trabajando en obras teatrales de carácter naturalista, será de vital importancia concretar lo mejor posible aquellos aspectos de la vida psicológica y conductual del personaje, y por supuesto todo lo que se refiere a la interrelación de éste con los elementos de la estructura dramática, es decir, objetivos, conflictos, estrategias, etc. En resumen, serian los apartados B y C en los que incidiríamos. Pero si, en cambio, las obras que nos ocupan son de mayor carácter teatral, farséscas, o bien pertenecen al teatro del absurdo, de la crueldad, o a cualquier otra tendencia no naturalista, habremos de insistir principalmente en el apartado A, ya que en este tipo de teatro es fundamental la creación física, el movimiento escénico, y el uso de la voz como recursos expresivos independientes. También prestaremos mucha atención al vestuario y a la caracterización de nuestros personajes.

En conclusión, presentamos esta herramienta como recurso para todo docente que se enfrente ante las dificultades que implica el espectáculo teatral. Consideramos que está puede adaptarse fácilmente y por tanto puede ser empleada en cualquier etapa y nivel educativo. Ofrece ventajas para el alumnado, ya que estructura su trabajo, y para el docente, dado que además de un recurso para enfrentar la práctica escénica, supone un excelente instrumento de evaluación.

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Anglo-Saxon Educational System

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The matter of Education is a vital issue for society, no matter if in Britain, the US or any other country in the world. Education is one of the key points for the development of a country.

Although the title of this article is “Anglo-Saxon educational system”, we should bear in mind that there are many countries that can be included within the Anglo-Saxon tradition, as English is their first language. In order to keep brief, we shall concentrate on the two main English speaking
countries: Britain and the USA, since most of the Anglo-Saxon educational systems resemble these two models.

This presentation will divided in two different areas. First of all we will deal with each of the different stages of education – primary, secondary and higher education – both in the United Kingdom and in the US. In the second area, we will introduce some curious aspects related to education that can catch our attention because of the difference with our Spanish educational system.


Before starting with the primary education in Britain, we should point out that in Britain the period of compulsory education is divided into four key stages, depending on pupils’ age. So we have Key stage 1 (pupils aged 5 to 7) and Key stage 2 (pupils aged 7 to 11), both of which correspond to primary education, and Key stage 3 (pupils aged 11 to 14) and Key stage 4 (pupils aged 14 to 16), both of which correspond to secondary education.

It is also worth remembering that education in England may differ from the system used elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Actually, there are two main systems: one covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland and one covering Scotland.

Let us start with primary education. British law requires all children to be in full-time education from the age of 5 to 16, but many parents, when possible, send younger children to a nursery or playschool at the age of 2 or 3. Most children go to state schools near their home. Britain has several different school systems. Depending on where they live, children can go to an infant school form the age of 5 to 7 and then to a junior school until they are 11. Others attend primary school from age 5 to 11. They enter the reception class as “rising fives” just before their fifth birthday.

Since 1988, the subjects to be taught in state schools have been laid down in the National Curriculum, which also sets the standards to be achieved. The National Curriculum does not apply in Scotland, and independent schools do not have to follow it, though many do.

The Curriculum in Britain has two different levels: the core subjects (Maths, English and Science), which children have to do compulsorily at all levels of education, and the foundation subjects (Technology, history, geography, music, art, physical education etc), which are studied at different levels and which, sometimes, pupils can choose. Optional cross-curricular subjects are also offered such as health education, citizenship and subjects in which kids learn for instance from how to carry out a healthy life to how to tolerate and live peacefully with the others.

Wales and Northern Ireland have a different curriculum, and in Scotland, the curriculum is not prescribed by statute. Religion education in schools is not prescribed nationally as part of the
curriculum, but is decided locally. All parents have the right to withdraw their children from the religious education.

Regarding assessment, apart from the class assessment carried out by school teachers, towards the end of each of the key stages, that is, at the age of 7 and 11 in the case of primary education, children are assessed in the core subjects through nationally designed tests, called Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). These tests are intended to show whether the children have reached the National Curriculum learning targets. School performance tables are published annually to show how well students in individual schools have done in tests.

Let us see now primary education in the US.

As a kind of introduction the first thing to stand out in American educational system is that no national curriculum exists. Each of the 50 states has its own Department of Education. And public colleges and universities receive funding from student tuition and the state in which they are located.

State and local governments have direct control and are responsible for the education of the students. Individual states have their “Boards of Education”, which decide the curriculum and what students must have achieved before they can graduate from school.

Although many Americans attend nursery school, day care or pre-school from an early age, formal education is usually consider to begin at the age of 5, when children go to kindergarten, the first step in the K-12 education. K-12 refers to the 12 years of compulsory education that children attend. Kindergarten and the next five or six years of education (first grade, second grade...) are together usually called elementary education (till the students are 11).

During their elementary education, children do not take, as in the case of England, national exams. They may take tests as part of their grade assessment.

After considering primary education we shall move on to deal with secondary education both, in the United Kingdom and in the United States.

In the UK children begin their secondary education at the age of 11. Secondary education used to be selective, that is, schools accepted children based on their performance in an exam called the “eleven-plus”. The best pupils went to grammar schools and high schools. Those who failed the exam went to secondary modern schools, which taught more practical subjects. In the 1960’s it was though that 11 was too young an age for a child’s future to be decided in this way. Selective education, and the eleven-plus, was ended in many areas. Secondary modern and many grammar schools became comprehensive schools offering a broad education to students with a wide range of abilities.

During their secondary education, 8% of British children go to independent schools. It is important to define clearly the difference between public and private education. In Britain, schools funded by the government are called “state schools” and education provided in this way is known as “state education”. State education is different from “private education”, which comprises “independent schools”. Some independent schools are known as “public schools”.

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The possibility of confusion is great, since in the US and in Scotland, the same as in Spain, schools organized by the government are “public schools” and the others are “private”.

British public schools institutions are attended to by those having a wealthy economic status, as parents have to pay fees that may amount to several thousand pounds a year.

Taxes go up to 12,000 euros per term. A small number of children from less wealthy families win scholarships, in which case the fees are paid for them. Many of the “public schools” are boarding schools. Many of Britain’s 200 public schools are very old. The majority of them are boarding schools where students live during term-time. Many British well-known people attend these schools. A clear example is Prince Charles’ sons, William and Harry, who attended Eton (see picture).

The National curriculum also establishes which are the subject secondary students must take.

At the age of 14 students take another SAT. During the last two years of secondary education, they begin working towards their GCSEs (General Certificate on Secondary Education), another national exam. Students do as many subjects as they can manage often eight or ten. After taking their GCSEs (at the age of 16), students who want to go to university stay on at school or go to a “sixth form” college to study for a further exam, “A levels” (Advanced levels), in two, three or four subjects (the take this examination at the age of 18). Some secondary schools now offer more practical courses leading to GNVQs (General Vocational Qualification) as an introduction to work-related skills.

In Scotland, students take similar public exams, the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE). It has three different grades. The standard grade is taken at 16. Then students may take five or six subjects as Highers, which are similar to A levels.

Let us see the situation in the US. The word secondary education is rarely used in the US. Instead, they use Junior High school and High School.

Secondary education in the US also embraces six grades (grades 7 to 12). Grades seven and eight are taken at junior high school, and the ninth to twelfth grades at high schools.

Students are required to study certain subjects, but they can choose which classes they take. For instance, students may be required to study a science for three years, but they can choose whether to take chemistry, physics or biology. There are also many subjects that students can choose to do or to drop, without any limit at all.
American high students who want to study at a college or university have to take a standardized test: the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or the ACT (American College Test). Each college or university decides on the minimum score it will accept.

In the US there are also private schools where students have to pay. 10% of American children attend these schools. They are very similar to British “public” schools.

Finally, after secondary school many British students go to university. They apply to several universities and receive offers of a place on condition that they achieve certain grades in their A levels. A first degree, which is usually an honours degree, generally takes three years, although it may take longer. Most courses end with exams called “finals”. Graduates may add the letters BA (Bachelor of Arts) or BSc (Bachelor of Science) after their names. There are also BEng (Bachelor of Engineering), BEd (Bachelor of Education), etc. The students’ results are given as classes or grades: a first is the highest class, seconds are often split between upper second and lower second, and below that is a third. After finishing their degree, some graduates go on to study for a further degree, often a master’s degree or a doctorate.

Students in Britain formerly had their tuition fees paid by the state and received a government grant to help pay their living expenses. Now, they receive only a loan towards their expenses, and from 1999 they have to pay their tuition fees. When they finish their degree, they have to pay their loans back.

People who do not go to university can do vocational training. It is intended to give people the skills and knowledge they need to perform a particular job, and involves practical instruction as well as theory. Most vocational training takes place not in universities but in colleges of further education and in colleges specializing in art, accountancy, etc.

In the US, people talk about “going to college” even if the institution they attend is a university. Most colleges offer classes only for undergraduate students studying for a bachelor’s degree. Community colleges are institutions which offer two-year courses leading to an associate’s degree, and afterwards students transfer to a different college or university to finish their studies. Universities are larger than colleges and also offer courses for graduate students who study in a graduate school. Most of the degrees last for four years.

In the US there are no national qualifications like GNVQs in the UK, though some professional organizations decide on their own qualifications and some of these have become widely accepted. Many vocational training is done by private institutions which are sometimes called proprietary schools.

Another aspect of British education which differs from the Spanish system is the inspections. They are carried out by the OFSTED (office for the standards in education). There are over 28,000 inspectors in England and Wales. The aim of OFSTED is to improve standards in teaching and learning in all of the state-funded schools in England. Inspectors visit schools and produce a detailed report on every aspect of school life. This will be freely available for the public to view. For this reason, schools are continually trying to improve and there is fierce competition.