

GUÍA DOCENTE

A Practical Approach to the English-Speaking Cultures

Degree in Primary Teacher Training

Foreign Language (English) Specialization

Universidad de Alcalá
C.U. Cardenal Cisneros

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STUDY GUIDE

Subject:	A Practical Approach to the English-Speaking Cultures
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Language:	English

1. PRESENTATION

The Cardenal Cisneros University College, associated to the University of Alcalá, guarantees their students that, if due to sanitary demands, the competent authorities should suspend face-to-face teaching either partially or totally, their teaching plans will achieve their aims through blended teaching or full online teaching-learning methodology and assessment, and that we will retake face-to-face teaching as soon as these sanitary impediments should cease.

Culture has been defined as the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends on human beings' capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. Culture also includes beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a specific group. The concept of culture has evolved throughout time and, today, it is an umbrella term that means many different things to different people. In any case, the clothing, the food, the values, the laws, the beliefs, the music and the dance, the material things, the language, the art, the medicine, the common history, the kinship system, the stories, the cinema or the economic system of a group of people are part of their culture. Hence, not only States have their own national culture but also regions within countries, counties, ethnic, religious, or age groups, as well as families, have their own cultures. What is more, culture is constantly changing the same as people and places change constantly.

To understand a foreign culture implies that learners must be able to develop intercultural competence, an ability that consists in functioning effectively and achieving success in their

own culture and the newly acquired foreign one. Byram (1997) defined this competence as the ability to communicate and interact effectively in own and others' culture and proposed a model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) composed of five interdependent principles: a) attitudes, b) knowledge, c) skills of discovery and interaction, d) interpretation and relationship skills, and e) critical cultural awareness.

In the Spanish curriculum for Primary Education, the subject of English includes the knowledge of several cultural aspects of some English-Speaking countries. Therefore, students in the Degree of Primary Teacher Training should be previously acquainted with them. Moreover, this subject is concerned with the teaching of English through cross-curricular topics and bilingualism. Thus, this subject becomes necessary to understand the immense variety of cultures among the English-Speaking countries.

Therefore, students enrolled in this subject will make a try at what Spanish society demands from Primary teachers, namely, to teach English language and Social Sciences in English at bilingual schools and to integrate Culture as part of the English language curriculum. This is the reason why this subject aims at a) working on the students' communicative and thinking skills in an integrated way, as the CLIL¹ approach promotes, b) providing students with a general knowledge of and a practical approach to the most relevant cultural aspects of the most relevant English-Speaking countries, and c) developing the students' Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Regarding the level of English, students will be asked to work at a B2+ Level (Common European Framework of Reference)² and are expected to reach closer to a C1 throughout the course.

Prerequisites and Recommendations

It is required for students to:

- Have a minimum B2+ level.
- Be officially enrolled in the subject.
- Have an active and participative attitude along the course.
- Be committed to improving their level of English using all the possibilities offered both inside and outside the classroom.
- Work effectively both individually and in groups.

¹ CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning.

² The Common European Framework of Reference will be referred to as CEFR from now onwards. More information about the required competences for each level can be found here: http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/levels.html

2. COMPETENCES

According to the current legislation, at the end of this study programme students will be able to acquire the following:

Cross-Curricular Competences:

1. Promover el respeto a los derechos fundamentales y de igualdad entre hombres y mujeres. (CCC1³)
2. Promover el respeto y promoción de los Derechos humanos y los principios de accesibilidad universal y diseño para todos de conformidad con lo dispuesto en la disposición final décima de la Ley 51/2003, de 2 de diciembre, de Igualdad de oportunidades, no discriminación y accesibilidad universal de las personas con discapacidad. (CCC2)
3. Promover los valores propios de una cultura de paz y de valores democráticos. (CCC3)
4. Adquirir y comprender los conocimientos necesarios de las distintas áreas de estudio que conforman el título de tal forma que capaciten para la profesión de Maestro en Educación Primaria (CCC4).
5. Saber aplicar esos conocimientos al trabajo de una forma profesional, demostrando el dominio de las competencias mediante la elaboración y defensa de argumentos y resolución de problemas en dichas áreas de estudio (CCC5).
6. Ser capaces de recoger e interpretar datos relevantes de las distintas áreas de estudio y de emitir juicios que incluyan una reflexión sobre temas relevantes de índole socioeducativa, científica y ética. (CCC6)
7. Ser capaces de transmitir información, ideas, problemas y soluciones al personal especializado y vinculado con su formación, así como a personas cuya vinculación sea indirecta. (CCC7)
8. Adquirir las habilidades de aprendizaje necesarias para ampliar sus estudios con autonomía (CCC8).

Degree Own Competences

1. Diseñar, planificar y evaluar procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, tanto individualmente como en colaboración con otros docentes y profesionales del centro (DC2⁴).
2. Abordar con eficacia situaciones de aprendizaje de lenguas en contextos multiculturales y plurilingües. Fomentar la lectura y el comentario crítico de textos de los diversos dominios científicos y culturales contenidos en el currículo escolar (DC3).

³ CCC stands for Cross-Curricular Competence. The number corresponds to the order in which this information appears in the official documents describing the Degree Programme.

⁴ DC stands for Degree Competence.

3. Diseñar y regular espacios de aprendizaje en contextos de diversidad y que atiendan a la igualdad de género, a la equidad y al respeto a los derechos humanos que conformen los valores de la formación ciudadana. (DC4)
4. Mantener una relación crítica y autónoma respecto de los saberes, los valores y las instituciones sociales públicas y privadas. (DC8)
5. Reflexionar sobre las prácticas de aula para innovar y mejorar la labor docente. Adquirir hábitos y destrezas para el aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo y promoverlo entre los estudiantes. (DC10)
6. Conocer y aplicar en las aulas las tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación. Discernir selectivamente la información audiovisual que contribuya a los aprendizajes, a la formación cívica y a la riqueza cultural. (DC11)

Specific Competences Related to the English Specialization:

1. Acquire a good communicative competence (introduction to C1 CEFR) (SC1⁵).
2. Have an extensive training in the field of Foreign Language teaching at Primary Education level, considering both theoretical and practical implications (SC2).
3. Develop classroom research and reflection on the teaching-learning process in the Foreign Language classroom (SC3).
4. Be able to use the knowledge and procedures which truly contribute to autonomy in relation to professional practices and lifelong training (SC4).

3. CONTENTS

1. Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence
 1. National and Social Identities. Archetypes and Stereotypes. The Cultural Iceberg.
2. British Culture and National Cultures within the United Kingdom
 1. Britain, England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland
3. Cultures within the United States of America
 1. An American Way-of-Life.
 2. Culture & Many Cultures within the USA: Ethnic, Regional, Religious, Economic, Social, & Gender Cultural Varieties.
4. One Island, Two Countries: Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Irishness and Irish people around the World.
5. Cultures in Other English-Speaking Countries.
 1. The Commonwealth and their Wide Variety of Cultures.
 2. The English language around the World.

⁵ SC stands for Specific Competence related to the English Specialization.

Units	Total of ECTS credits and hours
Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence	1 ECTS (25 h)
Cultures within the United Kingdom	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)
Cultures within the United States of America	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)
Ireland and the Republic of Ireland	1 ECTS (25 h)
Cultures in Other English-Speaking Countries	1 ECTS (25 h)

4. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGY - FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

The teaching-learning methodology will be active and dynamic, having as its main aim to create a communicative atmosphere and to involve students actively in high-order thinking processes. Thus, students will be improving their competence in the English language as well as reflecting on this progress, enabling them to transfer their learning experience to their teaching practice.

Lessons will be structured throughout the term in three different ways:

1. **Whole-group sessions** will be carried out by using activities such as communication-based work (pair or group discussions), information searching, question answering based on different texts, and others, all aimed at consolidating the theoretical contents, and applying them to a practical context. Debates and oral presentations may also be carried out during this time. The work here will mainly be done individually and in small- to medium-sized groups.
2. **Practical lessons** will consist of activities such as problem solving, analysis of documents or other materials, practical workshops, discussion and analysis of activities, debates, research projects, oral defence of written assignments, and oral activities, such as presentations or simulations. During these sessions the work will be done individually, in pairs and small- to medium-sized groups.
3. **Seminars** are aimed at ensuring a more personalised attention to students, and will consist in meetings with the lecturer to have guidance for group-working in research projects or oral presentations. The work will be done in the groupings previously fixed.

Apart from the above detailed 48 hours of lesson attendance, students must also complete 102 hours of independent work at home, which can include finishing activities from class, preparing presentations, reading articles, doing some research, organising information, and revising the subject contents. Independent work can include two types of grouping and a wide variety of activities such as the following:

- **Group work:** designing teaching-learning activities, preparing oral presentations in group, or designing appropriate tools to carry out a task.
- **Individual work:** self-study, finishing activities from class, writing or reading articles or other texts, revising the subject contents, self-training in the development of the student's listening skills by using audio-visual and multi-media materials in English, designing slideshows, or completing rubrics reflecting on the whole process.

Finally, they could also attend **tutorial hours** to have their doubts answered by the lecturer.

4.1. ECTS Distribution

Total number of hours (6 ECTS): 150	
Number of hours of classroom attendance: 48	30 hours of whole-group lessons
	15 hours of practical lessons
	3 hours of seminars
Number of hours of independent learning: 102	102 hours

4.2. Methodological strategies, materials and didactic resources

Methodological strategies will be based on the CLIL approach, thus working on the 4 Cs: Cognition, Communication, Content, and Culture. Activities will be student-centred and based on cooperative and collaborative learning. Students are expected to develop critical awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence. They are also expected to use and improve their communicative skills in the English language, and to be able to promote them when working with Primary schoolchildren in the English classroom. The analysis and evaluation of didactic materials and oral presentations will be complemented with self-assessment and peer assessment of student-produced materials and oral presentations. The lecturer will act as a guide and facilitator and will foster student' reflection and creativity.

Students will handle a variety of materials, which will be available on our Virtual Community <http://edu.cardenalcisneros.es> as well as published material. This subject does not use a course book, but will take advantage of published books, journals, and articles, as well as school text books and Internet sources.

5.ASSESSMENT

In the following tables students can find the specific competences the subject deals with, the assessment criteria set and the appraisal criteria the lecturer will apply to measure these outcomes and, finally, the assessment system, divided into the tools which will be used. This table may serve as a guideline to know how the competences will be assessed.

Specific competence English Specialization	Acquire a good communicative competence (introduction to C1 CEFR) (SC1)
Assessment criteria	Acquisition of a communicative competence higher than a B2+ (CEFR).
Appraisal criteria	Demonstrating appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.

Specific competence English Specialization	Have an extensive training in the field of Foreign Language teaching at Primary Education level, considering both theoretical and practical implications (SC2)
Assessment criteria	Production of effective activities and/or lesson plans which go around cultural or intercultural topics.
Appraisal criteria	Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.

Specific competence English Specialization	Develop classroom research and reflection on the teaching-learning process in the Foreign Language classroom (SC3)
Assessment criteria	Development of a plan-do-review didactic strategy to integrate reflection and research as a fundamental component of good teaching.
Appraisal criteria	Effective integration of previously acquired knowledge and a plan-do-review teaching strategy in their work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process.

Specific competence English Specialization	Be able to use the knowledge and procedures which contribute to autonomy in relation to professional practices and lifelong training. (SC4)
Assessment criteria	Choice of appropriate materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set. Integration of previously acquired knowledge, such as classroom management techniques. Ability to work in groups effectively. Ability to manage own time in independent work effectively.
Appraisal criteria	Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set. Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge.

Appraisal criteria	Definition	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.	Shows a communicative competence which fulfills the requirements set for a B2+ level or higher	30
Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.	Designs and implements effective activities and/or lesson plans working with or around cultural or intercultural topics.	30
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set.	Selects materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set and is able to produce a justification to support this choice.	15
Effective integration of a plan-do-review teaching strategy in their work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process.	Reviews and implements effective activities and/or lesson plans working with or around cultural or intercultural topics. Evaluates one's own materials and teaching performance.	15
Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge.	Shows awareness of his/her learning as a whole and is able to link prior knowledge to new knowledge acquired. Evaluates peers' materials and teaching performance.	10
		100%

Report Criteria

Although **attendance** will not be marked, students who are unable to attend regularly and/or submit works within the submission deadline set should choose final assessment. If students submit **one assignment** in the continuous assessment evaluation, they cannot opt for the final assessment, even if this happens during the first two weeks of class.

Each of the **assessment tasks** in this subject is linked to the **attainment** of **linguistic and communicative goals** in the **Foreign Language (English)** which correspond to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages descriptors (B2+). If the attainment of these goals is not demonstrated, the assessment task will be considered not to have been passed.

The assessment system is articulated according to the current legislation established by the University of Alcalá. These regulations establish, among others, the following criteria:

1. This subject has one ordinary examination in January and another extraordinary examination in May.
2. **Ordinary examination** follows the criteria set in the continuous assessment system. To follow it, a minimum attendance to classes, a prompt submission of tasks and an appropriate attitude during the teaching and learning process are compulsory. Students who cannot cover this minimum must retake the subject in the extraordinary examination.

3. If any student cannot follow the continuous assessment system proposed for the ordinary examination, he/she should ask for a **final assessment** to the lecturer. This request must be asked in the **first two weeks of the term** and will be approved or rejected by the Academic Sub-Director.
4. An **extraordinary examination** is set for students who cannot attend classes or are unable to pass the ordinary examination. It is their own responsibility to contact the lecturer in order to know which the assessment tasks and exams are in order to pass.
5. Students whose request for final assessment has been approved should cover the same assessment criteria established to pass the subject as for the continuous assessment system and complete these assignments by using digital tools the lecturer will indicate. They will also be required to record videos to supply for their impossibility to carry out oral presentations in class.
6. In order to pass the subject, students must demonstrate through the above described assessment criteria that they have achieved all the competences established in this study guide. Students are **required to complete all the assessed work** presented in this study guide. This applies both to continuous and final assessment systems, and ordinary and extraordinary examination periods.
7. The description of both continuous and final assessment is detailed below.
8. To access more information on the University of Alcalá assessment regulations, visit: <https://www.uah.es/export/sites/uah/es/conoce-la-uah/organizacion-y-gobierno/.galleries/Galeria-Secretaria-General/Normativa-Evaluacion-Aprendizajes.pdf>

Continuous assessment – first call (ordinary and extraordinary)

All students will be asked to engage in oral presentations and micro-teaching activities. These will simulate teaching-learning situations students will need to cope with in the future. Whenever it is possible, schoolchildren will be invited to participate in these micro-teaching activities. Students will also complete written exams, oral and written activities, and research projects, including video-making.

Assessment tool Appraisal criteria	Written tasks	Oral presentations	Reflection tasks	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.	X	X		30
Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.	X	X	X	30
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set.		X	X	15
Effective integration of a plan-do-review teaching strategy in their work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process.	X	X	X	15
Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge	X		X	10
TOTAL	40%	40%	20%	100%

Notice that these percentages are approximate and can slightly vary depending on concrete circumstances; i.e.: the ratio of students per class, the average level of English of a given class, etc.

Final assessment – first call (ordinary and extraordinary)

Assessment tool Appraisal criteria	Written tasks	Oral tasks/ Defence before a tribunal	Reflection tasks (either oral or written)	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.	X	X		30
Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.	X	X	X	30
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set.		X	X	15
Effective integration of a plan-do-review teaching strategy in their work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process.	X	X	X	15
Development of cross-curricular skills	X		X	10

which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge				
TOTAL	40%	40%	20%	100%

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following references will constitute the basic bibliography for the course, and more specific references, journal articles, or Internet sources will be provided throughout the course.

Basic bibliography

Brocklehurst, R. (2008). *The Usborne History of Britain*. London: Usborne

This is a comprehensive compendium of British History, from prehistoric times to the turn of this millennium. It features internet links to additional resources, including video clips, games and interactive features.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Teaching English should prepare learners to have language fluency and accuracy, and also to speak with people with different cultural identities, social values and behaviours. This text aims to define precisely what competences are required, how these can be included in teachers' objectives and methods, and how the ability to communicate across cultural differences can be assessed.

Byram, M. (1988). *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters

This book deals with the acquisition of understanding of foreign cultures and peoples. It is also a study of the philosophy and purpose of language teaching in all its facets, in the context of foreign language teaching in secondary education. The book is an attempt to raise teachers' and learners' awareness of the full educational value of foreign language learning.

Byram, M., Nichols, A., & Stevens, D. (2001). *Developing Intercultural Competence in Practice*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters

Learning a language should not just involve linguistic competence but also intercultural competence, which can be developed through related subjects such as geography, history, mother tongue teaching. This book takes this as a given and provides practical help for teachers who wish to help their learners acquire intercultural competence in the ordinary classroom. It contains descriptions of lessons and materials from a wide range of classrooms in several countries and for beginners to advanced learners.

Crowther J. & Kavanaugh, K. (1999). *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*. Oxford: OUP.

A richly-illustrated source of information about everything that is important in British and American culture.

Dennis, A. (2003). *Spotlight on Australia*. New York: OUP

This book is an overview on Australia and offers insight into Australian life and culture.

Garwood, C., Gardani, G. & Peris, E. (1995). *Aspects of Britain and the USA*. Oxford: OUP.

This book is an intermediate level with a panoramic view of the people, geography, history and institutions of Britain and the USA.

Falk, R. (1994). *Spotlight on the USA*. Oxford: OUP.

This is an intermediate level reader with a region-by-region introduction to life in the USA. The book consists of high-interest reading passages on prominent regions across the US. It focuses on topics such as the history, geography, famous personalities, economics and culture of concrete regions. The book encourages cross-cultural comparisons and includes glossaries at the end of every unit.

Lindop, C. (1998). *Australia and New Zealand*. Oxford: OUP

This is an intermediate level reader that offers introductory information on these countries. It offers easy-to-read insight into these two fascinating countries.

Mauck, D. & Oakland, J. (2009). *American Civilization: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

This text provides the perfect background and introductory information on contemporary American life. It covers all the central dimensions of American society from geography and the environment, government and politics, to religion, education, media and the arts.

McCormack, W. J. (2001). *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture*. London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Blackwell Publishers.

This book provides insight into those subjects such as literature and political history. It features coverage of architecture, music, and painting with stress upon their European contexts.

McDowall, D. (1999). *Britain in Close-Up. An In-Depth Study of Contemporary Britain*. Harlow: Longman.

This book on contemporary Britain examines aspects of British society from government and politics, to culture and style.

Oakland, J. (2010). *British Civilization: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

This is an up-to-date, highly-readable exploration of British culture, media and the arts.

O'Driscoll, J. (2015). *Britain for Learners of English*. Oxford: OUP.

Students will understand the country and its people with this culture guide that gives a good insight into what it means to live in Britain today.

Tomalin, B. & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural Awareness*. Oxford: OUP.

This popular book gives teachers practical advice and guidance, along with resource ideas and materials for the English class with the aim of taking care about cultural differences. Tasks and activities are clearly presented, and offer teachers the information they need about level, time, preparation, materials, classroom management, monitoring, and follow-up activities.

Websites

There is quite an enormous amount of Internet resources to learn about the cultures in the English-Speaking world, among them, these will be widely used:

World Culture Encyclopaedia: <http://www.everyculture.com/>
Culture Glossary: http://www.laguardia.edu/intercultural/key_terms.htm#1
British: <http://www.britannia.com/history/h100.html>
British: <http://www.learnenglish.de/britishculture.html>
British: <http://ww.elc.britcoun.org>
British: <http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk>
British: <http://projectbritain.com>
British: <http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/festivals-and-holidays/>
English: <http://ww.englishculture.allinfoabout.com>
Scottish: <http://www.scotland.com/culture/>
Scottish: <http://www.scottish-at-heart.com/scotland-culture.html>
Welsh: <http://www.britannia.com/wales/culture1.html>
Irish: <http://www.mythicalireland.com>
Irish: <http://www.weleyjohnston.com/users/ireland.html>
Irish: <http://www.irishcultureandcustoms.com>
Irish: <http://www.surfnetkids.com/resources/ireland>
Irish: <http://irelandseye.com/aarticles/culture/index.html>
Irish: <http://www.irishindeed.com/index.htm>
US: <http://www.historychannel.com/>
US: <http://www.night.net/tucker/>
US: <http://www.ushistory.org/us/index.asp>
US: <http://www.usconsulate.org.hk/pas/kids/>
US: <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/index.cfm>
US: <http://education.byu.edu/diversity/culture.html>

All Web references were accessible at the time of publishing this study guide.