

THE MONTHLY

# NETWORKER

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## WORDS FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

We welcome the 2025 school year with great enthusiasm and optimism. It was truly a pleasure to witness the energy and dedication of both teachers and students on the first day at the schools we, the leadership team, visited. This spirited start fills us with hope and inspires confidence that this positive attitude will carry through the entire school year.

I want to reaffirm my commitment to continuing the established English programs to ensure that our students attain a high level of proficiency in the language—an essential tool for their academic and professional growth. At the same time, we have a valuable opportunity to enrich the educational experience through interdisciplinary projects. The collaboration between early childhood education and technology, combined with an integrated approach to natural sciences, fosters a more comprehensive and engaging learning process.

The effort invested in these initiatives will be key to achieving the high educational standards we strive for. Equally important is raising awareness about the implementation of the new competency-based curriculum—particularly in the teaching and learning of English. Helping teachers understand its significance and how it aligns with the evolving needs of education will be crucial. Taking time to reflect on what has been learned and making necessary adjustments will ensure the curriculum's effectiveness.

All of this is possible through the collective efforts we bring to our work. That is why I encourage you to continue going the extra mile with the passion and dedication that define English language teachers, knowing that we are shaping the professionals of tomorrow.

With all my best wishes,

**Ms. Davina Cole**

## LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Welcome to another issue of The Monthly Networker! We've put together a selection of articles that will give you practical ideas and new perspectives to consider in your teaching practice.

This edition features an article on how to use Bloom's Taxonomy to enrich lesson planning and support student growth. We also discuss gamification using Blooket, which has proven to be an effective tool for teaching English to students with special educational needs. Additionally, we take a closer look at building competency through collaboration, with insights on how working together can make a real difference in the classroom.

We're happy to share a recap of the Summer Institute held in Colón and Chiriquí. These events gave teachers a chance to exchange ideas, strengthen professional ties, and gain practical skills to use in their classrooms. Be sure to check out Meet Our Team and Profile of the Month to learn more about the dedicated educators who make our community strong.

Lastly, I want to remind you to stay connected through the English Network on Teams. It's a space where you can share experiences, access useful resources, and keep up with what's going on. Your participation helps build a stronger community. Thank you for being part of the network.

Happy reading!

*Raul Sieiro*  
Editor, The Monthly Networker

## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

SUMMER INSTITUTE RECAP:  
COLÓN AND CHIRIQUÍ REGIONS

The Summer Institute in the Colón and Chiriquí regions offered English teachers valuable training on teaching strategies, digital tools, and curriculum updates.

**Colón: Week Three Recap**

In Colón, the third week kicked off with questions about digital teaching tools and a preview of next year's curriculum. Teachers, despite having completed two demanding weeks already, remained engaged and curious. They quickly recognized the potential of integrating technology into their lessons but also expressed some uncertainty about aspects of the new curriculum. The week ended on a positive note, with encouraging feedback and motivated participants.

**Chiriquí: Building Connections and Skills**

Chiriquí hosted 26 groups of English teachers, bringing together around 620 participants. The training sessions focused on social-emotional aspects in the classroom and the key features of the new English curriculum.

Based on reports from facilitators, there were many examples of camaraderie among participants. One standout moment was when Leonel Miranda from Bocas de Remedio and Siomara Saldaña from Escuela Urracá resolved connectivity issues by setting up their own internet equipment. Their quick thinking ensured everyone could practice with the digital tools as planned.

Another highlight was the strong sense of collaboration among participants. Teachers shared strategies for developing grammar and communication skills, including a curated list of 150 free tools for creating educational materials. Breaks allowed participants to relax and connect with colleagues over coffee, sharing stories and experiences. At the end of the week, many formed a WhatsApp group to continue exchanging resources and offering support beyond the event.

The Summer Institute strengthened professional connections and reinforced practical skills. Teachers from both regions showed a commitment to growth and collaboration, leaving better prepared for the new school year.



## TIPS &amp; BEST PRACTICES

## IMPLEMENTING BLOOM'S TAXONOMY IN THE CLASSROOM

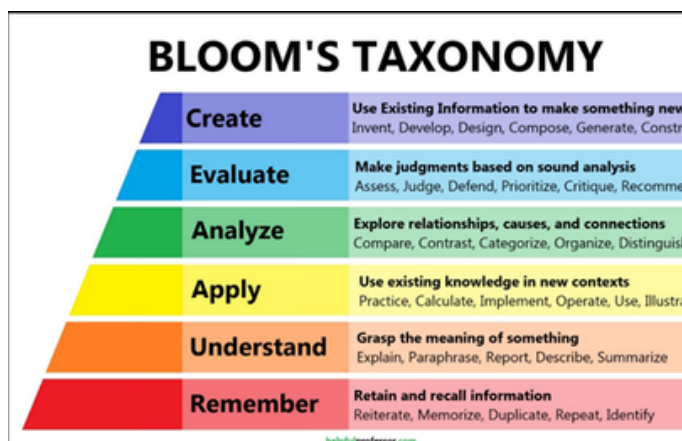
By Zulimar González

In the 21st century, educators are responsible for preparing students to thrive in a complex, interconnected world. This requires teaching higher-level thinking skills that align with modern demands—skills that Bloom's Taxonomy helps develop.

Created by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom in 1956 and revised in 2001 by Anderson and Krathwohl, Bloom's Taxonomy classifies cognitive skills into six levels: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create. It serves as a practical framework for planning lessons, assessing progress, and fostering critical thinking.

### Bloom's Taxonomy supports teachers by:

1. Guiding lesson planning: It ensures lessons address a full range of cognitive skills, from memorization to complex analysis and creation.
2. Promoting meaningful learning: Encourages students to move beyond memorization to understanding and applying concepts, fostering critical thinking.
3. Facilitating assessment: Helps design questions and tasks that evaluate various cognitive levels, providing clearer insights into student progress.
4. Encouraging differentiation: Supports diverse learning styles and paces by allowing tailored instruction based on students' cognitive levels.
5. Developing higher-order skills: Prepares students to analyze, evaluate, and create—crucial for academic and professional success.



### Practical Applications in the Classroom

- **Question Design:** Use verbs like “identify” (Remember), “explain” (Understand), “solve” (Apply), “compare” (Analyze), “justify” (Evaluate), and “create” (Create) to structure questions that build cognitive skills.
- **Learning Activities:** Integrate debates (Evaluate), case studies (Analyze), creative projects (Create), and hands-on experiments (Apply) to challenge students at various levels.
- **Continuous Assessment:** Design assessments that test understanding and application across multiple cognitive levels, ensuring well-rounded learning.

Bloom's Taxonomy remains a vital tool for modern educators, offering a dynamic framework to enhance teaching and learning. By integrating it into classroom planning, teachers promote deep, critical, and practical learning, preparing students for future challenges.

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TES: How to Use Bloom's Taxonomy in the Classroom

Anderson, L. W., Krathwohl, D. R., & Bloom, B. S. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. New York: Longman.



## GAMIFICATION BLOCKET: A TOOL FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

By Mixiuris Madelen Maltez

Teaching English to students with special educational needs is a challenge faced by many educators today. Some students in the classroom require significant or minor adaptations based on their medical diagnoses. However, the lack of awareness about these needs often negatively impacts the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.

There are methods that English teachers can use to promote language acquisition and develop fundamental communication skills, such as oral expression and listening comprehension. Among these methods, gamification emerges as an invaluable tool, especially for educators working with students who need additional support.

Before implementing gamification, it is crucial to establish clear instructions so students understand the goals and procedures. The learning environment should also be safe, motivating, and visually stimulating. Incorporating multisensory activities and differentiating instruction are essential elements that contribute to meaningful learning experiences.



Once students are actively engaged in the learning process, gamification strategies can be introduced to reinforce the material presented. One effective example is Blooket, an educational platform that enables the creation of competitive games featuring multiple-choice questions. These games not only captivate students but also enhance their learning experience. Additionally, teachers can use Blooket to provide constructive feedback and more dynamic assessments.



To create a sense of security and comfort, it is helpful to establish consistent routines and structured activities. A practical framework might include vocabulary, grammar, and interactive or multisensory activities, followed by a digital tool that adds an element of surprise, competition, and motivation. Alongside Blooket, other platforms like Nearpod, Kahoot, Quizizz, Educandy, and Edpuzzle can also be integrated into lessons.

Teaching students with special educational needs requires dedication, quality engagement, and ongoing professional development. It is essential to continuously seek out effective strategies and innovative tools to make the language acquisition process more enjoyable and supportive for all learners.

### References

- *Nominis (n.d.). 10 ways to teach English to children with special educational needs in primary school. Retrieved from:*
- *Teaching students with special educational needs requires dedication, quality engagement, and ongoing professional development. It is essential to continuously seek out effective strategies and innovative tools to make the language acquisition process more enjoyable and supportive for all learners.*
- *Fundación Querer (n.d.). The implementation of English in special education: The challenge lies in adapting the content to their pace. Retrieved from:*
- *Teaching students with special educational needs requires dedication, quality engagement, and ongoing professional development. It is essential to continuously seek out effective strategies and innovative tools to make the language acquisition process more enjoyable and supportive for all learners.*

## BEHIND THE SCENES

## EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: BUILDING COMPETENCY THROUGH COLLABORATION

By Professor Vanessa A. Quintero M.

A recent seminar brought together over 400 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers from the province of Chiriquí, overcoming challenges like connectivity issues to provide valuable professional development. Organized by the National Directorate of Foreign Language Teaching in collaboration with regional education leaders, the event united teachers from diverse backgrounds—ranging from remote rural areas to urban schools and indigenous communities like Ngäbe-Buglé—all committed to enhancing language instruction and student success.

Socio-emotional learning took center stage as a key theme, emphasizing its role in fostering a positive classroom climate. Teachers explored strategies to boost students' empathy, communication, and resilience, reinforcing the idea that emotional well-being significantly influences academic performance.

On the second day, digital tools such as Jeopardy, Blooket, and Bamboozle were introduced as innovative language teaching aids. These platforms empower teachers to create interactive and engaging lessons, even in resource-constrained environments. Educators recognized the potential of integrating technology to make learning more dynamic and accessible, particularly for students in remote areas where traditional teaching methods face unique challenges.

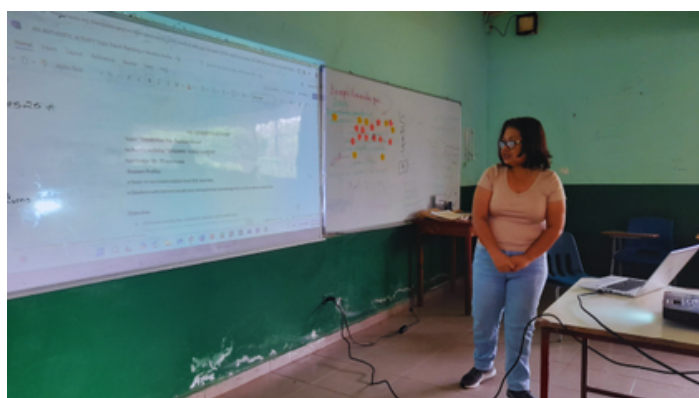
Motivation and assessment also emerged as prominent topics of discussion. Teachers examined how to design meaningful, relevant learning opportunities that inspire students' intrinsic motivation. The seminar emphasized shifting toward formative assessments and alternative evaluation methods beyond conventional testing, encouraging educators to view assessments as tools for growth rather than just performance metrics.

One of the seminar's most impactful elements was the examination of Panama's newly implemented competency-based and multidisciplinary curriculum. This innovative approach seeks to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills by integrating English instruction with other subjects and real-world applications.



Through practical exercises, teachers discussed how to align their lessons with this new educational framework. The seminar highlighted the unwavering commitment of Panamanian educators to advancing the nation's educational system. Whether teaching in accessible urban centers or remote rural areas, these educators demonstrated perseverance, responsibility, and a shared vision of improving English language instruction.

Their dedication to holistic learning, openness to new methods, and readiness to embrace technology reflect a collective effort to foster meaningful educational change and overcome challenges.



## THE ROAD TO IMPLEMENTING A NEW CURRICULUM

**MAXIMIZING LEARNING POTENTIAL: THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF SMART OBJECTIVES IN EDUCATION***By Claudia De León*

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, the educational landscape is evolving to meet the diverse needs of learners. As educators, we are tasked with not only teaching content but also preparing students for real-world challenges. Enter the new English curriculum—an innovative framework designed to equip students with essential skills while enhancing their language competencies. At the heart of this curriculum lies a powerful strategy: SMART objectives.



**SMART** objectives serve as a roadmap for teachers and students, providing clear expectations for what needs to be accomplished in a lesson. When crafting a SMART objective, educators should consider three key questions:

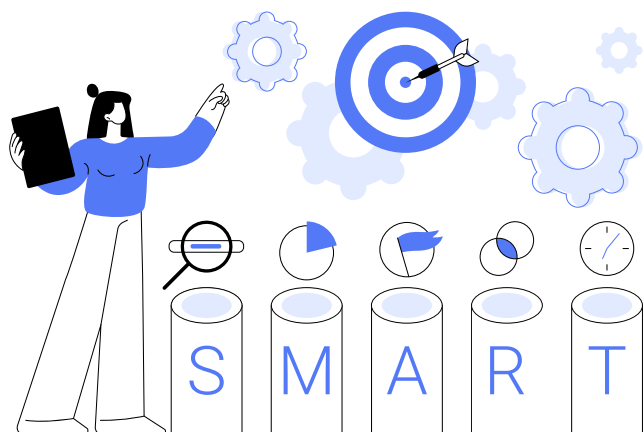
1. What language (linguistic competencies) will students use?
2. How will students use the language (pragmatic competencies)?
3. In what kind of activity will they demonstrate this learning to achieve their outcome?

By answering these questions, teachers can develop precise objectives that guide instruction and assessment.

**Why SMART Objectives Matter**

Using SMART objectives makes teaching and learning easier because:

- Students understand exactly what they need to do.
- Teachers can track progress and make adjustments.
- Lessons are more structured and effective.

**Step-by-Step Guide to Refining SMART Objectives in English Language Teaching****Step 1: Present the General Objective**

A general objective might look like this: 'Learners will improve their speaking skills.' While this provides a broad goal, it is not yet **SMART**. Let's refine it step by step.

**Step 2: Make It Specific and Student-Centered**

To make the objective specific, we need to clarify exactly what students will do. For example: 'Students will participate in structured dialogues to practice using comparative adjectives.'

This change makes the objective more actionable and student-centered.

**Step 3: Make It Measurable**

Adding measurable elements helps determine if the objective has been met. For example: 'Students will participate in at least three structured dialogues using at least two comparative adjectives correctly.' Now, we can assess their progress based on a clear target.

**Step 4: Make It Achievable**

Ensuring that the objective is appropriate for students' abilities is essential. For younger learners, it may be more realistic to focus on using simple comparative structures rather than complex sentence formations. An achievable version might be:

## THE ROAD TO IMPLEMENTING A NEW CURRICULUM

**Step 5: Make It Realistic**

Connecting the objective to students' real lives makes learning more meaningful. For example: 'Students will compare familiar objects in the classroom using comparative adjectives in structured dialogues.

This adjustment helps learners see the relevance of the lesson in their everyday environment.

**Step 6: Make It Time-Bound**

A time-bound objective sets a clear timeframe for completion. For example: By the end of the lesson, students will complete three structured dialogues using at least two comparative adjectives correctly.

This ensures that the objective remains focused and can be achieved within the allocated class time

The integration of **SMART** objectives into the new English curriculum is not just a step forward; it represents a significant leap towards fostering student success in an evolving educational landscape. By crafting goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound, we not only clarify expectations but also enhance the learning experience, making it more engaging and relevant for our students. By prioritizing these well-structured objectives, we equip our students with the skills and competencies they need to thrive not just academically, but also in real-world applications.

*\*\*Extracted from the script content for the Introduction to the Lesson Planning and Competency-Based Curriculum session.*

## SPOTLIGHT SECTION

**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL AT SEBASTIAN PINZON BILINGUAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The first day of school at Sebastian Pinzon Bilingual School in Herrera, was filled with energy, smiles, and the promise of a fantastic year ahead. Students and staff alike kicked off the new school year with great enthusiasm. The school welcomed back familiar faces and introduced new ones, creating an atmosphere of warmth and excitement.

Teachers and staff were eager to reconnect with returning students and meet newcomers, offering a supportive and welcoming environment from the moment the school bell rang. Special moments were captured throughout the day, including a heartwarming picture of preschool teacher Cristian Castillo and his young students as they began their learning journey together.

The day was filled with laughter, learning, and the anticipation of the experiences that will shape the year to come. It's clear that this school year at Sebastian Pinzon Bilingual School is off to an incredible start!



**Sebastian Pinzon bilingual elementary school**



# WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL





## MEET OUR TEAM

**MIGUEL ESCARTÍN***English Regional Supervisor for Panamá Norte*

**Miguel A. Escartín R.** is a dedicated educator and lifelong advocate for the transformative power of education. With a bachelor's degree in humanities specializing in English and English Translation, he has pursued



advanced studies, including a doctorate in education, to continuously improve his teaching practices and better serve his community.

As an English Supervisor, Miguel focuses on raising the quality of English instruction, working closely with teachers to enhance teaching methods and language proficiency. His mentorship and support inspire educators to adopt innovative strategies that benefit students' language development and overall academic success.

Miguel believes in fostering a supportive, failure-free learning environment that encourages students to take risks and grow without fear of judgment. This philosophy has proven effective at various educational levels, from preschool to university, creating inclusive spaces where students feel valued and empowered.

His international experience—studying and teaching in Washington and Arizona—has enriched his approach to education, allowing him to integrate diverse perspectives and methodologies into his work. This global outlook has positively impacted the local community by promoting a more inclusive and culturally aware learning environment.

Miguel's commitment to education and his impactful contributions have been honored with the prestigious Manuel F. Hurtado Order. His work exemplifies the power of dedication and leadership in shaping educational opportunities that empower students and strengthen the community.

## PROFILE OF THE MONTH

**HARRY DUNCAN***English Professor at C.E.B.G. John F. Kennedy*

Professor Harry Duncan has been an English teacher for over 7 years, and he is currently working at C.E.B.G. John F. Kennedy. His methodology has been driven by a passion for creating meaningful conversations in English during classes. Mr. Duncan's philosophy revolves around a conversational approach, rooted in constructivism and significant learning.

He is always looking for students to engage in discussions and relate content to their own experiences, they not only grasp the material better but also develop critical thinking skills.

He has contributed to validating the new English curriculum, led seminars on early childhood education focused on English, and facilitated the "Towards an Interdisciplinary Competency-Based Education" seminar, promoting innovative teaching practices.

His impact on students and colleagues is what he cherishes most. Prof. Harry strives to create a supportive learning environment, encouraging students to express their thoughts and collaborate with each other. It's rewarding to see them flourish as confident communicators.

Outside of the classroom, his first priorities are being a good husband and father. He's led a disciplined life, practicing martial arts regularly and engaging in physical fitness, which keeps him grounded and energized.

## RESOURCE CORNER

## BOOST YOUR ENGLISH SKILLS WITH DUOLINGO: A DAILY PRACTICE TOOL

By María del Pilar Guerra

Learning English can feel overwhelming at first, but incorporating daily practice makes a big difference. One effective tool for beginners is the Duolingo app, designed to make language learning easy and fun.

Duolingo offers interactive lessons that focus on building vocabulary and grammar skills. The app's bite-sized exercises are perfect for developing a consistent study habit without feeling overloaded. Plus, the gamified approach; complete with points, levels, and achievements; keeps learners motivated.



One of the app's standout features is instant feedback, allowing students to correct mistakes as they go. This reinforces accurate pronunciation and grammar, helping build confidence from the start.

Additionally, Duolingo uses voice recognition technology to practice speaking, ensuring that pronunciation gets just as much attention as reading and writing.

The best part? Duolingo is free to use, with most features available without a subscription. This makes it an accessible tool for students at any level. By dedicating just a few minutes a day to practice, beginners can make steady progress and gain confidence in their English skills.

Start building your English skills today, download Duolingo and see how daily practice can make a difference!



## THUMBS UP

More than 900,000 students and 50,000 teachers kicked off the 2025 school year with excitement and dedication!

March 10th was a true celebration of education across the country, filled with energy and pride during civic ceremonies in all 16 academic regions.

We're more committed than ever to delivering quality education and achieving our goals!



## FUN FACT

The Panama Canal, completed in 1914, is one of history's greatest engineering feats—and it operates without pumps! Instead, it relies entirely on gravity to move water through its locks, raising and lowering ships with water from the higher-elevation Gatun Lake.

Pretty cool, right? 😊



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*Inspiring*  
**EXCELLENCE**  
*in every*  
*lesson!*