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INTRODUCTION: UNED DISTANCE LEARNING METHODOLOGY

“Nowadays we live in the digital era and the era of technology is turning our lives upside down at such a fast pace that it is a bit overwhelming for university students to decide on the relevant technology that can enhance their study habits, especially, if they are enrolled in a distance college.

The learning methodology found in the Spanish University of Distance Education (UNED) is based on the hypothesis that if students are able to make the most of the improvements which technology brings to their lives, they will improve if they use study materials that are related to their routine tasks on their laptops, smartphones, or tablets.

In fact, most online courses at UNED make use of electronic or digital materials that one not only can download online easily, but also read offline as well, provided that one has the right software installed on one’s computer, laptop or smartphone.

Besides, these online courses have many other advantages over traditional face-to-face lectures such as the promptness one gets from Internet, since there is no need to wait to receive anything, and study materials are easy to download without any delays.

The UNED platform ALF aims to allow students to: (i) have access to study materials; (ii) manage and share documents; (iii) upload timed online activities; and (iv) conduct a fluid communication with their teachers and classmates.

As any standard university, undergraduate students at UNED need to be finally examined through a final in-situ exam at a registered center. This is in fact a compulsory requirement to complete their degree subjects” (Escobar, 2016, page 45).

Source: Escobar Álvarez, M. A. (2016). “L2 English learning and performance through online activities: A case study”. In E. Martín Monje, I. Elorza & B. García Riaza (Eds.): *Technology-Enhanced Language Learning for Specialized Domains* (pp. 47-58). Devon (UK): Routledge Research in Education.



Exercise (see answers on page 249)

Exercise 1:

Choose the answer which you think is best according to the article.

- 1) The expression *to turn someone's life upside down* means that...
 - a) You are not affected by a give situation.
 - b) Your life changes completely.

- 2) What aspect of the learning methodology at UNED is emphasized in the second paragraph?
 - a) Its applicability across different devices.
 - b) Its effort.
 - c) Its price.
 - d) Its competitiveness.

- 3) Why do most online courses at UNED make use of digital materials?
 - a) Due to their university status.
 - b) Due to their price.
 - c) Because they can only be read offline.
 - d) Because they can also be read offline.

- 4) In the fourth paragraph of the text, it is argued that traditional face-to-face lectures have many advantages over online courses, since students can download study materials at any given time. True or false?
 - a) True.
 - b) False.



Notes



Glossary

nowadays	adv.	actualmente, hoy en día
to turn sth. upside down	v expr.	cambiar algo por completo
pace	n.	ritmo
overwhelming	adj.	abrumador, -a
to enhance	v.	mejorar, aumentar, realzar
to enroll	v.	inscribirse, matricularse
hypothesis (pl. hypotheses)	n.	hipótesis
task	n.	tarea, deber
in fact	adv.	de hecho, en realidad
as well	adv.	también
advantage	n.	ventaja
promptness	n.	rapidez, puntualidad
to aim (to)	v.	pretender, tener como objetivo
to allow	v.	permitir
to manage	v.	gestionar
standard	adj.	común, estándar
undergraduate student	n.	estudiante universitario
compulsory	adj.	obligatorio, -a
requirement	n.	requisito



Notes

Language Point: Nouns and Pronouns

1. COMMON NOUNS AND PROPER NAMES

- **Common nouns**

car, dog, chair (singular) → cars, dogs, chairs (plural).

milk, sugar, air, oil (substances with no plural form).

- **Proper names**

People: Mary, John, Susan, Philip.

Cities: London, Madrid, New York, Amsterdam.

Rivers and Lakes: The Thames, The Mississippi, The Rhine, Lake Erie.

Mountains: The Pyrenees, The Alps, Mt. Olympus, San Juan Hill.

Monuments: The Eiffel Tower, The Statue of Liberty, The White House,
The Golden Gate Bridge.

Schools and Universities: Cape Elementary School, Harvard University.

Subjects: Physics, Mathematics, Philosophy, Grammar.

Remember: Proper names with a capital letter.

2. PRONOUNS

Pay attention: Subject and object pronouns replace nouns that are either subjects or objects in the sentence.

Personal Pronouns: I, You, He, She, It, We, You, They.

Examples: **I** have a small cottage.

You have a dog.

He teaches English.

She works in London.

It is a big city.

We love chocolate.

You live in Madrid.

They are from Burgos.

Object Pronouns: me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them.

Examples: Mary likes **me**.

Peter likes **you**.

The children like **him**.
The child likes **her**.
The woman likes **us**.
The man likes **you**.
The boy likes **them**.

Pay attention: Possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns are two different ways to show possession in English.

Possessive Adjectives: my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their.

Examples: This is **my** book.
That is **your** book.
This is **his** book.
This is **her** magazine.
This is **its** leg.
These are **our** books.
These are **your** books.
Those are **their** books.

Possessive Pronouns: mine, yours, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs.

Examples: This book is **mine**.
That book is **yours**.
The book is **his**.
The magazine is **hers**.
These books are **ours**.
The books are **yours**.
Those books are **theirs**.



Notes



Exercises (see answers on pages 249-250)

Exercise 1:

Match the questions with the correct answers.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Who are you? | a) I rent a small cottage in Poole. |
| 2) Where do you live? | b) I go to the South of England. |
| 3) Where do you work? | c) I teach English. |
| 4) What do you teach? | d) I work at the Museum of Arts. |
| 5) Where do you go on holidays? | e) I live in Madrid. |
| 6) Do you have a house there? | f) I am Linda. |

Exercise 2:

Use the correct personal pronouns to replace the words in brackets.

- 1) _____ is dreaming. (Mary)
- 2) _____ is green. (The tree)
- 3) _____ are on the wall. (The pictures)
- 4) _____ is running. (The cat)
- 5) _____ are watching TV. (My friend and I)
- 6) _____ are in the parking. (The cars)
- 7) _____ likes his bike. (Tom)

Exercise 3:

Turn the subject pronoun into the corresponding object pronouns by filling the blanks in the following examples.

- 1) I → Peter likes _____.
- 2) You → Molly invited _____.
- 3) She → Sue knows _____.
- 4) He → John and Peter visited _____.
- 5) It → Anne bought _____ in the shop.
- 6) We → The inspectors asked _____.
- 7) You → The neighbors saw _____ in the party.
- 8) They → My parents listened to _____.

Exercise 4:

Possessive Adjective or Possessive Pronoun? Fill in the gaps with the corresponding pronoun.

- 1) I → _____ dog is big.
- 2) You → _____ car is new.
- 3) She → The brown cat is _____.
- 4) He → The house is _____.
- 5) It → _____ tail is short.
- 6) We → The children are _____.
- 7) You → The problem is _____.
- 8) they → _____ sister works downtown.

1. READ THROUGH THESE DEFINITIONS AND FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE CONVERSATION BELOW BETWEEN A CLERK AND A STUDENT WHO WANTS TO ENROLL AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Definitions

Dorm: a college or university building containing living quarters for students. Also dormitory, residence hall, students residence, hall (of residence).

Campus: the grounds and buildings of an institution, especially a college, a university or other institution of learning, a hospital, or a corporation. Plural: campuses.

To register: to enroll officially or formally, especially in order to vote or attend classes.

Majors: a field of study chosen as an academic specialty.

Programmes: syllabuses or curricula.

Class: a group of students who are taught together, usually at a regularly scheduled time and in the same subject.

Cafeteria: a dining area, at a school or office building, where meals may be purchased or brought from home and eaten.

College: incorporated within a university, an institution of higher learning that grants the bachelors degrees in liberal arts or science or both.

University: an institution for higher learning with teaching and research facilities, typically including a graduate school and professional schools that award master's degrees and doctorates and an undergraduate

division that awards bachelor's degrees.

Credits: official certification or recognition that a student has successfully completed a course of study.

Professor: a college or university teacher who ranks above an associate professor.

Teacher: a person whose occupation is teaching others especially children.

Club: a group of people organized for a common purpose, especially a group that meets regularly.

Honour societies: an organization to which students are admitted in recognition of academic achievement.

Greek life: social organization at a college or university, traditionally consisting of students and designated by Greek letters.

Fraternity: social organization at a college or university, traditionally consisting of male students and designated by Greek letters.

Sorority: social organization at a college or university, traditionally consisting of female students and designated by Greek letters.

Tuition: a fee for instruction, especially at a college, university, or private schools.

Fee: a fixed sum charged, as by an institution or by law, for a service or privilege.





Loan: a sum of money that is lent, usually with an interest fee.

Scholarship: financial aid provided for a scholar because of academic merit.

Facilities: a building, room, array of equipment, or a number of such things, designed to serve a particular function.

Library: a place in which reading materials, such as books, periodicals, and newspapers, and often other materials such as musical and video recordings, are kept for use or lending.

Freshman: a student in the first year-class of a high school, college, or university.

Sophomore: a second-year student in a US college.

Junior: a student who is in the third year of a US high school or college.

Senior: a student in the fourth year of a college.

Trimester: one of the three terms into which an academic year is divided in some universities and colleges.

Quatrimester: one of the two terms into which an academic year is divided in some universities and colleges.

Semester: one of the two divisions of twelve to eighteen weeks each of an academic year in some universities and colleges.



Exercise (see answers on page 250)

Conversation 1:

Fill in the blanks.

CLERK: Good morning, how can I help you?

STUDENT: I would like to know how to (1) _____ for classes? Online or in person?

CLERK: You can register both ways. The deadline is the 1st of August.

STUDENT: I spent my (2) _____ year at Cornell, so I would like to transfer my first-year credits to Harvard. How can I do that?

CLERK: Just send an application form with your transcripts.

STUDENT: OK, thanks. But, first, I'd like to know about the prerequisites for certain (3) _____ and (4) _____.

CLERK: No problem. You can find all that in the (5) _____ and (6) _____ online. You will see that most subjects are divided into two terms, that is (7) _____ from September to December and from February to June with a special winter term consisting of three weeks in January.





STUDENT: Where can I buy books?

CLERK: You can buy all your books at the university bookstore at an exorbitant price or you can borrow them from the (8) _____.

STUDENT: Where exactly is the library?

CLERK: It's very easy. Here, take a (9) _____ map so you can find all the buildings.

STUDENT: By the way, I'd also like to know how to get involved in other campus activities such as honour societies and (10) _____.

CLERK: Sure, are you not interested in Greek life? We have a large variety of (11) _____ and (12) _____ where students can participate in a variety of fun and rewarding activities.

STUDENT: And what about housing? My home is too far away to commute to campus every day.

CLERK: We can provide you with a room in a (13) _____. They are comfy and well-equipped.

STUDENT: Can you also tell me about the meal plans?

CLERK: Sure. We have several (14) _____. You can bring your own food and eat it there or buy food there at a very low cost. You can also buy meal plans that include a certain number of meals per week each semester.

STUDENT: Talking about costs, aside from tuition, do I have to pay for room and board?

CLERK: Yes, but if you are short of money, you can apply for (15) _____ and financial aid, which will certainly help you with your payments.

STUDENT: Is it easy to reach a professor with questions about class?

CLERK: Absolutely, our teaching staff are really accessible. Academic advising is one of our quality features at Harvard. We also provide our students with medical check-ups, fitness facilities...



Notes

2. NICKY WILLIAMS IS A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD ENGLISH STUDENT WHO LIVES IN MANCHESTER. HER YOUNGER SISTER PAT ASKS HER ABOUT WHAT SHE DOES AT SCHOOL. ANALYSE VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSIONS. YOU CAN WRITE ANOTHER CONVERSATION FOLLOWING THIS PATTERN

PAT: Why is sixteen such an important age for you at school?

NICKY: Because I have to decide which course I will take in order to pass the exams that will allow me to go to university.

PAT: What are your subjects this year?

NICKY: My subjects are Spanish, French, English, History, Latin, Mathematics, Web Design and Physical Education. But I'm mostly interested in modern languages.

PAT: You seem very busy. What is your timetable?

NICKY: I have classes from 9 to 12:30, with only one break of a quarter of an hour at 11 o'clock. At 12.30 there is a longer break for lunch. Most of the students stay at school and have lunch there, but some of them, who live nearby, go home and come back in an hour's time. Classes are resumed at 1:30 and they go on until 4:00 o'clock.

PAT: Oh, and what about sports?

NICKY: I have Physical Education classes two afternoons a week, either in the gymnasium or on the playing fields.

PAT: But you also belong to the school football team.

NICKY: Yeah! And we have organized a league with the students from other schools, and we play a match every Saturday. You know, sometimes my teammates and I stay on in order to train for the next match.

PAT: Tell me about your youth club.

NICKY: My friends and I usually meet there two or three evenings a week. The club is a lively place, and there is always a lot of things to do there. We spend lots of time listening to music, playing videogames or just talking. Since many members of the youth club are girls, we very often dance to music.

PAT: But you also like painting, don't you?

NICKY: Absolutely. One of my hobbies is painting and I spend a great deal of my time at the club painting posters. Some boys and girls take painting very seriously and have long discussions about art.

PAT: Oh, Nicky, when do you do your homework?

NICKY: Easy! After 4 o'clock when I arrive home. I go straight to my bedroom to study the lessons for the next day.

PAT: Nice! I do really love when the whole family has dinner together in the evening. I want to be like you when I am older.

3. READ AND LISTEN TO THIS CONVERSATION BETWEEN A UNED PROFESSOR AND A STUDENT. ANALYSE VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSIONS. YOU CAN WRITE ANOTHER CONVERSATION FOLLOWING THIS PATTERN

STUDENT: Good morning, Professor Johnson.

PROFESSOR: Good morning, Mr Smith.

STUDENT: I'm in my senior year and I'd like to know about the "must do's" or compulsory subjects for the English Studies degree.

PROFESSOR: Of course, to earn your degree you must take all the subjects indicated in our guidelines. You can find them online.

STUDENT: I'd like to focus on English Literature. How many subjects do I have to study?

PROFESSOR: Our course of study focuses on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and it's divided into two semesters. We deal with drama, novel, essay and poetry.

STUDENT: How can I obtain the books and other materials?

PROFESSOR: All the recommended texts are online but if you prefer printed versions you can purchase them at the bookshop or on the Internet.

STUDENT: I'm worried about how I'm going to be assessed.

PROFESSOR: I know exams are horrible but they have to be done. Like I said, the subject is divided into two semesters, four units each. Then, you'll have two exams, one in February and another one in June.

STUDENT: Can I also write papers?

PROFESSOR: Of course you can. You'll have the opportunity to see what the exam is like if you write a couple of Continuous Assessment Tests. That way you can do some research on the subject.

STUDENT: And what about electives?