

STUDY GUIDE

A Practical Approach to the English-Speaking Cultures

Degree in Primary Teacher Training
Blended Learning
Foreign Language (English) Specialization
C.U Cardenal Cisneros
Universidad de Alcalá

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STUDY GUIDE

Subject:	A Practical Approach to the English-Speaking Cultures
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Degree:	Degree in Primary Teacher Training Blended Learning Foreign Language (English) Specialization
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Language:	English

1. PRESENTATION

Culture can be 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. Similarly, culture 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 different things to different people: the clothing, the food, the values, the laws, the beliefs, the music and dance, the material things, the language, the art, the medicine, the shared history, the kinship system, the stories, the economic system, and much more, of a group of people are part of their culture. Families, ethnic or religious groups, regions, countries, all have their own cultures. And besides all this, culture is not static, instead it is constantly changing as people and places change.

Thus, to understand a foreign culture implies that learners must be able to develop **intercultural competence**, which consists in effectively functioning and achieving success in their own culture and the foreign one. Byram (1997) defined this competence as the ability to communicate and interact effectively in our 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 cultural aspects of some English-speaking countries. Therefore, Primary Education teacher trainees should be previously acquainted with them. Moreover, this subject is concerned with the **teaching of English through cross-curricular topics and bilingualism**. In this subject, students will make a try at what Spanish society demands from Primary teachers: to teach **English** and **Social Science** (*Ciencias Sociales*) in English at bilingual schools. This is why this subject aims at a) working on the students' **communicative and thinking skills** in an integrated way, as the **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)** approach promotes, b) providing students with a **general knowledge** of and a **practical approach** to the most relevant cultural aspects of some English Speaking countries and c) developing the students' **Intercultural Communicative Competence**.

Regarding the level of English students will acquire, they will be asked to work at a minimum B2.2 Level (Common European Framework of Reference).

Prerequisites and Recommendations

It is required that students:

- Have a minimum B2 level.
- Are officially enrolled in the subject.
- Have an active and participative attitude during lessons.
- Are committed to improving their level of English using all possibilities offered both inside and outside the classroom.

2. COMPETENCES

Generic competences:

At the end of this study programme, students will be able to:

- 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).
- 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).
- 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).
- 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).
- Adquirir las habilidades de aprendizaje necesarias para ampliar sus estudios con autonomía (CCC8).

Degree competences:

- Diseñar y regular espacios de aprendizaje en contextos de diversidad que atiendan a las singulares necesidades educativas de los estudiantes, a la igualdad de género, a la equidad y al respeto a los derechos humanos (DC3).
- Fomentar la convivencia en el aula y fuera de ella y abordar la resolución pacífica de conflictos. Saber observar sistemáticamente contextos de aprendizaje y convivencia y saber reflexionar sobre ellos (DC4).
- Conocer las implicaciones educativas de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación y, en particular, de la televisión en la primera infancia (DC7).
- 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 en los estudiantes (DC11).

Specific competences:

At the end of the process students will:

1. Have an extensive training in the field of Foreign Language teaching at Primary Education, considering both theoretical and practical implications (SC2).
2. Be able to use the knowledge and procedures which contribute to autonomy in relation to professional practices and lifelong training (SC3).
3. Express, orally and in written form, using the foreign language (C9)

3. CONTENTS

UNIT 1: CULTURAL AWARENESS & INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Introduction to culture. Cultural stereotypes. Foreign language teaching-learning & cultural awareness. Intercultural Education. Culture in bilingual programmes & CLIL. Social trends about intercultural communication.

UNIT 2: CULTURE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Introduction to UK Geography. Multiculturalism, lifestyles & daily issues. History, myths & legends of the UK. Festivals, music, folklore, sports & traditions.

UNIT 3: CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction to USA Geography. Multiculturalism, lifestyles & daily issues. History, myths & legends of the USA. Festivals, music, folklore, sports & traditions.

UNIT 4: OTHER ENGLISH-SPEAKING CULTURES

Historic & cultural background. Some English-speaking countries: Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Nigeria, South Africa, etc. The Commonwealth of Nations.

Units	Total of credits and hours
1. CULTURAL AWARENESS & INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)
2. CULTURE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)
3. CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)
4. OTHER ENGLISH-SPEAKING CULTURES	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)

4. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGY - FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

Though online, the teaching-learning **methodology** will be **active and require student participation**, with the main aim of creating a **communicative** atmosphere in face-to-face sessions and involving students actively in **high-order thinking processes**. Thus, students will engage in improving their competence in the English language, as well as in reflecting on their own progress. This should enable them to transfer their learning experience to their teaching practice.

This subject combines face-to-face classes and tutorials with learning materials and technological tools which aid students in acquiring and constructing knowledge, working both autonomously and in groups, and communicating directly with the teacher and classmates.

Together with course materials, students will find activities with various objectives. The virtual platform, with various spaces and messaging systems, will enable cooperative group work.

The virtual community will serve students to communicate with the teacher and each other, receive necessary documentation, send completed tasks and have access to information about individual development and progression.

4.1. ECTS Distribution

Total number of hours (6 ECTS): 150	
Number of hours : up to 15 hours	Practical classes Face to face tutorials
Autonomous hours of working time on the student's part:	Up to 150 hours of autonomous working time

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 **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 children in the English classroom**. The analysis and evaluation of didactic materials and case studies will be complemented with **self-assessment** and **peer assessment** of student-produced materials and lesson simulations. The lecturer will act as guide and facilitator and 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.

5.ASSESSMENT

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 following tables show 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 equivalent to B2+ (CEFR) at least.
Appraisal criteria	Demonstrating appropriate, accurate and fluent English at a minimum 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 at a minimum B2.2 level.	Shows a communicative competence which fulfills the requirements set for B2.2 level	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 more than one assignment in the continuous assessment evaluation, they cannot opt for the final assessment, even if this happens during the first two weeks.

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/February and another extraordinary examination in May/June.
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 has to 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 what 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 this 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 in this study guide.
8. To access more information on the University of Alcalá assessment regulations, visit: <http://www.uah.es/es/admision-y-ayudas/grados/matricula/normativa-academica/#exámenes-y-calificaciones>

During all assessment tasks, the guidelines established in the University of Alcalá Coexistence Regulations must be followed, as well as the possible implications of irregularities committed during those tasks, including the consequences for committing academic fraud, according to the Disciplinary Regulations for Students of the University of Alcalá.

Continuous assessment – first call (ordinary and extraordinary)

All students will be asked to **engage in micro-teaching activities**. These will simulate teaching-learning situations students will need to cope with in the future. They will also complete **written exams, oral and written activities, and research projects**.

Assessment tool	Written tasks	Oral presentations	Reflection tasks	%
Appraisal criteria				
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level. Oral presentations, Handouts, Video-making, Essay, Written, Exam, Peer and Self-Assessment.	X	X		30
Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics. Oral presentations, Essay, Peer and Self-Assessment.	X	X	X	30
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set. Oral Presentations, Essay, Video-Making, Peer and Self-Assessment.		X	X	15
Effective integration of a plan-do-	X	X	X	15

review teaching strategy in their work. Oral Presentations, Essay, Video-Making, Peer and Self-Assessment. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process. Oral Presentations, Essay, Video-Making, Peer and Self-Assessment.				
Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge. Essay, Video-Making, Peer and Self-Assessment.	X		X	10
TOTAL	40%	40%	20%	100%

Appraisal criteria	Assessment tool			%
	Written tasks	Oral presentations	Reflection tasks	
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English at a minimum B2.2 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	Reflection tasks	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English at a minimum B2.2 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	35%	35%	30%	100%

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following references will constitute the basic bibliography for the course, and more specific textbooks or journal articles will be provided throughout the term for each of the units of the syllabus.

Basic bibliography

Bromhead, P. (1993). *Life in Modern Britain*. Harlow: Longman.

Designed for advanced students of English, this reader provides a source of information about present-day British life and institutions.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, England: 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.

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.

- 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 a particular region. The book encourages cross-cultural comparisons and includes glossaries at the end of every unit.
- 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. (2009). *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.
- Wesch, M. (2013). From Knowledgeable to Knowledge-able. In D. J. Cohen & T. Scheinfeldt (Eds). *Hacking the Academy: New Approaches to Scholarship and Teaching from Digital Humanities*. pp. 69-77. University of Michigan, Digitalculturebooks. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv65swj3.18>

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://www.elt.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://www.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>

Anglo-American: <http://www.holidays.net/>
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>