaknesses that undergraduate/alumni have towards the current elective courses offered in the curriculum?
3. Should elective courses be placed as mandatory in the B.A in the English teaching curriculum?
4. Is the Foreign Language Department prepared for a curriculum change in regards of technology, more classrooms and teacher staff with good educational background?

D. OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

- To examine the current elective courses of the B.A in English Teaching at the Foreign Language Department in order to develop a proposal for curriculum change.

Specific Objectives:

- To assess to what extent the current elective courses contribute to develop undergraduate/graduate students' abilities and competences in their professional performance.
- To identify the elective courses which have a meaningful impact in the development of students' abilities and competences.
- To find out why it is necessary to take a look at the current elective courses and its impact on the students' performance by the time they become teachers.
- To formulate a proposal in order to modify somehow the elective courses for the B.A in English Teaching based on the results found during the research process.

E. RATIONALE

According to Geraldine O'Neill (2015) “each institution has its own social, historical, economic and political contexts. These impact on how the curriculum is developed locally.” Currently there is a need of developing an educational system that better engages students’ skills and competences. Taking into consideration that innovation is a crucial part of a curriculum change, it is significant to implement new ideas to accomplish improvements that foster and contribute the current curriculum to get higher quality standards in education. Furthermore, innovation produces changes that go directly to support students’ needs to develop abilities and competences that can improve their professional performance. From that point of view, many universities around the world are making changes in their curricular programs, and the universities of El Salvador are not the exception.

According to the “Ley Superior Universitaria” from El Salvador, a curricular program must be revised, changed or updated every five years. As it is conceived this contributes to raise the quality of the education in the country. Besides, it would give benefits not only to current students or to the institution, but also to the future students of the major at the FLD. This curricular change implies an enormous responsibility and possesses great challenges for those in charge to direct and implement this process of change.

In addition, the exploration of teachers' perceptions about these changes is necessary in order to help the institution, and other professionals make decisions about how to improve the development and implementation of new elective courses focused on a skill-based curriculum. Besides, it is expected that these results can be used to inform the authorities from the FLD about the changes and adjustments that still can be done, and the strengths and benefits that this initiative may be providing to the teachers, the students and the institution itself.

F. DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

In order to develop the investigation, the research team decided to choose 64 students from the B.A. in English Teaching, including 5th year students, undergraduate students, and alumni from the Foreign Language Department in the School of Science and Humanities at the University of El Salvador, during the semesters I-II 2018.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ELECTIVE COURSES IN THE MODERN CURRICULUM

Elective courses are as the name states an election that university students can make in regards to complementary knowledge to be gotten from the major they have chosen. Often, these courses are complete different fields from the gens so as to provide students an extra option that will form them in integrity. In addition to opposite courses that mostly supply the student with extra knowledge, skills, and even tools; there are also complementary courses which comply to the requirements on the field being studied, these type of elective courses will provide students with expanded knowledge.

Why Elective Courses?

The purpose of elective courses is to give students a wide range of choices so they can decide whether to expand their knowledge to new fields and develop expertise on other areas of the main field being studied.

There are several benefits for students taking elective courses, and indeed, the courses were created with the intention of benefiting students.

Among the benefits offered, we can find:

- Extra knowledge that differs from the generals of the major, as humans we are full of passions and ambitions which means that most of the times, we will be able to find interesting any other proposals in regards to new knowledge to be acquired. If there is a range of elective courses offered that will be the trigger to discover what other areas somebody can develop on (even if these are not related to what the student previously chose; for instance, a mathematics student taking a photo course, or an English student taking a chemistry course)
- The opportunity of studying another major, if all of the courses a student selects are interrelated, this may lead to studying a new major, given that the student has already acquired general knowledge about the field.
- Well-rounded education, many students may know a lot in regards to their fields but might not be as good when it comes to other matters. If a student is aware of this lack of knowledge in a specific area, they could take advantage of the elective courses in order to reinforce specific areas in their education.

But the purpose of students to choose any of these elective courses may vary depending on their personal needs. Some students may choose based on their educational needs, others may choose because they have a curiosity trigger, and some may even choose because they want to have fun during the course.

THE ANCIENT CURRICULUM: INTERNATIONAL AND HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE ELECTIVE COURSES

In its earliest days, the curriculum was relevant to the preparation of students for the professions of the period. Over time, the curriculum evolved and was adapted to correspond to trends in U.S. society, but the colleges did not change the curriculum without intense debate and serious reservations. The tension between a prescribed course of study and the elective principle has cycled through the history of U.S. higher education. The elective system was both a creative and destructive educational development in the post-Civil War era.

Eventually, the curriculum changed to a parallel course of study: the traditional classical education and the more modern, practical program. By the end of the 19th century, the U.S. curriculum had evolved into a flexible and diverse wealth of courses well beyond the scope of the colonial curriculum. This evolution moved the university into the mainstream of U.S. life. The debate over prescribed curriculum versus electives continues to generate lively discussion today.

As college enrollments grew and universities rapidly expanded westward, the intellectual community learned to allow religion and different thought patterns to coexist. The rise of the scientific method of inquiry made its inroads in the newly formed technical colleges with the introduction of new studies in engineering, agriculture, mechanics, and manufacturing.

Greek and Latin were still being taught in most institutions during the first half of the nineteenth century, but the teaching of modern foreign languages expanded. This helped to retard any attempts at changing the curriculum in favor of electives. By mid-nineteenth century, classics, mathematics, science, history, and philosophy were all represented, but few campus leaders dared to imply that any of the traditional subjects be eliminated.

During this era, the curriculum was in flux, there was a collection of traditional forms focusing on the classics alongside new areas of study, such as science and vocational subjects. Cohen (1998) “as more and more students took advantage of higher education, the curriculum expanded and continued its trend toward vocational education. Colleges were tacitly preparing students for specific careers, providing an environment for research, and gaining prestige (pp. 134-139).

By the end of the century, over half the courses offered in America were electives. In 1872 all subject requirements for seniors were abolished and then in 1885 subject requirements were significantly reduced for freshmen, and fourteen years later, freshmen were only required to take rhetoric and modern languages. It was conceived that the electives were an instrument of liberal education and social development that also continued to bring science and other disciplines into equality with the traditional subjects.

It was not until the 1920s and 1930s that the General Education movement reacted to the fragmented curriculum. By the end of the nineteenth century, the size of the institution remained a major determinant of the type of curriculum and instructional.

Large, wealthy, private universities were national in orientation and recognized the value of electives as a quality of a dynamic institution. Many of the oldest colleges held to the prescribed curriculum because they believed in it ideologically. For other colleges, the decision to move to an elective system was based more in finances than ideology. In addition, five years later more colleges that were starved for students utilized the elective principle as a strategy to increase enrollments and generalize the collegiate experience.

IMPACT OF THE ELECTIVE PRINCIPLE

A major impact of the elective system was the creation of new curricular developments in the twentieth century. For example, the elective principle was the inspiration for such 10 9 innovations as concentrations, distributions, majors, minors, tutorials, honors, independent study, reading periods, seminars, field studies, general education, and comprehensive exams. In 1908, President Eliot noted that the elective principle made scholarship possible for faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate students. Eliot reinforced the notion that the old course of study held the student and teacher to the most superficial kind of knowledge.

However, electives granted both student and professor the opportunity to explore their interests in greater depth and encouraged the accumulation of new knowledge. Electives promoted the growth of science and shattered the concept that

any one person could know everything worth knowing. Elective proponents asserted the following: all educated individuals need not know the same things, that no area of knowledge was of greater worth, and any area of study was as useful as any other.

Perhaps it can be said that the elective system moved professors and students from an adversarial relationship to a more collaborative learning model. Cohen (1998) said “the elective system made such rapid progress in institutions of higher education that by the turn of the century more than half of the course enrollments across the nation were in optional classes as the curriculum expanded, little was dropped (p. 132). The idea that students should be allowed to pursue any course of study that fit their interests and aspirations was widely accepted.

ELECTIVES IN THE 20th CENTURY

Butts and Cremin (1953) said that in the complex society of industrial and post-industrial America, the objectives of college students were diverse (pp.446-.447) These varied goals, plus the growing knowledge of different abilities and interests of students, presented a strong argument for the elective system. Despite the extremes elective system and prescribed curriculum, by the turn of the 20th century, the most common pattern was to create a balance of both. A popular plan was to have a prescribed program early on, followed by electives in the junior or senior years.

To sum up, the curriculum controversy has attracted attention in the past and will continue to be debated into the future. Most importantly, the elective principle gave vitality to the American college at a time when its remoteness from society threatened to destroy the foundation of higher education. It moved the American university into the mainstream of American life.

Lucas (1994) said that the impact of these changes during the last half of the nineteenth century was the promise of social mobility to those willing to subject themselves to the rigors of the academy (p. 123). The spirited debate over a prescribed curriculum or electives continues to generate lively discussion today. There persists a desire to preserve certain subjects or bodies of knowledge that are timeless, while at the same time creating a curriculum that protects choice and is responsive to the needs of the larger society. As the curriculum continues to evolve naturally, those institutions and individuals that value education will debate the prescribed-elective controversy into the foreseeable future.

ELECTIVE COURSES IN ENGLISH STUDIES

Most of universities nowadays offer elective courses in most of their majors. However, this study will focus on those elective courses offered on the English studies, usually known simply as English major and on countries where English is not the native tongue mainly taught with a focus on teaching.

A LOOK AT THE HISTORY

The English Major (alternatively "English concentration," "B.A. in English") is a term in the United States and a few other countries for an undergraduate university degree focused around the consumption, analysis, and production of texts in the English language. The term may also be used to describe a student who is pursuing such a degree.

Students who major in English reflect upon, analysis, and interpretation of literature and film, present their analyses in clear, cogent writing. Although help-wanted postings rarely solicit English majors specifically, a degree in English, critical thinking skills essential to a number of career fields, including writing, editing, publishing, teaching, research, advertising, public relations, law, and finance. But as seen, the study of the English Major in the United States relates to many other fields and does not limit a number of given fields.

The history of English studies at the modern university in Europe and America begins in the second half of the nineteenth century. Initially, English studies comprised a motley array of content: the practice of oratory, the study of rhetoric and grammar, the composition of poetry, and the appreciation of literature (mostly by authors from England, since American literature and language study was only added in the twentieth century). At the beginning, all of the schools mainly focused on teaching literature and different writing styles such as poetry, non-fiction, etc. (Graff, 1987).

During the next decades English became one of the most used languages worldwide and different institutions all around the world dedicated to its teaching. In 1948, English was introduced to El Salvador, through the University of El Salvador, when the language academy was founded with the main purpose to teach Foreign Languages such as English and French, but in a complementary way for other schools as an optional subject. This remained until the year of 1955 when the first restructuration of the “Facultad de Humanidades” was made which led to the creation of school of languages, but it was until one year later that the Foreign Language Department was founded. The same year the Foreign Language Department offered its first Technical Major which was “Técnico en Traductor Interprete” which lasted 4 years consisting of 16 subjects. This Technical major was served for 12 years in the Foreign Language Department. In 1973, the “Bachelor in English” was finally approved and opened to start operating and offering academic development to a new generation of students (Salazar & Rodriguez, 1998).

HOW TO ORGANIZE A CURRICULUM

The term curriculum, broadly defined, includes goals for student learning (skills, knowledge and attitudes); content (the subject matter in which learning experiences are embedded); sequence (the order in which concepts are presented); learners; instructional methods and activities; instructional resources (materials and settings); evaluation (methods used to assess student learning as a result of these experiences); and adjustments to teaching and learning processes, based on experience and evaluation.

Berkvens and Akker said that a curriculum should be relevant so it means that curriculum must be appropriate to the students' interests, aspirations and full fill the learners' expectations in our society and it has also to include a variety of learning and teaching methods, to suit the learning styles and needs of different learners, and the different topics covered. (CHEPSA). In addition, consistency, which means that its structure needs to be coherent and ordered in a logical way, is another important aspect when planning a curriculum. It means teachers have to respect curriculum main objectives and those should be closely related to the major. Additionally, the courses and the methods used to teach must fit the learning requirements of the field. (CHEPSA).

Curriculum models

various curriculum models are introduced in higher education. Examples of the models are:

- Problem based education, project education, research based education,
- Theme oriented, interdisciplinary oriented, disciplinary oriented, competency based
- Cognitive, constructive, social critical vision

The main steps to organize a curriculum are the following:

- Describe your vision, focus, objectives, and student needs.
- Identify resources.
- Develop experiences that meet your objectives.
- Collect and devise materials.
- Lock down the specifics of your task.
- Develop plans, methods, and processes.

CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION

Curriculum organization is a crucial element to provide a high quality education and to show a variety of courses which help students to develop their abilities according to their needs and wishes. Elective courses have existed since they are part of the most of curriculum of United States and even in some Central America universities it is important to mention that participation from teachers is required so that a curriculum can be created based on teachers experience and by knowing students' needs according to their context. Likewise, curriculum should follow some criteria according to Berkvens and Van den Akker (2013).

In other words, it is another important element when creating an effective curriculum due to one of its main purposes is to suit in context according to the learner's requirements. Berkvens and Van den Akker (2013) have identified six quality criteria which should be met when (re)designing a curriculum:

- a. Relevance: The curriculum is based on state-of-the-art academic knowledge and understanding of contextual need and wishes.
- b. Consistency: The structure of the curriculum is logical and coherent.
- c. Practicality: The curriculum is usable in the context it is designed for.
- d. Effectiveness: The curriculum leads to the desired outcomes.
- e. Scalability: The curriculum is successfully implemented scale.
- f. Sustainability: The curriculum remains successful over extended periods of time.

According to Dearn (2010) and Van Merriënboer and Kirschner (2013) complex learning is a crucial component of the curricula of modern higher education. Professionals have to learn complex skills and competencies during their studies and they will never stop learning throughout their careers. The authors stress the importance of a holistic design approach.

Dearn, 2010; Diamond, 1998; O'Brian, 2015; Verloop and Lowyck, 2003 and the AACU, 2002 stressed that the different courses in a curriculum should build on each other. The students develop insight in the content and master the main competences step-by-step in the consecutive courses.

ELECTIVES IN THE CURRENT TIMES AND PLACES

Since English is taught as a higher education major in many different countries nowadays, the elective courses offered by the corresponding institutions may vary. Following, we will take a look at the different elective courses currently offered by different universities around the world, and then, take a look at the ones offered by the University of El Salvador. Starting with two of the most relevant higher education institutions of the United States, shall we take a look at the curricular design for the English major from the University of Berkley and the University of Columbia.

The University of Berkley

It requires English Major Students to take 6 elective courses, out of which 4 are freely chosen by the student and can be related to any of the several fields offered by the university. The other 2 subjects are chosen by an advisor who looks into the needs of the student and chooses what better suits to the integral development of the student.

The University of Columbia

It requires students to course only one elective course, in this particular case the courses are already proposed to the students. Students must choose at least one topic-specific methods course, such as:

- ❖ Literature and Teaching
- ❖ Literacies and Technologies in the Secondary English Classroom
- ❖ Teaching of Poetry
- ❖ Teaching of Shakespeare
- ❖ Teaching of Drama and Theater

On the other hand, shall we take a look at two universities from Central America and their Elective courses for the English Major, the University of Costa Rica and the Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador.

The University of Costa Rica

It requires English Major (Students to take 2 elective courses out of 4 given courses.

Seminario de temas varios

Introducción al lenguaje

Estrategia para una comunicación intercultural

El inglés en un contexto social

It is essential to mention that this study plan was designed in 1987.

Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador

It recently made some adjustments to the curriculum of the English Major and as a result all the courses became mandatory; nevertheless, there is still a difference between core course and supplementary courses in their study plan. Regardless, the students no longer have the choice on which complementary or supplementary courses they wish to course. Since this is a recent decision, the results are yet to be seen.

After reviewing all these external universities, we should take an insightful view to the University of El Salvador.

The University of El Salvador

It requires students to take 3 elective courses throughout the major. According to the curriculum, there are 27 different choices out of which the students can choose, counting with complementary and supplementary courses.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. TYPE OF STUDY

According to the nature of research, this study was exploratory. Since, it was oriented to discovering the areas that are needed to reinforce in the teaching major. Despite the fact that there is no widely shared term for this type of research it is known as called single-variable research. Therefore, when it came to this research, the team was able to identify to what extent the current elective courses contributed to students to build strong core values that helped them in achieving their desired degree and being successful in their field.

B. TYPE OF METHOD

Emphasizing the necessity of a revision of the current elective courses offered in the Foreign Language Department in English teaching option was one of the main purposes of the present research in order to get information from the students and prominent people involved on its development throughout the years. In effect, the research team used a qualitative method to develop the investigation.

With this method the team pretended to focus on the essential necessities and expectations of the people involved on this research topic such as students and professors with the collected data the researchers detailed and described the information that supported the reasons to foster a curricular updated. The curriculum update is necessary to fulfill teacher's profile. Basically, the professional skills that students develop in the major must prepare then to deal with current society needs in the educational area. Under those circumstances, the qualitative method is adequate to get the information of the participants' answers.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive research design was used for this study. The main purpose of such study was to develop the working hypotheses from an operational point of view. Rahman (2010) claimed that “The major emphasis in such studies is on the discovery of ideas and insights. As such the research design appropriate for such studies must be flexible enough to provide opportunity for considering different aspects of problem under study (p. 119).” Emphasizing the necessity of a revision the current elective courses and promote a proposal in the Foreign Language Department in English teaching option were one of the main purposes of the present research.

D. RESEARCH APPROACH

In effect, the research team used a mixed method to develop the investigation since it allowed managing both qualitative and quantitative data. With this method the team pretended to focus on the essential necessities and expectations of the people involved on this research topic.

V. POPULATION

A. POPULATION

In order to develop the investigation, the research team decided to choose a population from the Foreign Language Department in the School of Science and Humanities at the University of El Salvador, semester's I-II 2018, San Salvador, El Salvador. The populations were students from English Language Teaching major.

B. SAMPLING FRAME

This research was developed by taking a sample from students who already graduated and others who are currently studying the fifth year of the B.A in the English Teaching at the Foreign Language Department in the School of Humanities and Sciences.

C. SAMPLE

The sample for this research was (alumni and undergraduate students) the total of students that took the survey was 64 students. 32 students from fifth year, 20 undergraduate students (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, year) and 12 alumni, in order to make a total of 100% of the sample. Also an interview was conducted to three prominent people involved in the curriculum reforms throughout the years. Once having the results, they were analyzed in two ways: the survey was analyzed in a quantitative way and the interviews in a qualitative way because the information recollected was first-hand information from coordinators, principals and heads of departments.

VI. DATA GATHERING PROCESS

A. INSTRUMENTS

In the research project, instruments were used with the purpose of getting the information that researchers needed to find out. An open or unrestricted questionnaire form was conducted as a way to get free response from the respondent; allows for greater depth of response. This instrument was used for developing the informal interview in order to know the students' needs and how those principles help to meet or overcome these necessities regarding a proposal for a curriculum change. This interview will be directed to the teachers and professionals who participated on the development of the last curriculum.

Survey, a list of closed questions with multiple options was prepared and it was administered through a digital system (Google Surveying Form system), and also through physical copies filled out by students from the major B.A. in English teaching at the Foreign Language Department.

B. TECHNIQUES

In this research project the researchers used interview and survey techniques. Through the interview the main objective was to collect the information by a face-to-face conversation about the research topic with the participants. Knowing firstly students' expectations and perceptions about the research topic, the researchers could analyze the information provided to get a reliable diagnostic of the necessity of people involved as a support for the curriculum update.

In fact, the interview is the technique that must fulfill the research topic of this investigation in order to obtain reliable and trustful information from the participants. In that way the collected information will help us to get input for the research that contributes with the creation of the curricular updated to improve students from the Foreign Language Department proficiency and development in professional areas. In the survey, there were close questions that let the team collected information about the perspective that students have about the current elective courses and its incidence in their professional experiences.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

The following survey was administered to students and alumni from the B.A. in English Teaching at the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador.

This survey was administered by using both copies and through the Google surveying engine (the Google surveying engine works based online through the web). Using both tools made the data collection easier and less expensive, some of the participants (especially alumni) were not really able to fill in the survey in written paper, so having an online form helped shortening distances and gathering their opinion.

On the next pages, the survey sample administered is presented:

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



RESEARCH TOPIC: A revision of the current elective courses of the B.A in the English Teaching at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador Semesters I-II 2018: a proposal for curriculum change.

Objective: The following survey has as the main purpose collecting valuable and accurate information about the opinion from both alumni and undergraduate students, of the B.A in the English Teaching, regarding the current courses offered in that curriculum.

Directions: Underline or mark your answers with a circle. Some questions require writing your answer, please be as accurate as possible. 😊

Before starting with the main questions of the survey, would you help us answering the following set of questions?

➤ What is your ID number?

➤ _____
Do you work?

➤ _____
Where do you work?

➤ _____
How long have you worked there?

1. Academic status:

- Fifth year/graduation process
- Alumni (already graduated)

2. From the following elective courses, which ones have you already taken?

- Translation
- Japanese
- Dibujo
- Psicología General
- Sociología General
- French

- Filosofía General
 - Ética y teoría de los valores
 - Other (s):
-

3. From the following elective courses, which ones would you like to take if you had the chance? Mark more than one option if applicable.

- Translation (1 or both)
 - Japanese (1 or both)
 - Dibujo (1 or both)
 - Psicología General
 - Sociología General
 - French (1 or bot)
 - Ética y teoría de los valores
 - Other (s):
-

4. Of all the elective courses, which one(s) do you find interesting or useful for the major?

5. According to your selection from question 2, how much do you think those courses have helped you to improve your English and/ or teaching skills?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. Do you think some of the elective courses should be mandatory?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. From the elective courses you have taken so far, which ones have been of great help in developing your English skills and/or Teaching skills?

8. From the following list of elective courses, which ones would you consider should be obligatory? Mark more than one option if applicable.

- Translation
 - Japanese
 - Dibujo
 - Psicología General
 - Sociología General
 - French
 - Ética y teoría de los valores
 - Other (s):
-

9. Do you consider that current mandatory courses such as Literature I and II, Expresión Visual or Syntax should be offer as elective courses? Explain your answer (optional).

- Yes
 - No
-
-

10. From the following list, select the courses that you consider should be part either as obligatory or elective courses:

- Practice teaching with kids
 - Lesson Planning
 - Administración y Supervisión Escolar
 - The use of technological resources for teaching
 - Pedagogía General
-

ELEMENTS STUDIED WITHIN THE SURVEY

This survey contains different variables to be analyzed and contribute in a great manner to this research. The most important variables and what their importance is are described below.

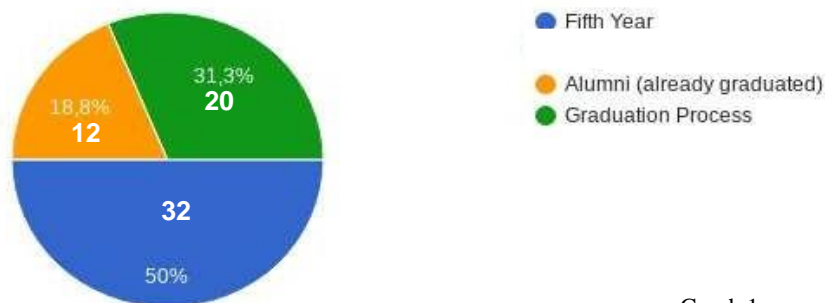
- Student ID, this is a single variable and is not directly related to others within the research. It was obtained in order to make sure that each of the participants were authentic students and their enrollment year was compatible to the research (at least 2014) since the research works with senior students and alumni. For confidentiality purposes such information will not be published in this research and will not be shared at no point, as the sample was informed the collection of such information was only to ensure participants belonged to the preset sample.
- Work Status, this variable collects information in regards to whether each of the participants works or not. It is intended to analyze how the opinion could vary due to the fact of having a participant that dedicates to work and one that only dedicates to their superior studies.
- Work Place provides an idea on where the participant works. This piece of information helps classifying the type of job some of the participants have obtained after finishing studying, or what type of job the senior students currently have and how that impacts their opinion.

- Academic Status, it could be either a senior student (5th year), an undergraduate student (currently in the degree process), or a graduate (alumni). This variable is also to be taken into account by the time of analyzing the responses.
- Elective courses, is any of the elective courses taught at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, or a course thought as though. Any possible course that could be taught at the FLD at the UES.
- Interest towards an Elective course, the interest towards an elective course is another variable studied within the survey and it seeks to know straightly whether participants are or not interested in a specific elective course.
- Help Perception, this variable works with the level of perception participants have in regards to the help they have received from the elective subject in their professional development.
- Subject Effectiveness Perception, this variable works the level of perception participants have in regards to whether a subject should be elective or mandatory and to what level they think so in some cases.
- English Knowledge and Skills, this variable depends directly on the elective courses and will be studied as though.
- Teaching Knowledge and Skills, this variable depends directly on the elective courses and will be studied as though.
- Professional Development Perception works with the idea participants have in relation to their development and how it has been triggered by elective subjects.

RESULTS

This survey was administered to 64 participants out of whom 50% is studying fifth year of the major and the other 50% is either carrying their degree project or has already graduated, being 20 students doing their degree projects and 12 graduates.

Academic Status?

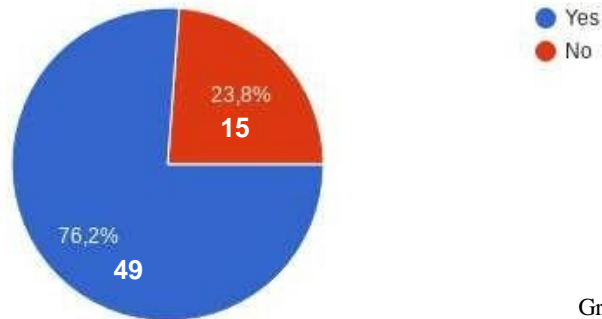


Graph 1

Students IDs were collected in order to make sure that the participants were actual senior students close to finish with their major, such information will not be disclosed in order to respect the privacy of the participants. The labor status of the participants was also documented in order to find out how many of them do work and whether they work on a field related to their major, and if the elective courses they have chosen are somehow related to their job (variable relation).

Do you work?

64 answers

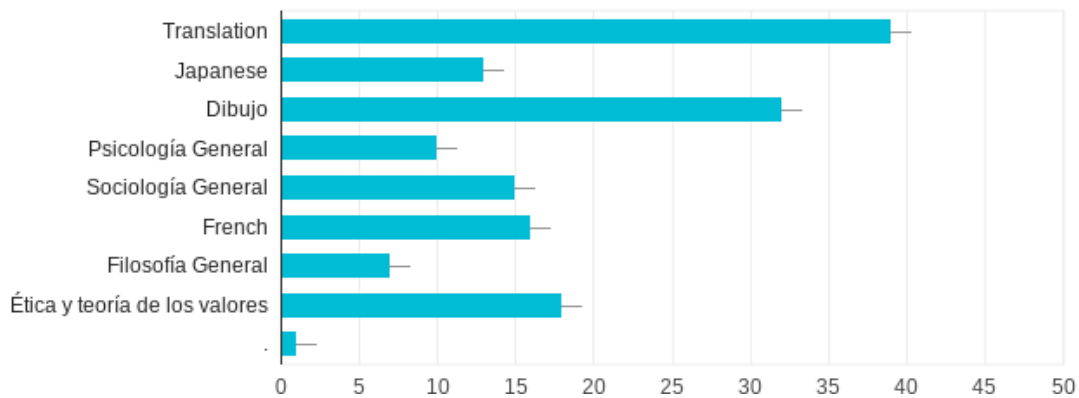


Graph 2

It can be observed in the charts above that 76.2% (49) of the participants do work, in fact, most of the ones who work have a job in a call center, leading to the conclusion that the major percentage is not strictly associated to their labor field. So in this particular case, the participants' labor does not really impact their opinion or decisions made towards elective courses.

In the next page, the answers to each of the questions will be analyzed and tabbed in order to have a better comprehension and draw conclusions based on the statistical results obtained after surveying the sample of this study.

1. From the following elective courses, which ones you took or which ones have you already taken?
64 answers



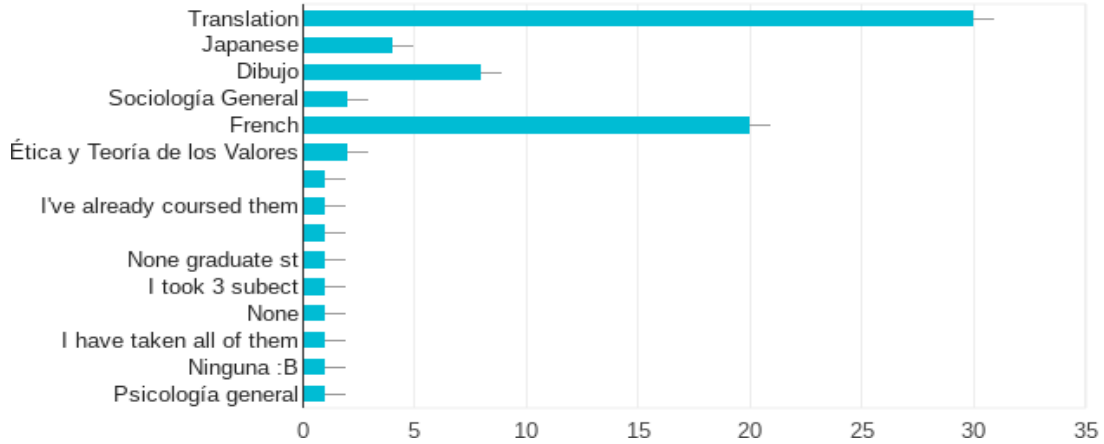
Graph 3

In the chart above, it can be observed that most popular elective courses are Translation, Drawing, and Ethics and Value Theory. This points to the intention of students to keep their elective courses within the core knowledge of the major; nevertheless, they also look forward to expanding their knowledge and gaining other skills such as drawing. As it is well-known at this point, elective courses exist with the intention of providing students with alternatives outside the scope of their major; and thus, students will be able to acquire new knowledge.

However, most of students at the FLD are interested in expanding their core knowledge and develop expertise in other areas such as Translation. The question represented on the graph 4 includes the variable of the elective subjects and the taken subjects, it relates the choices students already made and the subjects they took. This question only provides data regarding the subject and not the reason or trigger for taking that subject.

2. From the following elective courses, which ones would you like to take if you had the chance? Choose more than one option if applicable

64 answers

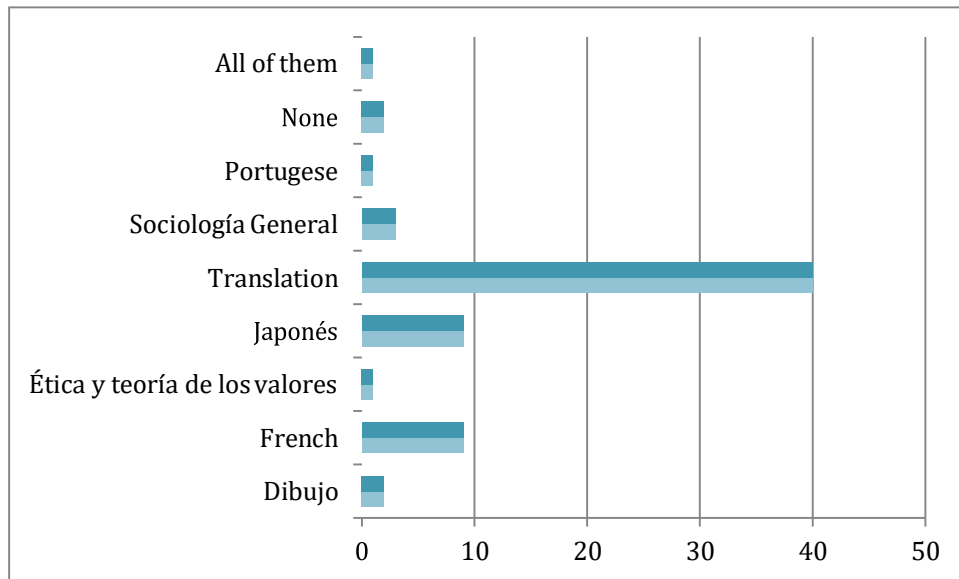


Graph 4

In this question, the variables related are first the elective subjects and second the attraction students feel towards that subject. As a result, we get the subject students would like the best, if they were to take it. This chart clearly expresses a tendency towards translation as the desired subject by most of participants. Out of all of the elective courses offered, translation is the one that is closer to the core knowledge and offers expanding the given knowledge and polishing a really important skill.

3. Of all the elective courses, which one(s) do you find the most interesting?

This question relates the interest students feel towards a subject with the subject they look up to as the most interesting. Some of the students provided the reason why they found it as the most interesting, so the data can be even richer, following is the chart with all the results:

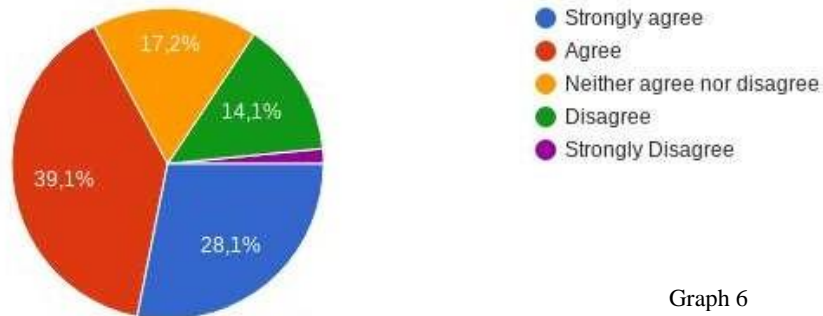


Graph 5-Annex *

Some of them even answered that none of the elective courses are interesting for them. Regardless, these results are showing a new variable which is languages as elective courses, many of the students selected French and Japanese as of their interest which means having language courses as elective courses would students' interest, plus the intent of elective courses will be met as offering extra skills and knowledge.

4. According to your selection from questions 2 and 3, do you think those courses have helped you improve your English and/ or teaching skills?

64 answers

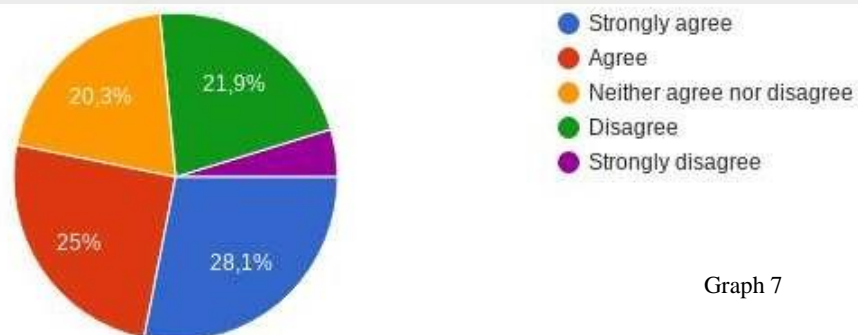


Graph 6

This question relates the level of helpfulness of the subjects in regards to teaching or speaking English to the Elective Courses students took. As observed in the graph before, 67.2% (Agree and Strongly Agree together; 43 participants) of students actually considered the elective courses of good help. Again, most of students actually chose translation as their elective course. In other words, tendency of acceptance goes towards translation.

5. Do you think elective courses should be mandatory?

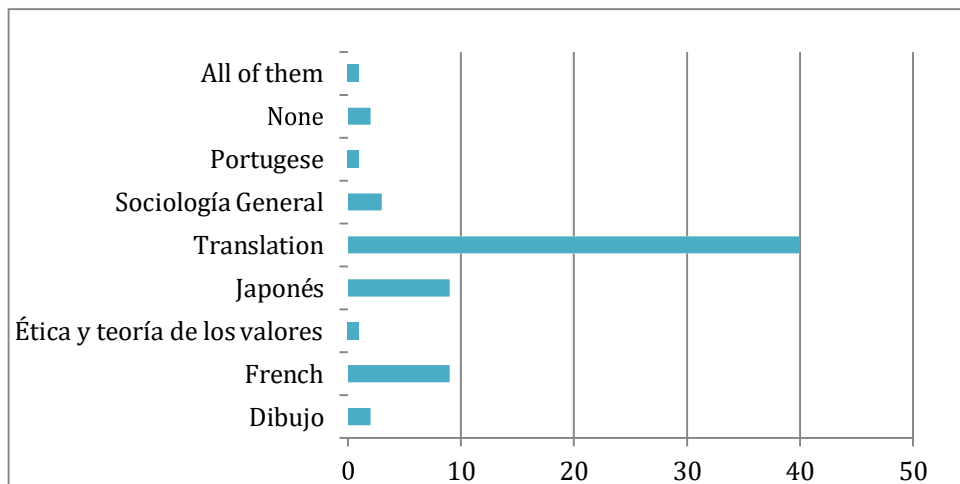
64 answers



Graph 7

This question relates the elective courses with the level of acceptance they would have as mandatory courses. The previous chart represents an interesting result within the survey, most of participants pointing towards Translation as the most important subject, and tend to even disregard the rest of subjects; however, more than the 32, summing up the ones who agree to the ones who strongly agree, of them agreed to elective courses to become mandatory.

6. From the elective courses you have taken so far, which ones have been of great help in developing your English skills and/or Teaching skills?

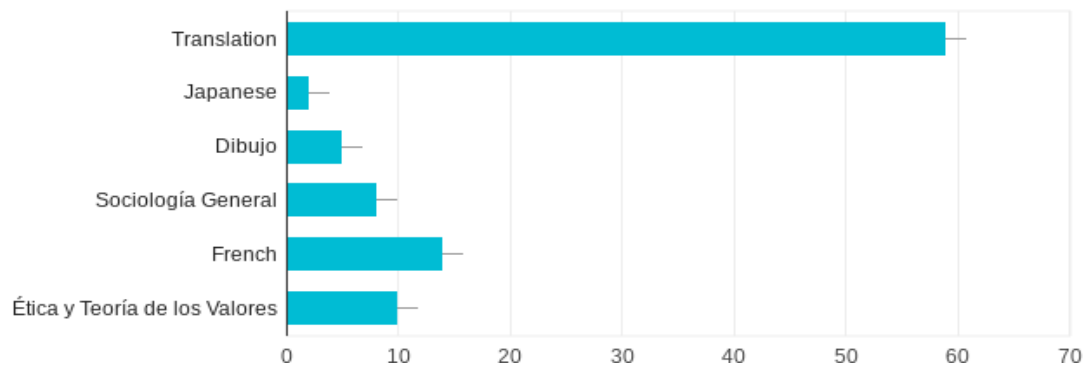


Graph 8-annex

Based on the answers obtained on Chart 2, over the 50% (32 participants) of the participants agreed on Translation being the most helpful on developing their English skills and giving them more knowledge, some of them mention the opportunity they had to practice the language in a greater way, expand their knowledge, and even gain linguistic abilities that help them interpret from Spanish to English, or vice versa.

7. From the following list of elective courses, which ones would you consider should be obligatory? Choose more than one option if applicable.

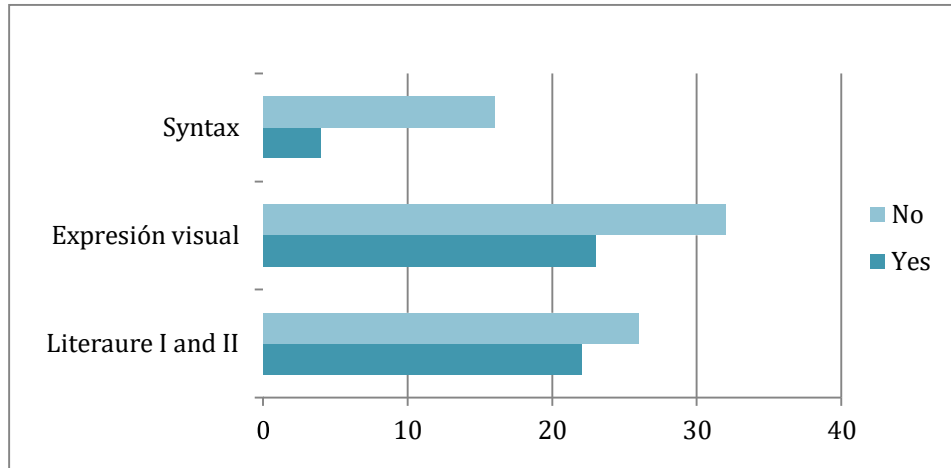
6 64 answers



Graph 9

This question relates the specific elective subject with the desire of students to see that subject as an obligatory one. The trend is clear; students at the FLD share the feeling that Translation should be part of the curriculum and it can also be inferred that similar subjects (close to the core and offering expertise of skill) would be a better idea for students.

8. Do you consider that current obligatory courses such as Literature I and II, Expresión Visual or Syntax should be offered as elective courses? Write YES or NO. Please explain your answer (optional).



Graph 10-annex

**Per authenticity process, the chart is exposed as the answers were provided by the participants.*

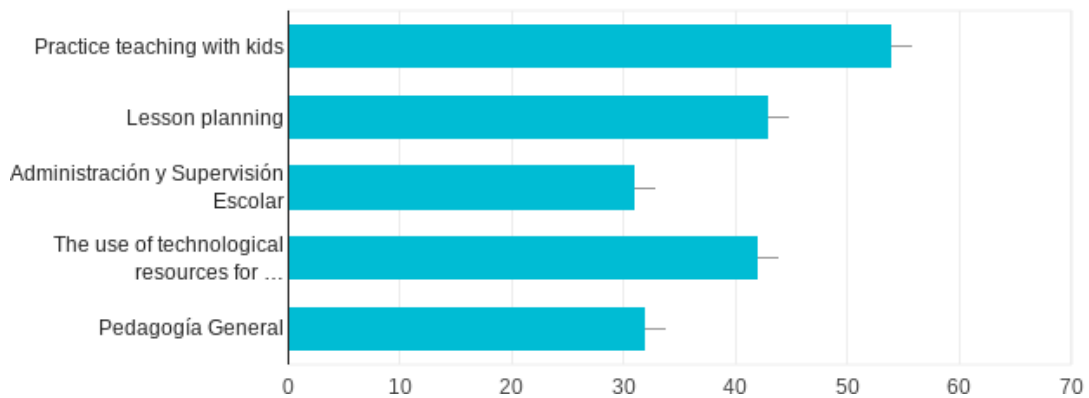
In this question, the main variable to be analyzed is the current obligatory subjects that are not too close to the core of the major and how the students feel about having them as obligatory or elective instead.

Results, chart 3

Most of the answers on this question point that visual expression should not be mandatory subjects since are not even close to the core of the major. Besides, few participants answered that Literature I & II should remain as an elective one. On the other hand, some of the participants agree on offering this subject as an elective course. Most of the participants agree that syntax should remain as a mandatory subject being a core subject since it provides great knowledge.

9. From the following list, select the courses that you consider should be part either as obligatory or elective co...ark more than one option if applicable.

64 answers



Graph 11-annex

The most likable proposal was Practice Teaching with kids, and, yet, all of the proposals go around the 50% of acceptance and likeability. This is so due to the fact that all of the proposals are directly related to the core of the major.

After completing this survey, it can be concluded that students from the B.A. in English teaching at the University of El Salvador are actually looking for subjects that will increase their knowledge and in the future will open doors on different labor markets. Students want subjects that will teach them new and useful knowledge in order to get some profit out of it in the future whether close or far.

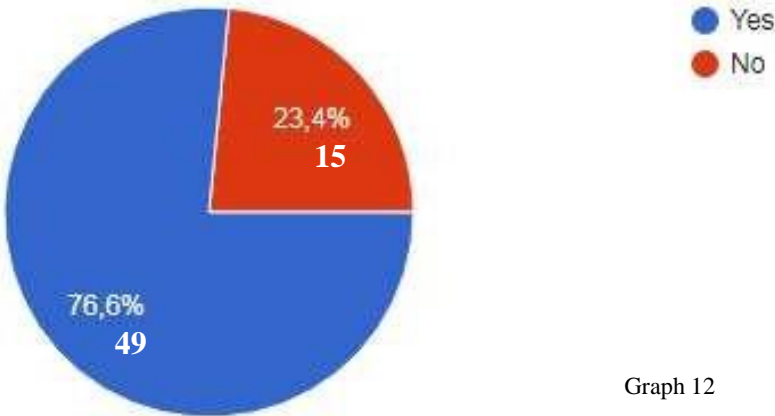
ANALYSIS OF RESULTS BASED ON GIVEN PARTICIPANT SITUATIONS

This analysis compares the answer from specific groups separated by given variables and compiles the possible similarities or differences.

- Participants who work compared to those who do not work.

Do you work?

64 answers



Graph 12

As observed in Graph 10, 49 participants work and 15 do not. Below, we will review the results from each group for questions 2 to 10.

Question	Participants with a Job (49)		Participants with no Job (15)	
2. From the following elective courses, which ones have you already taken?	Top 3 answers		Top 2 answers:	
	<u>Translation.</u>	30	<u>Dibujo</u>	8
	Dibujo.	23	Translation	7
	Ética y Teoría de los valores.	15		
3. From the following elective courses, which ones would you like to take if you had the chance?	Top 2 answers		Top 4 answers	
	<u>Translation.</u>	23	<u>Translation</u>	8
	French.	18	French	2
			Sociología	2
		Dibujo	2	
4. Of all the elective courses, which one(s) do you find the most interesting?	Top 3 answers		Top 3 answers	
	<u>Translation.</u>	30	<u>Translation.</u>	9
	French.	7	French	2
	Japanese.	7	Japanese	2
5. According to your selection from questions 2 and 3, do you think those courses have helped you improve your English and/ or teaching skills?	<u>Agree:</u>	18	<u>Agree</u>	7
	<u>Strongly agree:</u>	14	<u>Strongly agree</u>	3
	Neither or:	9	Neither or	2
	Disagree:	7	Disagree	2
	Strongly disagree	1	Strongly disagree	1
6. Do you think elective courses should be mandatory?	<u>Disagree:</u>	14	<u>Strongly agree:</u>	5
	<u>Strongly agree:</u>	13	<u>Agree:</u>	5
	Agree:	11	Strongly Disagree:	3
	Neither or:	11	Neither or:	2
7. From the elective courses you have taken so far, which ones have been of great help in developing your English skills and/or Teaching skills?	Top 2 answers:		Top 2 answers:	
	<u>Translation:</u>	27	<u>Translation:</u>	8
	None of them helped me:	7	None of them helped me:	4

8. From the following list of elective courses, which ones would you consider should be obligatory?	Top 3 answers		Top 2 answers:	
	<u>Translation:</u>	44	<u>Translation:</u>	14
	French:	11	Ética y Teoría de los Valores:	4
	Socio:	7		
9. Do you consider that current obligatory courses such as Literature I and II, Expresión Visual or Syntax should be offered as elective courses?	Syntax:	18 YES	Syntax:	3 YES
	<u>Expresión visual:</u>	30 YES	<u>Expresión visual:</u>	7 YES
	Literature I & II:	23 YES	Literature I & II:	6 YES
	No, they should remain as mandatory:	16	No, they should remain as mandatory:	6
10. From the following list, select the courses that you consider should be part either as obligatory or elective courses.	<u>Practice teaching with kids</u>	40	<u>Practice teaching with kids</u>	14
	Lesson planning	32	Lesson planning	12
	Administración y Supervisión Escolar	26	Administración y Supervisión Escolar	6
	The use of tech. res. for teaching	33	The use of tech. res. for teaching	9
	Pedagogía General	24	Pedagogía General	8

Chart 4

OBSERVATIONS

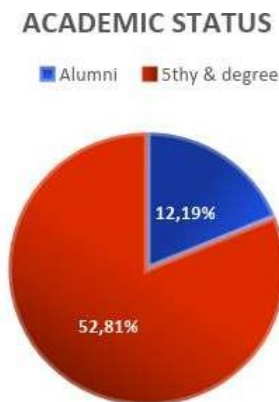
After observing the results of those participants who work and those who do not, some analysis can be drawn. First it can be observed that the tendencies on both sides are pretty similar and the student's opinion does not vary a lot because of their work condition.

Yet, there is a difference in the Question 2 because the majority of students who do not work took drawing as their elective course. This means that probably students who already work think mostly about getting better at something that will be useful at their job or just by getting more job opportunities. Whereas, students with no job might be thinking about acquiring more knowledge and expanding their skills into different fields such as arts. As well as the schedule of the course Expresión Visual actually does

not meet the needs of someone who works since it is often offered on Fridays from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm or from 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

- Participants who already graduated compared to those who have not graduate (5th year and degree process).

64 Participants



Graph 13

Presented on figure two, we have those participants that have already graduated against those that have not graduated yet, in the following chart the data will be distributed for each group in order to draw a comparison based on the results. These results include those from the questions 2 to 10 and omit the work variable in order to make an analysis based merely on the academic status.

Question	Alumni		5 th year & degree process	
	2. From the following elective courses, which ones have you already taken?	Top 3 answers		Top 2 answers:
<u>Translation.</u>		8	<u>Translation</u>	30
Ética y Teoría de los valores.		5	Dibujo	28
French & Japanese		4	Sociología	15

3. From the following elective courses, which ones would you like to take if you had the chance?	Top 2 answers		Top 2 answers	
	<u>French.</u>	6	<u>Translation</u>	26
	Translation	5	French	14
4. Of all the elective courses, which one(s) do you find the most interesting?	Top 2 answers		Top 2 answers	
	<u>Translation.</u>	7	<u>Translation.</u>	34
	French.	3	Japanese	8
5. According to your selection from questions 2 and 3, do you think those courses have helped you improve your English and/ or teaching skills?	<u>Agree</u>	7	<u>Strongly agree</u>	17
	<u>Disagree</u>	3	<u>Agree</u>	16
	Neither or:	2	Neither or	9
			Disagree	6
			Strongly disagree	2
6. Do you think elective courses should be mandatory?	<u>Disagree:</u>	4	<u>Strongly agree:</u>	17
	<u>Neither or:</u>	4	<u>Agree:</u>	13
	Agree:	3	Disagree:	10
	Strongly agree:	1	Neither or:	9
			Strongly Disagree:	3
7. From the elective courses you have taken so far, which ones have been of great help in developing your English skills and/or Teaching skills?	Top 2 answers:		Top 2 answers:	
	<u>Translation:</u>	7	<u>Translation:</u>	30
	None of them helped me:	3	None of them helped me:	8
8. From the following list of elective courses, which ones would you consider should be obligatory?	Top 2 answers		Top 2 answers:	
	<u>Translation:</u>	11	<u>Translation:</u>	47
	French:	5	Ética y Teoría de los Valores:	10
9. Do you consider that	Syntax:	4 YES	Syntax:	21 YES

current obligatory courses such as Literature I and II, Expresión Visual or Syntax should be offered as elective courses?	<u>Expresión visual:</u>	8 YES	<u>Expresión visual:</u>	30 YES
	Literature I & II:	5 YES	Literature I & II:	27 YES
	No, they should remain as mandatory:	4	No, they should remain as mandatory:	16
10. From the following list, select the courses that you consider should be part either as obligatory or elective courses.	<u>Practice teaching with kids</u>	12	<u>Practice teaching with kids</u>	42
	Lesson planning	6	Lesson planning	38
	Administración y Supervisión Escolar	9	Administración y Supervisión Escolar	23
	The use of tech. res. for teaching	11	The use of tech. res. for teaching	31
	Pedagogía General	4	Pedagogía General	28

Chart 5

OBSERVATIONS

After segmenting the data based on the academic condition of the participants, which searches forward to differing 5th year and degree process from alumni, it can be noted that most of the answers and tendencies still point toward the same direction, as analyzed in the general answer report previously presented.

However, there is a big difference on the answers provided on Question 6.

6. Do you think elective courses should be mandatory?	<u>Disagree:</u>	4	<u>Strongly agree:</u>	17
	<u>Neither or:</u>	4	<u>Agree:</u>	13
	Agree:	3	Disagree:	10
	Strongly agree:	1	Neither or:	9
			Strongly Disagree:	3

Alumni or students already graduated from previous years do not agree at all on the point of the elective courses being mandatory, which means that they did not have the best experience within these courses or probably just want the subjects to remain as free choices, whereas students from 5th year and degree process would like to be relieved from the pressure of having to choose or simply think the subjects would be better as mandatory.

RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

In order to obtain meaningful data and use to enrich this research, three interviews were carried. The interviewees were all professionals who have or had important participations on the decision making in regards to Elective Courses offered to the B.A. in English Teaching at the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador.

INTERVIEW TO M.A ANA MARIA GLOWER

1. Were you part of the faculty curriculum committee? What was your role?

Of course, I was. I was the Head of the FLD at that time.

2. What is the importance of a curriculum change and how often a curriculum needs to be updated?

A curriculum is considered the "core" of any learning institution, which means that schools or universities cannot exist without a curriculum. Due to its importance in formal education, the curriculum has become a dynamic process because of the changes that occur in our society. Therefore, in its broadest sense, the curriculum refers to "the total learning experiences of individuals not only in school but society as well" (Bilbao et al., 2008).

The curricular development has a wide scope because it is not only about the educational Institution, the students and the professors. It is also about the development of society in general.

It really depends on what you mean by "updating" the curriculum. The universities rarely update the curriculum by themselves, and when they do, it is typically to change the number and type of courses required for the "general education" of a degree, at least in Latin American universities. However, they must be updated periodically because knowledge changes after a certain time.

3. When elaborating the current curriculum of B.A in English teaching, what elements were taking into account in regards of curriculum change?

I consider that the intentional and systemic design of a curriculum, should take into account at least four key elements of the educational system: curriculum, instruction, evaluation and professional development.

4. Are you aware of the most relevant changes of the curriculum? What did motivate a decision to change the curriculum?

Yes; I am.

In today's society of knowledge and information, pedagogues face:

- Important requirements. If in the past it was enough to be competent in their own subject and to know their teaching methods well, nowadays a pedagogue must be able to function in a constantly changing environment to try to achieve a high-quality performance.
- The relationship of contemporary teachers with information, new knowledge is of special importance, because of the fast changes on teaching contents, teaching methods and means have been more typical than ever of educational institutions. With the help of Information and communications technologies, such innovations are easily achievable, but difficult to administer. Possibly there are others that the colleagues of the Department have taken into account.

5. Do you remember why the authorities decided to create the elective courses in the curriculum or why were they proposed? Do you think was this a successful idea?

Yes, the curriculum in the University and specifically in the FLD was very rigid; therefore, to give a little freedom to the students, a series of courses were created so the students could select and gain some Unidades valorativas (credits)

6. Can you mention which were the core and elective courses implemented?

Drawing, Painting, French, Japanese, Italian, and any other foreign language, Sociology, Philosophy, etc.

In your opinion, are the current elective courses in curriculum creating an impact on students learning?

The elective courses extend the student's interest and critical thinking skills. In addition, the basic courses include subjects that teach necessary and valuable information that may be directly related to their field of study.

These elective classes provide students with complete information that focuses on fundamental subjects such as math, English, and social studies. They extend the student's global awareness, critical thinking skills and communication skills. These courses provide invaluable insight into areas from mathematics to public speaking.

Elective courses can help you develop the skills you want to have or increase your knowledge of a specialized area within your field. They could even satisfy your curiosity about a certain topic.

7. Should some current mandatory courses be placed as elective courses in the B.A in English teaching syllabus and/or vice versa?

What percentage of the curriculum should offer core and elective courses? Yes, I believe so. At least 25%

8. Do the current elective courses offered in the curriculum provide the required skills to prepare good professionals? What are the weaknesses of the current curriculum regarding the elective courses?

I really don't know which elective courses are being offered now, but I am sure they offer skills and valuable information to the students.

9. Why does the idea of a curriculum change at the Foreign Language Department seem slow? Is it time to propose a new curriculum and some other elective courses?

Successful curricular changes occur only through dedicated efforts of effective change agents. Probably one of the main reasons is that there is no motivation to change methods, attitudes and innovations. Sometimes, teachers are very comfortable teaching same topics every year.

10. Is the Foreign Language Department prepared for a curriculum change In regards of technology, infrastructure, and teacher staff with good educational background?

I think that the FLD and the teaching staff are prepared, but, is there a willing to do so? We should ask the present staff.

INTERVIEW TO M.A NICOLÁS AYALA

1. Were you part of the faculty curriculum committee?

I was invited to work in that committee my role was planning and organizing the curriculum change and organizing meetings with teachers, and like I said it takes time and a lot of work and sometimes you get bored when people say no they are not going to take it, and then get stuck and somehow working is based on democracy processes we cannot impose anything when people are not convinced, on the other hand we have time periods, deadlines according to law we have to update curriculum every five years so we are great behind with the process some of majors have not been updated for almost ten years or more. But I would say that is not totally true that we have not updated the curriculum maybe not a whole document but teachers they analyze the syllabi they get together and they update the content of the semester syllabi so if we are not updating the whole document, the whole plan but I'm sure that some teachers not all of them but some of them are getting together, buying new books,

attending trainings and they update in their own, the classes the syllabi of course in order to teach. So, in that way there is updating but not as a whole. And it has to deal with generations as well if we talk about new teacher generations, they are more open minded but we talk about old teachers they take more time to change and in some cases they never change.

2. What is the importance of a curriculum change and how often a curriculum needs to be updated?

According to the national registration, according to MINED a curriculum must be updated every five years if we are talking about bachelors if it is a technical career, it must be updated every 2 years. It means after finishing a promotion the curriculum must be updated, this must be done by the local committee. Every academic unit must organize the local committee, and there is a central unit that belongs to the school of arts and sciences and humanities. Also, it is stated that a central unit in the university needs to be created but that one doesn't exist.

3. Do you remember why the authorities decided to create the elective courses in the curriculum or why were they proposed? Do you think was this a successful idea?

I think it was a very good idea. because when we talk about the exit profile is not just to translation there is a general area where you learn didactics, pedagogy and some other examples, and then you get into the specialty like didactics and there is another part of research and teaching practice so we talk about a curriculum areas in the curriculum are three the general area the one is related and also we need to be

connected with other units so when we talk about the general area is not only the subjects we take in the semester you have a choice to take some others that are offered by academic units in the school of sciences and humanities, and they are also need it and training teachers you see the list there is like a menu and you have choices is like when you go to united states the first years they are called liberal parts and you need to get general credits the same idea was in here. I would say that we are more connected with some other academic units

4. Should some current mandatory courses be placed as elective courses in the B.A in English teaching syllabus and/or vice versa?

No, I see it the other way around, I think we are missing some mandatory courses here, and we are changing the curriculum, one subject that is missing here is: “educative technologies” since education in technology is needed and it’s not in there, we are missing mandatory courses, and that tells me that there is something going on because we are missing subjects that should be there as mandatory courses.

5. Do the current elective courses offered in the curriculum provide the required skills to prepare good professionals? What are the weaknesses of the current curriculum regarding the elective courses?

I would say that when it comes to basic 1, intermediate, advanced, reading and conversation I think that there is no structure for students to develop those skills during intermediate, but in advanced, that is pretty good for teaching. According to your areas; developing language skills is the priority.

6. Why does the idea of a curriculum change at the Foreign Language Department seem slow? Is it time to propose a new curriculum and some other elective courses?

First, I would like to say that is irrelevant updating the curriculum and it is because knowledge, changes, so we need to update content and the exist profile of the curriculum. They are getting adapted with the new position, but if they are aligned with the new tendencies.

6.1 And why it takes so long?

It is because we professor at the university it takes a time for us to change, in general terms people do not change, we like keeping the same status, because we are in the comfort zone, and if we change the curriculum is not only to change the document but also teachers have to go trainings more practices, that's why they do not propose in some cases to change the curriculum, they don't want to replace subjects, they don't want to change anything. And somehow is understandable but changing and updating is part of life we must be open minded and but I would say that is not the main obstacle in this academic unit. That is why we are enrolled in a curriculum change

I would say that is the main obstacles. But I think that little by little we are making changes and eventually we are going to have a good product. And also, it is about understanding how people work here, they need time to assimilate changes.

7. Is the Foreign Language Department prepared for a curriculum change in regards of technology, infrastructure, and teacher staff with good educational background?

It is prepared, but like I said teachers are in a comfort zone, so it will take time for us to assimilate changes.

INTERVIEW TO THE HEAD OF THE LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

LIC. RICARDO GAMERO

1. When did you start to work at Universidad de El Salvador?

I began to study and then I graduated, I began teaching that is the second part, I began to work for the university in 1975, so that was a long time ago. I began working at the medicine school, I worked there for almost 1 year and then I moved here to work in the laboratory, Language laboratory.

2. When you began teaching, did you already have elective courses?

Yes, I studied French, I took French.

3. What other options did you have?

I cannot remember pretty well, what I do remember is that we didn't have (it is here in the study plan) translation. They didn't teach you that course at the time. That began many years later.

4. What do you think about elective courses that are currently offered here?

There are many courses, Japanese I & II, German, Portuguese, translation, French I & II and III, painting I, II, and III, general psychology, ethics, general philosophy, administration, sociology, if I am not wrong there are 18 courses. And that's too many, 2 of these courses are here, elective 2 and elective 3. Currently we have around 90 to 100 students, and we have 18 elective courses, now if we divide those 90 students, and then you have this number, then you could have like 4-5 students for each course, and then there are too many (courses).

The majority of students have preferred to study translation, only few of them study Japanese that is less than 20-25 and I remember than 2-3 years ago I included French, only 5 students enrolled in the course. That is why I prefer not to offer so many courses because students don't want that, they prefer translation, and in translation we have over 80 students, According to what we collected like around 80% of the students that we surveyed took translation.

5. How many years ago did you (as the languages department) realize about that most of the students preferred to take that course translation?

About 3 years ago.

6. Have you tried to offer some others?

The thing is that, since French didn't work, I decided to try another one so it was ethics; it was sort of an experiment, and up to now I haven't heard any really positive comments about that course so I'm planning not to open it again. Since these courses are taught not by teachers, then they don't see the conception that we have and, they

can't make the connection between the course and what we do here in the department, for example now we have someone teaching statistics applied to education but, as far as I know, What I have heard is that she is too hard, and that many students are going to fail the course.

8. How do you determine the elective courses to be taught each semester?

There is a sort of movement of the courses offered, and then what I do is I follow the order of the number of courses, not number but name of courses, from time to time it changes, for example this one French, philosophy and some others, at the end I decide but I concentrate more on translation and then one or two other course Japanese is offered all the time and then I think that I have for one more course and then I decide which one to be offered, but I understand, whenever I choose a course I understand that only few people will attend.

9. What do you think about you know offering or developing other subjects that are more related to interpretation or anything else like how to teach kids, like teaching practice with kids, or English methodology or lesson planning, subjects like that, that will actually give our students or partners right here more knowledge or more skills?

This has to do with something that you asked at the beginning, if it was possible to add other courses to the offer that we give and the answer is: It is very difficult, the thing is that the university has some patterns, and then once the university sent *Consejo Superior Universitario* approves something it is very difficult and it would take years to approve a change, it is almost as if it's written in stone.

10. What would your opinion be like in regards to what topics do you think would work better, What subjects do you think will be the best choice to have?

Ok, one of them would be technology, because we don't have any course related to that, even though we have a teaching major we understand that many of our students don't teach and they don't want to teach and they won't teach, and then the other option is to work in a call center and then they begin working there, and they work there for years and they change, but the thing is that we don't prepare them for that, and something that I would like is a course on technology, educational technology or something like that.

Another one could be teaching how to become entrepreneurs because "we come here all the time, but when I finish my major I will go out and work for somebody else" We don't think of having our own business that is the idea, "I want to get a job" "I want to get a good salary" "I want to work for a good company" but it is always for someone else, and it is not me, me beginning a business, that is something that I would like to see in the new curriculum, because the department has been working on that for 2 or 3 years to change this. But we are not planning to change just some elective courses. We are planning to change everything that is why we have professionals, students, teachers working together to make a new study plan, one of the courses suggested was that to help students become entrepreneurs.

VIII. FINDINGS

A. ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are elective courses offered in the current curriculum preparing students to perform a successful professional experience?

After surveying all the participants who were active and old students and surveying the professors and professionals, the research turned out to respond to this question specially through the way students answer in the survey being that many of them show low interest on the Elective Courses offered by the Foreign Language Department, some of them even stated that none of the courses had been of good help for them. Students feel that most of the elective subjects, except for Translation, are not directly related to the major. And as a matter of fact, students showed more interest in a series of possible courses to be offered which are closely related to teaching. Besides many of them feel that language related subjects would be the best choice in order to increase their knowledge and skills to become more prepared professionals.

After interviewing the Head of the Foreign Language Department, it could be determined as well, that the curriculum does need an update in order to add more helpful subjects that can match more the students need, subjects such as Use of Technologies and Entrepreneurship. The bottom line concludes that in the modern time students do not only take the B.A. in English Teaching in order to become teachers but also to get other jobs related to the use of the English Language such as job offers in Contact Centers, so the elective courses should adapt to the need that students have in

other to get prepared to perform in different labor markets successfully; however, in short words this goal is not being accomplished with the current elective subjects.

2. What are the most common weaknesses that undergraduate/alumni have towards the current elective courses offered in the curriculum?

Based on the survey results obtained after the sample answers were analyzed, it can be stated that most of the weaknesses that undergraduates and graduates face towards the elective courses currently offered at the Foreign Language Department fall into the lack of extra knowledge related to the Language or to Teaching. Not only that, but also students are not prepared to make use of technological resources, and with the innovative movements in the country, technology plays a great part on the new methodologies developed for teaching English. New generation of teachers need to be efficiently prepare to innovate their teaching methodology use in order for them to learn English faster and in an effective way so learners can communicate; in order to accomplish that goal, technology, leadership, and emotional intelligence play a big roll, these skills could be taught to students through the development of elective courses.

3. Should elective courses be placed as mandatory in the B.A in the English teaching curriculum?

The study provided answers that indicate that elective courses cannot be placed as obligatory at no point. There are several reasons besides the opinion of students, who think elective courses are not of much help (except for Translation), one of the reasons is that in order to have Elective Courses as Mandatory Courses, there will be a need for teachers from other schools because of many courses such as Drawings, Theory of Values, Psychology, Psych pedagogic, for teachers from different school will need to be hired to work at the Foreign Language Department and the approval of the costs would take way too long. On the other hand, if the teachers are hired through hourly- based contract, they will not adapt to the way and style of teaching at the Department, and therefore, students will end up complaining about the different methodologies used by these external teachers.

Besides, the current Elective Courses are not what students expect from the curriculum, so a curriculum change is needed before getting to the point of deciding whether Elective Courses could be obligatory or not. This consideration could be taken since there are many local universities in El Salvador that offer all the core and the complementary subjects as obligatory, so they can assure they will get integral professional out of their graduates. Rather, the University of El Salvador searches for giving students at the Foreign Language Department the opportunity to choose among the set of subjects so that way they can have the chance to improve a specific skill or gain some knowledge (not necessarily related to the major). In conclusion, Elective Subjects should stay as elective because of the dynamic they follow, the cost it would

represent to have them as obligatory and the feasibility of switching them into obligatory subjects.

4. Is the Foreign Language Department prepared for a curriculum change in regards of technology, more classrooms and teacher staff with good educational background?

This question was mainly answered based on the answers provided by Professor Ricardo Gamero during his interview about the curricular changes and elective courses. It is necessary first to make special mention of the extenuating process of a curriculum change process at the University of El Salvador. Because of the way this University is structured, a series of permissions and approvals for each of the changes has to be provided by the Superior Committee of the University, also a budget has to be approved. With that being stated, in order for an effective curriculum change a group of teachers need to be ready for covering the first year of the major with any new subjects, and along the students on the new study plan are moving forwards, the rest of the teachers can be trained. According to the head of the department, a curriculum change is very feasible; however, to get the approval for the budget and changes is the most difficult part of the process. Other than that, all of the teachers can receive special training to familiarize with the use of new technologies and since most of the staff at the Foreign Language Department is very dedicated, many of them will be able to adapt easily, it is essential to mention that there are also senior professors who may not be available for a training in which case the department management will have to adapt them to the subject they can still teach without the need of further training.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ The students from the University of El Salvador have different expectations from the elective courses. They are expecting to gain extra knowledge related to the core on their major. For instance, subjects related to English skills such as Translation, and subjects related to languages such as Japanese, French, and others are the ones students find to be more helpful.

- ✓ Students look forward to acquiring more knowledge with the purpose of becoming more expert professionals and increase their job opportunities rather than acquiring extra knowledge not related to the core of the major.

- ✓ Many of the students think the elective courses they took were not useful or helpful, which means they need to be offered with more useful courses. And based on their answers, the subjects must be close to the core of the major and help students by giving them useful skills that will allow them to have better job opportunities.

- ✓ Students show a better level of acceptance towards subjects related to the core whether teaching or English.

- ✓ Elective Courses can have a higher level of acceptance by changing their methodology and guiding it more towards English Teaching so students can feel the subjects are related to their area of expertise.

- ✓ Changing the curriculum of the B.A. in English Teaching seems not to be possible at the moment; however the selection of subjects offered as elective courses each semester can be modified.

- ✓ Many courses students find as useful like French stopped being offered because students do not take the course and, thus, the resources are not managed in the best way since teaching courses for a reduced number of students represents a too high cost.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Currently, the authorities of the Foreign Language Department offer the Elective Courses based on linear trend analysis which is provided based on the data of the tendency of previous generations and their affluence to each of the elective courses; thus, the research group suggests the Foreign Language Department authorities survey the preferences of the students in regards to the Elective Courses to be offered so the affluence to the course can be high, this should be done each semester because each generation of students is a different set of individuals and their likes will vary on every occasion. So the resources can be better spent, the authorities of the Department can obtain a clearer video on what courses students would like to course and at the same time satisfy them and their needs.

- ✓ The research team recommends the authorities of the Foreign Language Department to inform freshman about the elective courses and give them clearer expectations about each of the elective courses so the first recommendation will have better effect, and students can choose their elective subjects wisely.

- ✓ In the case of curriculum change, the research team recommends the implementation of a subject regarding Practice Teaching with *KIDS* since this was the one students mostly showed interest in. Besides, this subject will provide students with newer techniques and methodologies that can be applied

while teaching kids. Since English for kids is nowadays one of the biggest markets of labor, students will have more opportunities to get a job and will be more integral professionals.

- ✓ In the case of curriculum change, the research team recommends the implementation of a subject regarding *The Use of Technology in Teaching*. In the modernized world we live, the new generation of Centennials is literally growing up with technology and they relate better to any technological process; therefore, teachers should be prepared to face a world full of technology and use that in their favor in order to make teaching more effective and richer in amenities.

- ✓ There are many cases in which subjects such as Sociology, Ethics and Value Theory, Psychology, are taught by external professor who have a different teaching style and this make students have a bad perception of the helpfulness of the subject. So, the research team suggests teachers at the Foreign Language Department take care of such subjects if they have the knowledge and are trained for it. However, this is not always feasible so if not, teachers from different schools should previously be advised about the teaching styles at the Foreign Language Department, and as well the subjects should be leaded towards Teaching English and English language use.

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ANNEXES

This question relates back to the variables studied on question number 4, but instead of searching for the degree of acceptance it researches for the specific elective courses students consider as helpful, following the complete list of results.

By put in practice it at work
Conversation and Reading
Dibujo
Dibujo
Dibujo and Transalation
Dibujo maybe
Didactic, teaching practice, English grammar
Didacticts
Etica y teoria de los valores
french
French, Translation, Ética y teoría de los valores
I don't think they've contributed in my English or teaching skills at all.
Maybe just dibujo
Mostly Japanese since there is also translation in English used in the Japanese language. Nonetheless, any subject is good is just the student who has to put effort in every one.
na
No course at the moment so they have been spanish elective course which I have taken.
Non of this
None
none
None of them
none of them
None of them
None, I did not take the one I think helpful (translation)
Psicologia general y Ética de los valores
Psychology general
Psycology
really none of the courses that I took helped me, just had require in the career
Sociología General, Ética y Teoría de los Valores
Speak, Teaching skills
Taking Translation has been benitful, because I've learned not just to

Translation
Translation
Translation
Translation
Translation and French
Translation and French
Translation Because I can learn how to interprete English and the same time I get other opportunities besides teaching.
Translation because is according with the bachelor
Translation Because it is important and useful
Translation Because of the teachers.
Translation is the most interesting for me but I have not taken it yet translation, Because it's the only one related to the language
Translation, French, Japanese
Translation, grammar

8. Do you consider that current obligatory courses such as Literature I and II, Expresión Visual or Syntax should be offered as elective courses? Write YES or NO. Please explain your answer (optional).
Expresión Visual It doesnt give me any help in teaching English. It is a relleno expression visual NO, but others subjects YES
Expresión visual should be considered as elective bcs there are some others that are more helpful to improve.
I believe the only subject that must be mandatory os Syntax.
I consider that courses such Literature and Expression Visual should be omitted why? Because there some courses such as Syntax that should bbe there.
I think Literatura and expresión visual should be elective because they have little or nothing to do with our major. Not in the case of syntax which is really helpful to develop English skills.
Literature and expresión visual yes but syntax should be mandatory
Literature because I think it is not so necessary
No
NO
No
no
No
NO
NO
No
No
No
NO
No because I considere they are important for the knowledge they bring to students
no because reading and syntax helps to improve english skills
No i think they are fine as obligatory.
No, Because I consider they help and are associated with the English learning process.
NO, because they are necessary for an english teacher

No, because those courses help to improve the english skills un different ways
No, because those were subjects that I was taught of how to used the language properly as a former student in The B.A English Teaching major, in my personal opinion they must be mandatory and not elective courses.
No, each of one brings students some important knowledge. However expression visual because do not give any important knowledge with the bachelor.
NO, I don't think is related in order to get a good level of English
No, This courses help us to improve our english reading skills (literature)
No.
No. I strongly believe Literature I and II and Syntax must be mandatory. Expresión Visual should be elective.
No. I think they help a lot.
No. Only Expression visual should be mandatory.
syntax NO
Syntax should remain mandatory, Lite I and II should be removed forever, and Exp visual must be elective.
yes
Yes
yes
Yes
YES
YES
YES
YES
YES
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
YES
YES because some of those classes are not well oriented
yes because they are not useful at all
Yes but just literature because Syntax is really important
Yes cuz it contains a peace of esency within those subject . Literature helps for creatividad ñ and expresión visual helps you create charts that catch the attention of the public
Yes, but only expression visual because it is like drawing one.
YES, because they complement the skills we will develop
Yes, but expression visual only. Don "t think is really useful
Yes, but only expresión visual, because this is not relate to the English majors at all.
Yes, I consider that they don't fit with the Teaching students need.
YES, it's important
YES, SHOULD BE BETTER
YES. (But Expression Visual only); Literature courses should change their methodology. Finally Syntax is ok
Yes. Syntax is really necessary to improve your English
Yes. They are not so important for the career
Yes. They do not help