

## The systematic development of self-access programs appropriate to local needs

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### ABSTRACT

*The concept of self-access learning centers was introduced to the republic of Mexico to meet statistically determined needs. One such need is the systematic development of the self-access program suited for those interested in applying English within the context of the tourist industry. Random interviewing of workers in the tourist department offices in Oaxaca, Mexico led to the discovery of 3 initial major categories of potential students and several minor ones. Basing the study on the premise that the interviewees are a small representative of substantial numbers of individuals it was begun to think in citywide, statewide or even nationwide terms therefore we created a systematic terms, therefore the expressed needs of an expected student population.*

*the resulting self-access center would contain a flexible, dynamically, growing system allowing its use to make informed choices at all levels within the field of language learn for tourism, using selected created materials efficiently. The study led to the conclusion that there is an inherent value in this make-level use of materials as each client can make his/her own decisions based on his/her immediate goals*

*Key Terms: <self instructional programmes> <self instructional methods> <individualized curriculum> <continuous progress plan> <individual study> <educational innovations> <public colleges> <Mexico>*

### SINOPSIS

*Durante un seminario sobre el uso del auto-acceso en la ciudad de Oaxaca, tuvimos la oportunidad de realizar una pequeña investigación de campo en el área turística, con el objetivo de conocer los posibles estudiantes interesados en la creación de un centro de auto-acceso. Obtuvimos 3 categorías diferentes de estudiantes potenciales del sistema de auto-enseñanza y creamos una serie de ejercicios de aprendizaje adecuados a sus intereses.*

*Términos Clave: <programa de autoaprendizaje> <método autodidáctico> <programa individualizado> <plan de progreso individual> <estudios individuales> <innovación educacional> <universidad estatal> <México>*

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As we have learned in our plenary sessions in Oaxaca, the very concept of Self-access Learning (entered) was introduced to the Republic of México to meet statistically-determined needs for more effective language programs with a greater impact on a wider base of students, even including those beyond the "traditional" student. In trying to meet the objectives of our task--a model for the systematic development of a self-access program suited for those interested in applying English within the context of the tourist industry in Oaxaca--it seemed like a good idea to get at least some initial indications of the probable users of those programs.

Simply walking up to the tourism department offices a few blocks from the UABJO Language center and interviewing several of the young people doing their social service proved to be very illuminating for us. By asking them questions about their language needs and interests, plus how they might be able to include self-access study in their personal routines, we were able to discern several broad categories of potential students. Naturally, a spontaneous 15-minute survey is not a scientifically-based study, and we have no idea as to the actual numbers which might occur of our very tentative categories, plus any other categories which more careful consideration might help us generate, but we offer the following initial findings as the basis for the rest of our own work and as the basis of our recommendation that any institution seeking to develop its own self-access programs begin with some sort of statistically-based demographic breakdown of the student population it intends to serve.

#### INITIAL CATEGORIES FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

- A) Students currently studying tourism programs in vocational high school who are too young to be accepted for formal study in the university language center. They anxiously want to study

and practice more English. They do not feel that enough instruction is available in their school, and they also feel that their classes are far too crowded for the effective study of a foreign language. Some of them from outlying areas such as Suchilguitongo (25 Km from the center) and would find it difficult to enter formal classes on top of their schoolwork, social service and the demands of their daily commute.

- B) Students currently pursuing studies for their licenciatura en turismo degrees at the technological institute on some other university-level program who also want more English than their institutions offer. Some of these students are currently taking English classes at the UABJO center to supplement their academic programs, and they still feel the need for more "self-contained" (i.e., go in...do it...leave...carry on with other things) practice opportunities such as they imagine they could find at a self-access center.
- C) Students who have spent extensive periods of time living and/or studying abroad and have managed to acquire a sufficient control of conversational English that they feel awkward sitting through the demands of the traditional EFL classroom where their conversational skills may far outstrip those of their classmates. One respondent put it quite succinctly: "I want to study more English, but I don't want to study it in an English classroom".

We imagine that the several individuals we spoke with who could be placed in each of our rough categories are actually representative of substantial numbers of individuals if we begin to think in citywide, statewide or even nationwide terms. Likewise, even brief brainstorming can lead us to generate other categories of potential users of the self-access center: those who

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have gone beyond their social service requirements and are gainfully employed, those who are married and must juggle family responsibilities along with the demands of work and study, those who are returning to work and/or study after a long hiatus, those who have had no contact with english since secondary school (which they may or may not have finished). All of these potential categories must likewise be considered.

It would probably be profitable to visit all of the institutions which offer programs in any branch of tourist services to interview teachers, students and administrators. representative restaurants and hotels could also be visited. several professional associations such as CANTRAC (camara nacional de la industria de restaurantes y alimentos condimentados) have regional delegations in the central district of Oaxaca, and they could be approached for both qualitative and quantitative information that can support our decision-making process.

As we extend our considerations from the initial gathering of statistical information, we naturally come to the development of materials that will form an integral part of a systematic program designed to satisfy the expressed needs of our expected student population. We emphasize the need for a needs-based criteria from the beginning as we try to actually construct materials that will fill our center. If we can borrow an example from building construction as we think of construct materials for self-access study, let's think of those materials as tools.

In building construction, there is nothing inherently "wrong" with either hammers or screwdrivers...but one is bound to waste a lot of unrewarding time botching up jobs and damaging things if one insists upon pounding nails with screwdrivers.

In our self-access center we need some sort of flexible, dynamically growing system in order to be able to make informed choices at all levels and to help our students/self-access users make the most informed

choices that they can make. A system will help us select/create materials more efficiently, will help us guide our clients in the best, most productive uses of those materials, and will help both us and our clients evaluate the results of that use. In all of discussions of the development of a system, we shall try to relate our comments to our admittedly superficial treatment of english for tourism.

Faced with strict time constraints (as usual), limited funds (what else is new for educators?) and only scant information about the field of tourism itself (in spite of our "extensive" interviews with expert sources), it should not be surprising that we found it somewhat difficult to find abundant tourist-oriented materials in english in Oaxaca. A logical implication of this difficulty was that all materials that we could find and adapt to our uses should have a variety of graded exercise alternatives constructed around them so that we could extract maximum benefits from them and come "on line" within the parameters of our intensive seminar. While expediency demands this consideration of us, careful reflection leads us to the conclusion that there is an inherent value in this kind of multi-level use of materials: Each client can make his/her own decisions based on his/her immediate goals with the materials at hand. For example, this could conceivably include the possibility of repeating a just-completed set of exercises at a slightly higher level of proficiency, thus building on the familiarity with the materials and vocabulary/structures contained in them in order to self-push towards a higher level of competency in a skill area such as listening comprehension of requests for information from people speaking english with a variety of different regional accents, moods, etc. This was the main concern expressed by all of the people we interviewed and the main source of problems they encounter in their work.

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A FOOD GUIDE FOR TOURIST (Reading)

Prepare yourself: Before you read the article, check this list of topics. Mark the ones you think the article will mention.

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> waters  | <input type="checkbox"/> condiments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> museums | <input type="checkbox"/> prices     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> beaches | <input type="checkbox"/> spices     |

Typical Mexican food, and especially the regional cuisine of Oaxaca, is delicious...but spicy! It is therefore recommended that those who are not accustomed to eating spicy food eat it in moderation to avoid stomach irritation and other digestive problems during their stay. In every restaurant, ask if the dishes are spicy or not. There will probably be some small dishes with a variety of sauces and other condiments on your table. Most of these are very spicy! Sample them sparingly.

Many restaurants post their menu at the doors. A menu with prices must be on display inside the establishment. You can ask to see it before you are seated.

Wherever you go, it is important to drink only purified or boiled or bottled water. All of our finer hotels and restaurants have it. For your own comfort and convenience, make sure that you always ask for it. With these simple principles in mind, you can be sure that you will enjoy your stay here in Oaxaca. As we say here: Buen provecho! (It means: Enjoy your meal!)

Follow up: What are the main recommendations in the food guide for tourists? List them on a piece of paper. Which one do you think is most important? What other points can you add to the list? Can you make a list of specific foods you would and would not recommend to a tourist their first day in the city?

Practical Application: Here is a recipe for a simple omelette. Fill in the blanks with the verbs from the list below.

break make turn pour heat add put beat \_\_\_\_\_  
2 eggs and \_\_\_\_\_ them in a bowl. \_\_\_\_\_ them  
and \_\_\_\_\_ salt and pepper to taste. \_\_\_\_\_ a frying  
pan with a little butter or oil.  
when it is hot, \_\_\_\_\_ the egg mixture in. \_\_\_\_\_ sure  
the bottom doesn't burn. \_\_\_\_\_ it over when you can  
see that the bottom is golden brown.

Personal Extension: This is a very basic omelette. What is your favorite kind of omelette? What other ingredients would you add to make it more delicious? Imagine that you are owner of a restaurant. What kinds of omelettes would you offer on your menu? Which one would you select to be the specialty of the house?

Exercises for specific vocabulary: tourism (puede utilizar su diccionario)

Ordering Oaxacan Food: Language for ordering a simple meal.

preparation: Here is part of the typical menu of a Oaxaca restaurant.

<u>dishes</u>	<u>Hot drinks</u>
salted meat	chocolate
string cheese	coffee
egg bread	tea

Application: the items below are missing from the menu. Check any words you don't know in your dictionary. then write your own menu. You can add any other typical or special items that you can imagine. nice, chicken, soda, black beans, carrot juice, mixed salad, cake

Checking the tape: Robert McDonald is in the Oaxacan hotel, Mitla coffee shop. You will hear him ordering food and drinks from the waiter.

Listen to their conversation and write down what he orders. You can check your answers in the key. Here are some categories from the order slip to help you:

- appetizer? \_\_\_\_\_
- snack \_\_\_\_\_
- soft drink \_\_\_\_\_
- cold drink \_\_\_\_\_

Conversation Building: (reading)

Waiter: can I help you?  
 customer: may I have the menu, please?  
 waiter: certainly, here it is.  
 customer: I'd like some \_\_\_\_\_, please.  
                   or I'll have some \_\_\_\_\_, please.  
 waiter: Would you like anything else?  
 customer: yes, I'll have a cup of coffee, please.  
 waiter: sure. Regular or black?  
 customer: Black. and can you bring me the check?  
 waiter: of course. just a moment.  
 customer: thank you.  
 waiter: thank you. goodbye.

Extension: Create your own dialogues for the situations suggested below. (utilice las mismas expresiones o invente las suyas.)

place	situation
in the restaurant	ask for the menu
in the hotel coffee shop	order your favorite snack
in the hotel bar	order a drink
in the restaurant	ask for the check

TRAVELLING AROUND OAXACA

WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

INSTRUCCIONES: Lee la siguiente conversación, luego trata de hacer una similar, usando tu propio vocabulario.

"IN A TOURIST AGENCY"

Receptionist - Good morning ! may I help you?  
 Tourist - yes I would like to take some trips.  
                   what do you recommend?  
 Receptionist - well, would you like to take a trip to Huatulco beach?  
 Tourist - no, I wouldn't.  
 Receptionist - Well, what about walking and looking at some ruins or nature?  
 tourist - Yes, I think that's better.  
 Receptionist - Ok. you can visit Monte Alban. the fountain of the seven regions..

I.- Escoge palabras del recuadro al final de la página y forma un diálogo similar al diálogo de arriba. No uses todas las palabras del recuadro.

A.- Good morning ! may I \_\_\_\_\_  
 B.- Yes, I would like to \_\_\_\_\_  
                   what do you recommend?  
 A.- Well, \_\_\_\_\_  
 B.- \_\_\_\_\_  
 A.- Well, what about \_\_\_\_\_  
 B.- Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_  
 A.- Ok. \_\_\_\_\_

- |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| visit         | archeological ruins |
| walk around   | beaches             |
| take pictures | antiques stores     |
| go            | city                |
| suggest       | churches            |

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II.- ORAL PRACTICE:

INSTRUCCIONES: Pon en orden los enunciados en el diálogo de abajo, luego con un compañero practica el diálogo.

A	B
-Are you mark leblank?	-Not bad, but we had some
-And what about the tour guide?	difficulties with the car.
-How was your trip?	-Yes I did.
-Ok. something else?	-Yes I would like to go to
-Did you take some pictures?	Huatulco beach.
-Ok. would you like to do something tomorrow?	-No that's all. Thank you.
-You're welcome, see you then, bye.	-Bye.
	-Ten o'clock in the morning
	-Oh!, he's a nice person.

-what time?

-Yes, that's a right.

III.- LISTENING.

INSTRUCCIONES: Escucha el cassette y subraya las palabras que escuches.

-tour	-tree	-Mountain
-Guide	-ruins	-fountain
-trip	-church	-beach

IV.- WRITING PRACTICE.

INSTRUCCIONES: Elabora un dialogo como los anteriores. Usa palabras que te sean conocidas.

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