

**TEACHING ENGLISH TO INMATES FROM “LA MODELO” PRISON  
FINAL PROJECT PAPER**

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**UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER UIS**

**ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS**

**LICENCIATURA EN INGLES**

**BUCARAMANGA**

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**A Social Practicum submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the  
Degree Bachelor of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

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**TITULO: TEACHING ENGLISH TO INMATES FROM “LA MODELO” PRISON**

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**PALABRAS CLAVES**

**Practica Social – Programas de Reintegración – INPEC (Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario).**

### **RESUMEN**

Este trabajo intenta describir la práctica social hecha por los estudiantes de la Universidad Industrial de Santander UIS en el Instituto San Juan Bosco, ubicado en la cárcel de hombres la Modelo en Bucaramanga. Como respuesta a la petición de practicantes de inglés por parte del director del instituto a la escuela de idiomas de la UIS, y haciendo uso de la nueva modalidad de proyecto ofrecida por la universidad, un grupo de estudiantes de Licenciatura en Inglés de 9th semestre, diseñaron y llevaron a cabo un programa de inglés. Este resolvió la falta de profesores de inglés adecuados para el primer semestre de 2007 en el instituto San Juan Bosco.

El instituto tuvo la necesidad de incorporar profesores de inglés calificados con el propósito de cubrir la asignatura; algunos de los estudiantes necesitaban esta materia para graduarse y algunos otros para ser promovidos. Como estudiantes del área de humanidades en el programa de Licenciatura en inglés, en una universidad pública, y siendo conscientes de la importancia de desarrollar los programas de reintegración a la sociedad ofrecidos por el INPEC (Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario) y también considerando la difícil situación en que vivimos, deseamos participar y apoyar este programa educativo especial que ha sido liderado por el INPEC y el instituto San Juan Bosco.

#### **Modalidad Práctica Social**

Proyecto de Grado

Facultad: Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas . Director: Sonia Lucía Pedraza Ramírez.

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**PALABRAS CLAVES**

**Social Practicum –Reintegration Programs – INPEC (Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario).**

### **SUMMARY**

This paper attempts to describe the social practicum done by students from “Universidad Industrial de Santander, UIS” in the “San Juan Bosco” institute at Bucaramanga’s male penitentiary “La Modelo”. As a response to the request of practicing English students presented by the director of the institute to the English Language Teaching program at the UIS, and making use of the new final project modality offered by the university; a group of ELT students from 9<sup>th</sup> semester designed and carried out an English program. This solved the lack of suitable English teachers for the first semester of 2007 in the “San Juan Bosco” institute.

The institute had a need of incorporating qualified English teachers with the aim to cover the subject; some of the learners needed this subject for graduating and some others for promotion. As students of humanities in the ELT program in a public university, and being conscious of the importance of developing the reintegration to the society programs offered by the INPEC, and also considering the difficult situation we live on, we wanted to participate and support this special educational program that has been leaded by both the INPEC (Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario) and the “San Juan Bosco” Institute.

### Modalidad Práctica Social

Proyecto de Grado

Facultad: Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas . Director: Sonia Lucía Pedraza Ramírez.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the General Law of Education, Article 68”, the education for the reintegration to the society contains the educational programs offered to people whose individual and social behavior demands integrative educational processes that allow them to reintegrate to the mainstream society.

Within the law there is the case of the Colombian prison colonies in which one must take into account the plans and educational programs, the policies and techno-pedagogical and administrative orientations of the INPEC (Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario). In the General Law of Education, the article 71 states that there will be resources with their respective budgets, that come directly and deals with private non profit companies and with recognizable idiosyncrasy.

Being extremely important for the INPEC the reintegration of inmates into the society, there exist some programs that help them to reintegrate. That is why; they decided to create an educational section in 1.959 whose objective was the development of an integral and systematic educational process.

Taking into account this new section, the government of Santander gave the functioning license to “San Juan Bosco” institute in 1997. This institute is directed since that time by Lic. Maria Sonia Zambrano Rodriguez, who is in charge of

running the different academic programs of formal, non formal and informal education.

“San Juan Bosco” institute wants to be the leader in the educational section within the correctional system in Colombia; providing the inmates with real alternatives during the reintegration process. For that reason, it is highly important for the institute to develop and carry on educational programs which main purpose is to help inmates to acquire different useful skills and positive attitudes that would be used after being released.

This project attempts to carry out a social practicum in this specific context and focuses on the educational field; particularly on the English area in the institution mentioned above. The institute has a need of qualified English teachers with the aim to cover the subject; some of the learners need this teaching practice for graduating and some others for promotion. The students of humanities in the ELT Program in a public university, wanted to participate and support this special program that has been leaded by both the INPEC and the “San Juan Bosco” Institute.

## 2- PLAN OF ACTION

### **STAGE I**

- Recognition of the facility.
- Knowing the requirements and the prison procedures for entering to it.

### **STAGE II**

- Applying surveys (socio-demographic) and placement test.(See appendix A and B).

The students have to answer them in a written way. Both documents were designed by the ELT students program at UIS.

- Analyzing data

The result of the placement test showed that the inmates did not have even an A1 level of English.

### **STAGE III**

- Selecting the content to teach

The choice of these topics was based on the students' needs.

- Designing the course

Based on the content selected, the course was designed considering also the level A1 of the Common European Framework (CEF).

#### **STAGE IV**

- Selecting the teaching approaches or methods

The approaches chosen for this project were the following:

- Natural approach: this approach was considered because is mainly used with beginner learners and pictures or visual aids that help the students with a more comprehensible input.
- Grammar-translation method: this method that lets the teacher use his/her mother tongue, so that the classes could be taught with Spanish and translating into English.
- Community Language Learning: this method permits the teacher to work in the relationship to the learner-learner and learner-teacher. This also provides the teacher with activities such as group work or reflection.

These approaches were alternated each other within the same class, more or less every 20 minutes or according to the time an activity took.

#### **STAGE V**

- Evaluating the topics.

The way for evaluating the topics was an extensive process during the whole course. The inmates took some quizzes or homework that were graded according to the topic already studied. At the end of the course, they also took a test in order to see the improvement they had after having taken the English course.

### **3-THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1- LITERATURE REVIEW**

Over the last years, researchers have generated a number of theories in order to understand and improve Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Scholars working in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, linguistics and education have made great contributions in the field of Second Language Acquisition research. The following literature review attempts to give an overview of some SLA theories and information that were taken into account to carry out the social practicum.

There exist different theories that talk about the way learners could acquire a Second Language. For example, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2003) mentions the concept of “continuum of learning”. It says that learning is developed in a progressive way from no knowledge at all of the Target Language to a higher competency closely related to the one of native speakers. This process takes at least five stages starting from the Silent/ Receptive or Preproduction stage to the Advanced Language Proficiency.

Considering that the social practicum took place in the penitentiary context which has special features, it is said that teaching English was a challenging experience. This view of Second Language Acquisition theories gave us an idea of how to focus the practicum, which stages the learners could achieve. In this social

practicum the first stage (Silent/ Receptive or Preproduction) was the most suitable one, because in it learners were able to understand little words and structures. They also answer questions by gesturing, pointing something or just saying yes or no. Moreover, as soon as they felt really comfortable they could speak without being extremely forced by the teacher.

In addition to this basic concept of Second Language Acquisition, it is necessary to look at a more complex theory. This is the case of Stephen Krashen and his "Monitor Model Theory" (Krashen, 1987), which includes five main hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning, Monitor, Natural Order, Input and Affective-filter hypotheses. However, just three of them were appropriate for the practicum. Those hypotheses are: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis that refers to the way in which adults develop competence in a language, language acquisition and language learning. The former makes reference to a subconscious process not so different to the way a child learns this first language. Language acquirers are not consciously aware of the grammatical rules of the language but rather develop a feel for correctness. The latter makes reference to a conscious process of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them.

Therefore, from these two concepts the one which adjusts the most is the learning concept, because either teachers or learners were in an EFL context where the rules normally are explicit; even more for those who do not have any

knowledge and contact with the Target Language (English). Moreover, the inmates were pretty conscious of what they were learning because they think before producing in order to avoid errors in their performance.

The other hypothesis used is the Input hypothesis, it points out that humans acquire language by understanding messages or receiving “comprehensible input” Mclaughlin (1987). However, it is important that learners do not receive input that exceeds their level of competence. It is crucial that the input received by the learner should be comprehensible and challenging enough to lead improvement in the linguistics competence.

For example, if inmates were given strange or confusing information, they would not be able to learn or perform something in the Target Language. On the contrary, if inmates had relevant and clear input they would get enough knowledge for improving and developing their performance and skills. Learners in the prison were exposed to input that was appropriate for their level and could be easily internalized.

The final hypothesis is the Affective-filter hypothesis, it refers to the affective variables that could let flow or block the input received by the learner. Some of these variables are motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and so on. Mclaughlin mentions that an acquirer whose Affective-filter is up blocks the input and language

acquisition can not occur. On the contrary, when the filter is down the acquirer could reach a better competence in language Acquisition.

In other words, the lower the affective filter the better the language is acquired. In the penitentiary context not many people have a lower affective filter; the majority of them would present a kind of apathy towards learning new things, especially a language like English. They put a barrier that the teacher should take down for helping them in the learning process of the new language that will be useful for them. In this aspect is relevant to mention that maybe a cause of that barrier is the motivation they had.

In the hypothesis mentioned above some affective variables are mentioned; one of them is motivation, which is the learners' orientation with regard to the goal of learning something, that plays an important role in Second Language Acquisition. Student's motivation has been analyzed in a variety of ways, yet the effect that it has on teaching and learning remains unclear because motivation is quite challenging to measure. Researches have incorporated various definitions of the terms intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their concepts may vary according to the study area.

In SLA these terms are defined under some approaches. Vallerand (1997) on one hand, states that intrinsic motivation is the one that comes from the inside. Maybe, it is due to the learners' like for the Target Language group or enjoys an

activity itself. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is the one affected by external factor that leads or takes you to do things for tangible rewards rather than from the fun of it.

Researchers have shown that students in EFL classrooms can be characterized as having different levels of motivation that could affect how a teacher approaches these contexts. In an EFL setting students tend to have a higher extrinsic motivation; as in some public school where the students do not like the language but they need good grades to approve the subject. Therefore, the “San Juan Bosco” students are not the exception. They also have higher extrinsic motivation; the great majority of them were studying for the benefit of reducing their life time in prison, some others to get a degree and other to pass the course.

Sometimes, learners got a reward like a candy or chocolate for the best one in the activity done. This is another way of extrinsic motivation or even more a simple smiley face made them felt comfortable not only with the language but also with the teacher. These motivated the learners to go to class and be more active in the same; and therefore, made it smoother and more comfortable with both the teacher and the students.

Another aspect to regard in teaching Second Language, more in the context of the social practicum, is that learners were all adults. They were not as active as a child or adolescent, they had passed through some experiences that gave them

a background, which helped students in their learning process. Compare to children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners, Lieb (1991). For that reason, Lieb mentions Malcom Knowles the pioneer in adult learning field; he identified the following characteristics:

- ❖ Adults have a lot of life experience that should be connected to the learning.
- ❖ Adults are goal-oriented; they know what goal to achieve.
- ❖ Adults are relevancy-oriented; they must find a reason to learn something.
- ❖ Adults also deserve respect so that the instructor has to have a clear view of this aspect.

Since the beginning of the course, learners were aware of the main goal, which was learning English. Perhaps, they were not interested in it, some may think that English was not useful for them but after some time, they found that English is a useful language that would allow them to reintegrate into society. Because when they got out they would apply and find a better job or help their kids with their homework. This is a way of starting over and changing their previous life.

The final aspect to consider but not the less important is the Common European Framework (CEF) with the A1 level which makes references to the aspects that should learn a starter student. The following is a list of those aspects that agree with the social practicum made in the “San Juan Bosco” institute:

- In the **oral production (speaking)** activities the language user produces an oral text which is received by an audience of one or more listeners.  
Examples of speaking activities include:
  - ❖ Public address (information, instructions, etc.)
  - ❖ Addressing audiences
  - ❖ Reading a written text aloud.
  - ❖ Speaking from notes, or from a written text or visual aids.
  - ❖ Acting out a rehearsed role
  - ❖ Singing.
- In **written production (writing)** activities the language user as writer produces a written text which is received by a readership of one or more readers. Examples of writing activities include:
  - ❖ Competing forms and questionnaires.
  - ❖ Making notes for future reference
  - ❖ Taking down messages from dictation, etc...
- In **aural reception (listening)** activities the language user as listener receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers.  
Listening activities include:
  - ❖ Listening to media (radio, TV, recording, cinema)
  - ❖ Listening to overheard conversation.

In each case the user may be listening: for gist, for specific information, for detailed understanding and for implications.

- In **visual reception (reading)** activities the user as reader receives and processes as input written texts produced by one or more writers. Examples of reading activities include:
  - ❖ Reading for general orientation
  - ❖ Reading for information, e.g. using reference works
  - ❖ Reading and following instructions

In each case the user may read: for gist, for specific information, for detailed understanding.

As it was stated above the Common European Framework establishes the different aspects to consider for starter students. During the course learners were expected to develop the following skills:

**Oral production:**

In the oral production learners were able to produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places. They could also describe themselves, what they do and where they live.

**Written production:**

In the written production learners were able to write simple isolated phrases and sentences, write sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.

**Listening comprehension:**

Related to the listening comprehension learners were able to understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions.

**Reading comprehension:**

Related to the reading comprehension learners were able to understand very short, single texts, single phrases at a time, picking familiar names, words and basic phrases.

As it is noticeable, learning a Second Language demands a lot of effort and time from both teachers and learners. In the teaching experience, the teacher should take into account all the aspects mentioned above and also the context in which the classes take place. The learner should be aware of his weaknesses and strengths in order to improve the knowledge already acquired.

#### **4- STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

According to the 65 Law of 1993, the INPEC (Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario), has as main objective the reintegration of the inmate into mainstream society through discipline, work, study, spiritual formation, culture, sports and recreation.

Due to this, the director of the INPEC looks for the inter-institutional agreements that exist with some universities such as UIS (Universidad Industrial de Santander), UNAB (Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga), UCC (Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia), UTS (Unidades Tecnológicas de Santander) etc; in order to get a support for reaching the requirements of the General Law of Education and the PEI (Proyecto Educativo Institucional).

For this purpose, one representative of the INPEC in this case Lic. Maria Sonia Zambrano Rodriguez made an appointment with the representative of the University (UIS), Lic. Rafael Barragan Gomez, director of the School of Languages. In the meeting she set up the situation she had. Due to the fact that, within the prison there is an Institute called "San Juan Bosco" that functions as a school which fulfils all the parameters required by the General Law of Education. The Lic. Maria Sonia Zambrano stated the need of incorporating English teachers to the school to cover all areas needed for secondary education, and therefore; to carry

out one of the reintegration programs offered by the INPEC; that is the educational one.

***Is it possible for a group of inmates learn Basic English in their current context through the use of an eclectic methodology?***

## 5- RATIONALE

Being conscious that the government has the elements to punish, it is also significant to mention that it should provide the inmates with the tools to change their actual life. Moreover, help them not to feel psychologically bad or isolated or discriminated from society. Being aware of the fact that there is a whole legislation which contemplates some statements to offer help to the inmates during their time in prison; it is necessary to say that those statements aid them to make a decision, with the cooperation and support of the professionals working in the penitentiary institution; and that they look for alternatives to change, to obtain personal growth, which leads them towards the construction of a new project of life.

The INPEC is the institution in charge of the reintegration and it is always trying to improve the programs already established for this purpose. These programs allow the inmates to develop or acquire skills that would let them go back into society with a new vision of their life.

Programs like these should have a major support not only from the government but also from universities and companies. For this reason, this social practicum pretends to contribute with the labor of the “San Juan Bosco” institute placed in the prison “La Modelo” from Bucaramanga.

The UIS students as citizens ought to contribute to the inmates’ reintegration process into the society. As future English teachers we perceive education as a

way out to the difficult social situation we live on. For this reason, we believe in the importance of developing social programs which involve educational processes with the principal purpose of helping a less privileged minority. The “San Juan Bosco” institute offered ELT students from the UIS the opportunity to accomplish this idea by allowing those students to join one of this reintegration into the society programs offered by the INPEC making them participants in the inmates’ educational training process.

## **6- OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

### **6.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

- To contribute in the inmates' reintegration process into the society by covering the necessity of English teachers in the educational area.
- To help students cover the English requirement in their secondary education.

### **6.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- To develop cooperative activities which promote coexistence and respect among inmates.
- To develop and implement an English course according to the inmates' needs and levels.
- To propose an eclectic methodology to teach English to a special group of prison learners to make them feel better in their penitentiary environment.

## 7- DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

### 7.1- TARGET POPULATION

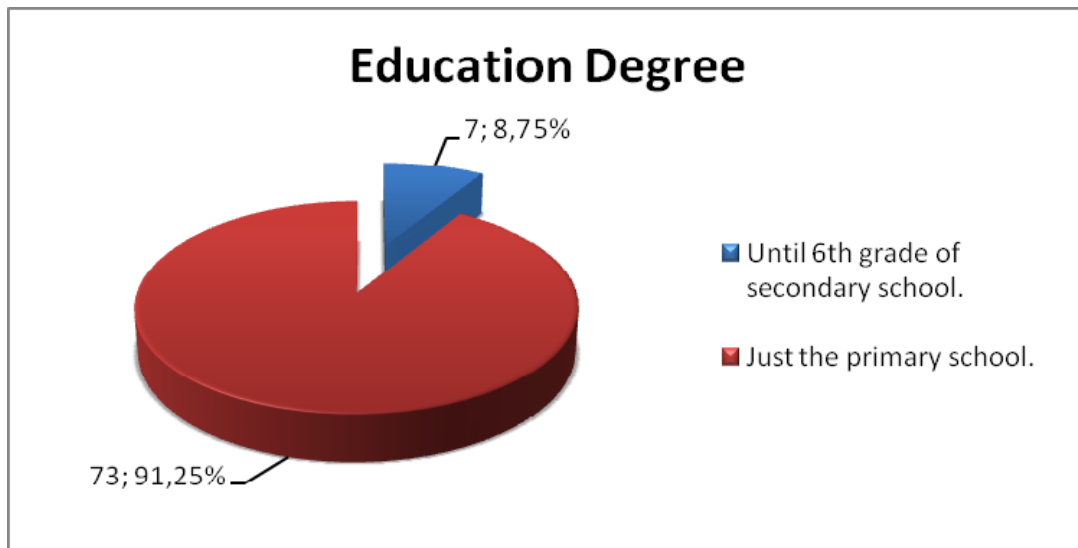
The population in the prison “La Modelo” of Bucaramanga is composed by male prisoners under conditions of *convicted* (prisoners found guilty of committed a felony) and *indicted* (prisoners waiting for the decision of the judge). In the penitentiary there exist 7 communities spread within the facility. In those communities coexist a lot of inmates with different educational, marital and regional background.

For example, the 8.75 % of the population studied until 6<sup>th</sup> grade of secondary school, the rest just the primary school (See table and figure 1).

**Table 1.** People’s Education status

Education	Quantity	Percentage
Until 6 <sup>th</sup> grade of secondary school	7	8,75%
Just the primary school	73	91,25%
Total	80	100,00%

**Figure 1.** People's Education status



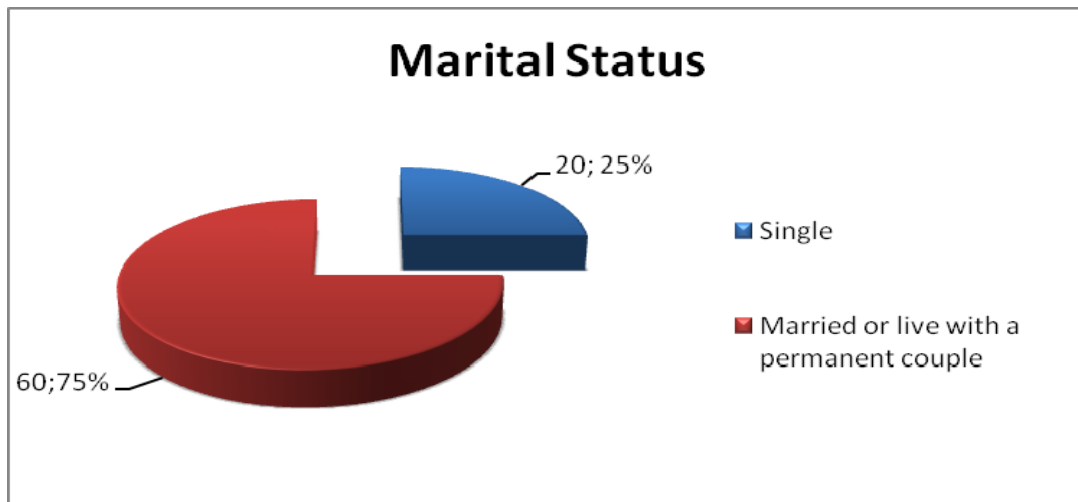
Source: Authors

The 25% are single, the rest are married or live with a permanent couple (See table and figure 2).

**Table 2.** Marital Status

Marital Status	Quantity	Percentage
Single	20	25,00%
Married or live with a permanent couple	60	75,00%
Total	80	100,00%

**Figure 2.** Marital Status



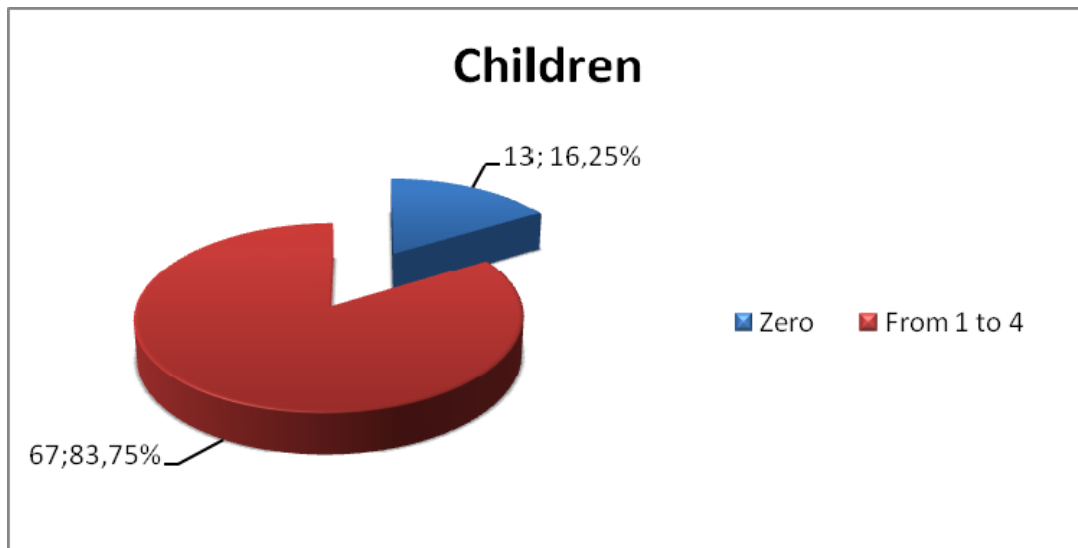
Source: Authors

The 16.25% do not have children, the rest have from 1 to 4 children (See table and figure 3).

**Table 3.** People who have children

Children	Quantity	Percentage
Zero	13	16,25%
From 1 to 4	67	83,75%
Total	80	100,00%

**Figure 3.** People who have children



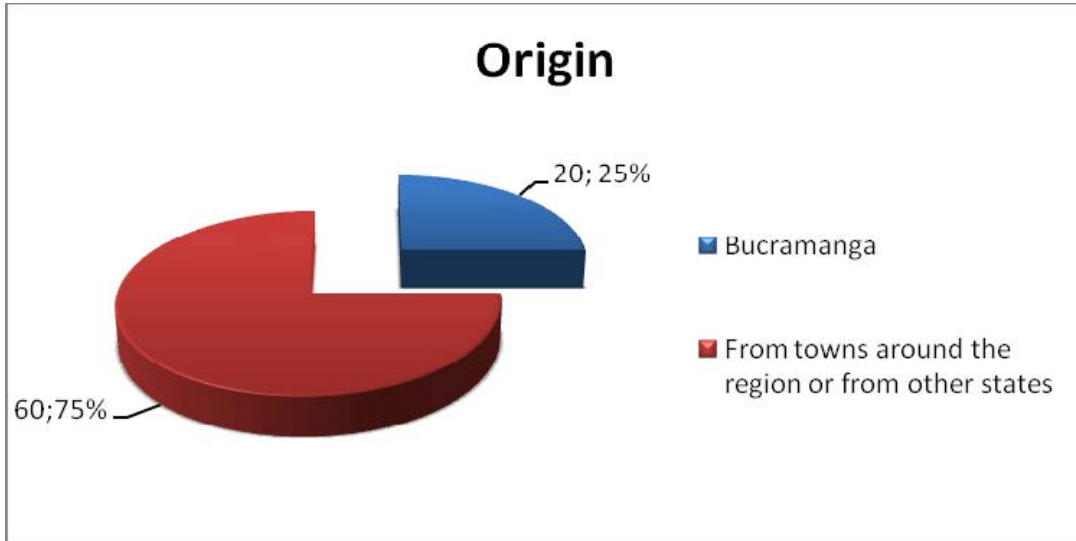
Source: Authors

Finally, the 25% of the population are from Bucaramanga, the rest are from towns around the region or from other states (See table and figure 4)

**Table 4.** Place of origin

Origin	Quantity	Percentage
Bucaramanga	20	25,00%
From towns around the region or from other states	60	75,00%
Total	80	100,00%

**Figure 4.** Place of origin



Source: Authors

Furthermore, they are organized in groups from 20 to 30 students but this may vary depending on the circumstances of the prison. The Age of the students also varies; it goes from 18 to 65 years old. It is important to say that the inmates meet each other every time they have classes in the Institute.

It is also important to establish the relationship between teachers-learners. As teachers were young and came from the outside, there was a friendly and communicative relationship between both; they wanted to know what was happening outside, what the new things were and so on. Also because teachers were neither guardians nor INPEC staff, they felt more comfortable addressing to the teachers. Without forgetting that, inmates were always pretty respectful with the work and with the teachers.

## 7.2- CONTENT

After having applied the placement test and analyzing the data, it was very clear that the majority of the students had a really low English level. Taking this into account and what the Common European Framework establishes for A1 learners, which is the lowest category for ELL learners, the content of the program was designed. Then after adjusting the content to the students' needs, the design was presented to the director of the "San Juan Bosco" institute. She revised it, agreed and approved it.

The topics applied for the program were the following:

- Using greetings and farewells.
  
- Introducing yourself.
  - ✓ Using Verb to BE in present simple
  - ✓ Using Wh questions
  - ✓ Identifying and writing formal and informal dialogues.
  - ✓ Saying age (numbers)
  - ✓ Saying country of origin (nationalities)
  
- Describing people.
  - ✓ Using qualitative adjective (colors)
  - ✓ Identifying the body parts
  - ✓ Saying professions and clothes

### 7.3. METHODOLOGY

For the selection of the methodology to be used within the classes, it was necessary to look for the Second Language Teaching Methods. The ELT students did a deep analysis of both the methods and the students' needs, so based on this the following methods were used:

- **The Grammar-Translation Method:** this method is a basic tool because the classes can be taught in L<sub>1</sub>, with a little active use of the L<sub>2</sub>. The learners in the social practicum were not used to the English Language, so they could not understand well when teacher used the L<sub>2</sub>. Instead it was better when the teacher said something in English and translated it into Spanish for a better comprehension by the learners; though teacher always tried to find the balance between the two languages for getting used to them and to the Target Language. By the end of the course, they were able to understand more than what they understood at the beginning.

Another aspect from this method that adjusts to the purpose of teaching inmates (learners) is the one that says that "little or no attention is given to pronunciation, and much vocabulary is taught in the form of a list of isolated words" Mckendry. The students were neither exposed to the Target Language for long periods of time; nor had a huge amount of vocabulary to

use. They only had an hour per week; and it should be used carefully in order to cover all the activities planned for that day.

As a result of this, it was necessary to give them some basic vocabulary such as numbers, nationalities, clothes etc. that they could use daily, and encourage them to speak without being worried about the right pronunciation of the words. (See Appendix C)

- **The Natural Approach:** this method is based on Krashen's theory of Second Language Acquisition. This method was taken because "it is considered for beginners and it is designed to help them become intermediate" Richards and Rodgers (1.986). As it was mentioned above, the learners did not have any knowledge of English, so they were all beginners for that reason; this method fits perfectly in the social practicum work.

"The purpose of a language course will vary according to the needs of students and their particular interests" Richards and Rodgers (1.986). This statement covers the practicum because everything done was based on the learners' needs. They were not pushed to produce anything unless they felt comfortable but they could answer the commands and questions in other ways like gestures and signals.

Besides this, the natural approach gives the opportunity to use pictures, visual aids and games which let the learners receive as much comprehensible input as possible; in order to help them develop competence in the target language. Focusing this competence in the management of the vocabulary and grammatical structures previously learnt. (See Appendix D) These materials let the teachers made the classes more active and help the learner to associate the pictures with the word in English.

- **The Community Language Learning:** this method was created from a method by Charles A. Curran. From it, the interactions between learners and between teachers-learners was the main factor into consideration, because as Richards and Rogers said “Language is a Social process” (1986). As the social practicum was carried out in a penitentiary context, interactions were quite significant; because inmates were comfortable to talk among them and with the teacher. They wanted to know things not only about the language but also about the changes that had occurred in the city. Nevertheless, this was not a reason for being disrespectful by neither of the two parts from teacher and from learners.

In addition to this, some activities proposed by the CLL method fits with the practicum. Those are group work and reflection or observations. The first one let the learners interact among them, looking for changing experience

and knowledge. This interaction may help them in the way they address people both outside and inside the prison. The second one let them made a reflection in the way they were learning, how they behaved in the class, how they felt during it and so on. But the reflection activity also made them think about their actual life, if they wanted to continue with the life they were living, or if they wanted to look for new alternatives.

The aspects mentioned above helped the inmates with their reintegration process into society, because the CLL method gave them the opportunity to work out in their social part as well as the academic one. (See Appendix E)

Talking about the method used the most is kind of hard because they were all used in the same quantity. They were alternate consecutively during the same class. Non of the classes was strictly carried out following one method because the idea was to implement and eclectic one.

#### **7.4. MATERIALS**

Within this section the materials which were used are based on the program contents mentioned above. These materials were designed considering the best approaches to the contents, students' needs and the Common European Framework. The institute provided the technological equipment such as (Television, DVD player, CD player and a Video player) in order to give flow to the class; at the same time it provided some bilingual dictionaries that could be used by the learners.

Furthermore, visual aids like posters, flashcards, and maps and so on were used for teaching the classes, considering the natural approach which let the teacher employ all these kind of teaching aids in a class. Another kind of material that helped in the class was the handouts. Most of the handouts were designed with the purpose of teaching isolated words (vocabulary) such as nationalities, numbers and clothes etc, taking into account the grammar-translation method.

All these materials were focused on making the learners' educational process easier and also on increasing their comprehension of the Target Language. As a result of using the materials the learners really learned something about English.

## **8- CONCLUSIONS**

After meeting with the principal of the “San Juan Bosco” institute, it was established that the inmates’ English level was very low or even not existent at all. Taking this fact into consideration, a placement test was designed using the common European framework parameters, that is, parameters for basic learners (A1). It was a text composed by a written production and a reading comprehension part.

After having applied the test and analyzing the results, it was concluded that in fact the inmates’ English level was very low and not close to what the Common European Framework establishes for A1 learners. Based on these outcomes, an English course for basic learners was designed following the Common European Framework requirements. The course covered all the skills, not only the ones evaluated in the texts (reading and writing) but also included listening and speaking.

The course was carried out through three months, and in order to check inmates’ progress, the same placement test was applied at the end of the course. After analyzing the results of the latter test, improvements were remarkably shown in all the skills. The conclusions are as follow:

**Written production:**

65% of the learners, that is, 52 out of 80 learners could write simple isolated phrases and sentences.

70 % that is, 56 out of 80 learners could write phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.

**Oral production:**

50% that is, 40 out of 80 learners could produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.

65% of that is, 52 out of 80 learners could describe themselves, what they do and where they live.

**Reading comprehension:**

40% that is, 32 out of 80 learners could understand very short, single texts, single phrases at a time, picking familiar names, words and basic phrases.

**Listening comprehension:**

75% that is, 60 out of 80 learners could understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions.

It is clearly stated that the inmates improved their English level after taken the English course; proven that it is possible for people in a penitentiary context to learn English, what answers the question stated previously.

What was established above refers to the academic aspect of the social practicum. Now it is important to make reference to the social aspect. After the course had finished the learners were more up to participate in the activities of the institute. Some of those activities were the “Izada de Bandera” and a reflection activity. Both of them were planned by the ELT students’ program at UIS.

In there the learners were able to forget a bit their actual life and enjoy a simple moment with different people. In the reflection, they could see themselves and think about a possible way of changing their actual life.

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## APPENDIX A

CONVENIO INTERINSTITUCIONAL UIS-INPEC  
PRÁCTICA SOCIAL  
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

### INFORMACIÓN PERSONAL

NOMBRE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDAD: \_\_\_\_\_ LUGAR DE NACIMIENTO: \_\_\_\_\_

ESTADO CIVIL: \_\_\_\_\_ NÚMERO DE HIJOS: \_\_\_\_\_

### ESTUDIOS REALIZADOS

#### PRIMARIOS

INSTITUCIÓN: \_\_\_\_\_ CIUDAD: \_\_\_\_\_

ULTIMO GRADO CURSADO: \_\_\_\_\_ AÑO: \_\_\_\_\_

#### SECUNDARIOS

INSTITUCIÓN: \_\_\_\_\_ CIUDAD: \_\_\_\_\_

ULTIMO GRADO CURSADO: \_\_\_\_\_ AÑO: \_\_\_\_\_

#### OTROS

CUALES ? \_\_\_\_\_

INSTITUCIÓN: \_\_\_\_\_

CIUDAD: \_\_\_\_\_ ÚLTIMO NIVEL CURSADO: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**

**UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER**

**PRUEBA DE DIAGNOSTICO**

I- Complete the following dialogue with the phrases in the box.

Excuse me	What's your name?	It's great to be here
How old are you?	Nice to meet you	This is

A: Hello \_\_\_\_\_?

B: My name is Barbara.

A: hi, I'm Andreas.

A: \_\_\_\_\_?

B: I'm thirteen years old.

A: Mr Jones, \_\_\_\_\_ Ali.



B: Hello, Ali \_\_\_\_\_

A: How do you do, Mr Jones.

A: Hi Welcome to San Francisco.

B: Thanks. \_\_\_\_\_

II- Write the questions (read the answer first).

1 (name?) <u>What's your name?</u>			
2 (married or single?) .....			
3 (American?) .....			
4 (how old?) .....			
5 (a teacher?) .....			
6 (wife a lawyer?) .....			
7 (from?) .....			
8 (her name?) .....			
9 (how old?) .....			
			PAUL
		Paul.	
		I'm married.	
		No, I'm Australian.	
		I'm 30.	
		No, I'm a lawyer.	
		No, she's a designer.	
		She's Italian.	
		Anna.	
		She's 27.	

III- Write short answers.

1- Are you married? No, I'm not.

4- Are your hands cold? \_\_\_\_\_

2- Are you thirsty? \_\_\_\_\_

5- Is it dark now? \_\_\_\_\_

3- Is it cold today? \_\_\_\_\_

6- Are you a teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

IV- Put in **am, is** or **are**.

1. The weather is nice today.

5. Look! There \_\_\_\_\_ Carol .

2. I \_\_\_\_\_ not tired.

6. My brother and I \_\_\_\_\_ good tennis players

3. This bag \_\_\_\_\_ heavy.

7. Ann \_\_\_\_\_ at home. Her children \_\_\_\_\_ at school.

4. These bags \_\_\_\_\_ heavy.

8 I \_\_\_\_\_ a taxi driver. My sister \_\_\_\_\_ a nurse.

V- Write full sentences. Use **is/isn't/are/aren't**.

1. (your shoes very dirty) Your shoes are very dirty .

2. (my brother a teacher) My \_\_\_\_\_

3. (this house not very big) \_\_\_\_\_

4. (the shops not open today) \_\_\_\_\_

5. ( my keys in my bag) \_\_\_\_\_

6. (Jenny 18 years old) \_\_\_\_\_

7. (you not very tall) \_\_\_\_\_

VI- What are these people doing? Use these verbs to complete the sentences.



IX- Reading Comprehension. Read and answer the questions based on the reading

### My Friend Peter

My friend's name is Peter. Peter is from Amsterdam, in Holland. He is Dutch. He is married and has two children. His wife, Jane, is American. She is from Boston in The United States. Her family is still in Boston, but she now works and lives with Peter in Milan. They speak English, Dutch, German and Italian! Their children are pupils at a local primary school. The children go to school with other children from all over the world. Flora, their daughter, has friends from France, Switzerland, Austria and Sweden. Hans, their son, goes to school with students from South Africa, Portugal, Spain and Canada. Of course, there are many children from Italy. Imagine, French, Swiss, Austrian, Swedish, South African, American, Italian, Spanish and Canadian children all learning together in Italy!

### Multiple-Choice

1. Where is Peter from?

- a. Germany
- b. Holland
- c. Spain
- d. Canada

3. Where are they now?

- a. Madrid
- b. Boston
- c. Milan
- d. Sweden

2. Where is his wife from?

- a. New York
- b. Switzerland
- c. Boston
- d. Italy

4. What are the children's names?

- a. Greta and Peter
- b. Anna and Frank
- c. Susan and John
- d. Flora and Hans

This reading was taken and adapted from

[http://esl.about.com/library/beginner/bl\\_beginner\\_read\\_pete.htm](http://esl.about.com/library/beginner/bl_beginner_read_pete.htm)

## APPENDIX C

This is an example of a task using the Grammar-translation method

### **TASK OBJECTIVE:**

- ✓ To learn countries and nationalities in a written way.

**TIME:** 30 - 40 minutes

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS:** 20 students

**MATERIAL:** map, crossword with nationalities.

### **PROCEDURE:**

- Paste a map of the world on the board
- Ask students to identify the countries they knew on it
- Request students to say the name of the country in Spanish or English if they know
- Write the name of the country in English on the board
- Ask them to write the names on their notebook
- Give some minutes to memorize some of the names
- Ask them to close their notebook
- Give a handout with a crossword about nationalities
- Provide them with 10 minutes to solve the crossword
- Check and elicit students' answer.

In this activity students could change knowledge about geography by saying names of the countries they identified on the map. At the beginning they said the name of countries in Spanish but after the exercise they could say the countries in English.

## APPENDIX D

This is an example of a task using the Natural Approach:

### **TASK OBJECTIVE:**

- ✓ To identify different kinds of clothes in a creative way.

**TIME:** 30 - 40 minutes

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS:** 20 students

**MATERIAL:** yellow/ red card, markers, flashcards.

### **PROCEDURE:**

- Show some flashcards with different types of clothes
- Ask students to describe and read the name of the clothes in the flashcards
- Ask them to write those names in their notebooks
- Organize the room in groups of 4 people
- Pass a small box with some papers inside
- Ask students to pick up one paper with a sort of clothes
- Give students the yellow card and markers of different colors
- Ask students to design the clothes they have chosen and put them on a classmate
- Give some minutes for the design
- Act them out and explain the kind of clothes designed
- Select the best design and paste it on the wall

In this activity teacher showed flashcards with different kinds of clothes, and asked students to describe what they saw in them. They answered without paying more attention to the grammar or pronunciation but the Teacher corrected them indirectly by asking other questions. It allowed learner to feel comfortable in the class and internalized the new vocabulary.

## APPENDIX E

This is an example of a task using the Community Language Learning

### **TASK OBJECTIVE:**

- ✓ To present short formal or informal dialogues in a written and spoken way.

**TIME:** 30 - 40 minutes

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS:** 20 students

**MATERIAL:** notebooks, board

### **PROCEDURE:**

- Write an example of an informal and formal dialogue on the board
- Ask them to identify the differences in the dialogues
- Explain the differences
- Tell students to write the information presented on the board in their notebooks
- Number the head students
- Pair up students with the same number
- Assign roles
- Give instructions
- ❖ Write a short formal or informal dialogue
- ❖ Practice it with your partner
- ❖ Act it out in front of the class
- Give 10 minutes to create the dialogue
- Perform it to the group
- Make a reflection of the activity as soon as they finish it
- Ask them how they felt with the activity, if they like it or not

In this activity learners were asked to create a formal or informal dialogue for changing the knowledge acquire about the two different dialogues. They could ask questions about personal information such as name, age, country of origin and so on. But they also had to find the differences by asking their classmates or the teacher in order to interact among each other.

They also had some minutes to talk about the activity itself, and made a reflection of their behavior in the development of the class. Besides, learners could change ideas and comments about what they really liked or not and what the topic already studied could help them in the future.